Office Girls in Turn-of-the-Century Fiction: Work, Technology and Everyday Modernity

Jessica Vivien Gray

Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English

School of English

University of Kent

July 2019

Word Count: 86, 139

Acknowledgements

My first thanks go to Wendy Parkins, who was my primary supervisor for this project. Her continual support, expert guidance and enthusiasm have been key. Thanks too to Catherine Waters, who has provided thoughtful, helpful advice and support throughout.

Thanks are due to the CHASE consortium and the AHRC for funding my PhD research, as well as providing support for trips to various conferences that aided in the formation of this thesis.

The staff at all of the libraries I have spent time in during the course of my research have been invariably helpful; thanks in particular to Paul Johnson at the National Archives, Paul Civitelli at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and all those at the British Library, especially Karen Waddell.

I am grateful to my fellow postgraduate students and good friends outside of academia who have provided both ongoing support and welcome distractions; thanks are especially due to Shani, Elzi, Trupti and Robyn.

Finally, thank you to Owen for always cheering me on: he is enthusiastic about my thesis even when I am flagging, and his love, patience and delicious cooking have carried me through this project. My family have been endlessly supportive of my education; this thesis would not be complete without their advice and encouragement. Jack, I would not be the same without your love and happy outlook on life. To my parents: your belief in me, which has extended from the writing of my

PhD proposal which allowed me to escape my own stint in the office, to the very end of this project, has made me grateful beyond words. This thesis is dedicated to you.

Abstract

This thesis offers a fresh perspective on the New Woman by examining the representation of the character of the 'office girl' in fiction published between 1890 and 1925. This time period aligns with the era in which certain office jobs, including typing and telegraph clerking, became feminised. Specifically, I reveal how the office girl can be considered a version of the New Woman, but contend that as her work is more mundane she departs from the type in being represented as a less aspirational figure than the New Woman; the office girl's experience of modernity is steeped in the everyday, the habitual and the routine. I extend and nuance existing critical readings of the office girl by offering three key points of context through which this character type can be read: Certeau's concept of *la perruque*; the idea of emotional labour; and the tension between the individual and the collective that is present in representations of the office girl and her colleagues.

This thesis proposes that office girls typically wish to escape their mundane work, even if temporarily: they often do so, I argue, through daydream and distraction. Examining this through Henry James's 'In the Cage' (1898) and Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (1915-67), I note that characters are able to elude the mandates of the workday through their wandering minds in a manner akin to *la perruque*.

I intervene in prior discussions of the office girl's romantic life through introducing to analysis of this character theories of emotional labour. Conducting caring duties is a necessary part of the office girl's work; in *Dracula* (1897) the typist character's emotional labour enables the formation of the vampire-hunting group. But such

emotional labour can, I argue, alienate emotion and thus distort the office girl's relationships out of the office, as seen in texts such as Rebecca West's *The Judge* (1922).

This thesis reveals the importance of analysing the office girl's relationships with other typists: I note that in journals such as *The Typist's Gazette* (1896-7) the hope for a collective is expressed. However, in novels such as *The Odd Women* (1893), Grant Allen's *The Type-writer Girl* (1897), and Ivy Low's *The Questing Beast* (1914) while there is a desire expressed regarding the mass advancement of women's position in society, there is often a tension between the exceptional individual and the mass of typists. This exceptionality is a recurring feature of office girl protagonists which leads to a sense within these novels that meaningful work may not be available to all. Additionally, the characterisation of the mass of typists seen in such texts leads to the development of a stereotype of the office girl: this, I argue, is made use of by James Joyce in 'The Boarding House' (1914) and *Ulysses* (1922). This stereotyping is shown in Joyce to be a function of urban modernity, in which interpreting and recognising others fully or in a complex manner becomes difficult in the crowded city environment.

My project intervenes in ongoing discussions regarding the continuities between late Victorian and modernist literature, contributing to recent critical efforts which have worked to contravene the conventional notion of there being a deep divide between these two literary periods. The office girl traverses this perceived divide, and is a figure who offers ways of thinking through issues of feminine identity and its relationship to work, technology, and everyday modernity.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 2

Abstract 4

Introduction 7

Chapter 1: Representing work in the typewriter girl novels of George Gissing, Grant Allen and Ivy Low 69

Chapter 2: 'I continued to click, click, click, like a machine that I was': technology, the typist and *Dracula* 111

Chapter 3: Office Intimacies: *The Judge* and the sexuality of the typist 144

Chapter 4: Attention and distraction in the office narratives of Henry James and Dorothy Richardson 180

Chapter 5: The stereotyped typist in the fiction of James Joyce 219

Conclusion 256

Appendix: Images 269

Bibliography 271

Introduction

> 'Does anyone want to write a cheap novelette? Make the heroine a lady typist, beautiful, good, innocent, capable of all sorts of impossibilities in the way of rising to high favour in an incredibly short time, securing the most impossibly lucrative positions *plus* ideal employers. Of course, an employer-lover appears in the second or third chapter, and all ends happily.'[1] – *The Woman Worker*, 1908

In an article titled 'Women Clerks — Remarks by One Who Knows', a writer who signed herself simply as 'Typist' mocks the prevalence of characters with her profession in fiction. In these novels, she notes, ambitious fantasies are fulfilled with rapid success in the typist character's career confirming her aptitude as well as her amiable disposition. Such success is typically quickly followed by the realisation of other kinds of desire through an aspirational romance that would return her to the private sphere. The typist was an emblem of the successful, independent woman worker in this formulation, but one who was not too overtly challenging or radical as signalled by her ability to return to the domestic sphere. She is notable nonetheless for her ambitions, and the easy achievement of her dreams. The author of the article emphasises how her job had become a literary trope and the typical narrative she outlines clearly frustrates her, as she subsequently makes clear the real monotony of her work and the often-disrespectful treatment she receives. Her everyday life, she underlines, seems not to be the stuff of popular novels.

The author of this article in *The Woman Worker* exaggerates how formulaic narratives of typists had become, although admittedly many texts about the office girl did loosely follow this narrative arc while also complicating or problematising it. She opts not to mention that the typist was found not only in 'cheap novelettes' but

[1] 'Women Clerks — Remarks by One Who Knows', *The Woman Worker*, 22, October 28 1908, p. 543.

also in fiction by well-respected writers.[2] These texts were in fact deeply invested in depicting not a simple narrative of success but also the everyday monotony and tribulations of the office girl. Nonetheless the author of this *Woman Worker* article importantly establishes that the 'lady typist' had become a common character in literature deployed across a multitude of texts, and one who was typically associated with young feminine ambition in work and in love, frequently characterised by the intensity of her aspirations.

The character type of the female office worker, and the tension between her ambitious nature and the mundanity of her everyday work which is identified by the author of *The Woman Worker* article, is the focus of this thesis. The prevalence of this character type noted in the article followed on from the increasing feminisation of jobs involving typing and telegraph operation in late-nineteenth century Britain. Such jobs were perceived as acceptable for women to take on. The cultural significance of the office girl is reflected in the fact that she has been the subject of a substantial amount of critical work in recent years. For example, scholars such as Katherine Mullin and Lawrence Rainey have focused upon her connections with the New Woman; scholars including Lena Wånggren, Pamela Thurschwell and Jill Galvan have examined her in relation to new technologies; and scholars such as Leah Price have analysed how authors portray the relationship between creative writing and typing.[3] While all of these studies constitute an important body of work

[2] Ibid., p. 543.
[3] Jill Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859-1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Katherine Mullin, *Working Girls: Fiction, Sexuality and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell, 'Introduction: Invisible Hands' in *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture*, ed. by Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Leah Price, 'Grant Allen's Impersonal Secretaries: Rereading *The Type-Writer Girl*' in *Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the* Fin de Siècle, pp. 129-42; Lawrence Rainey, 'Secretarial Fiction: Gender and Genre in Four Novels 1897-1898', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 53.3 (2010), 308-330;

upon which I have drawn in the analysis that follows, there are three key aspects of my argument that either extend this scholarship or nuance existing readings of the figure of the office girl in new ways: the concept of *la perruque,* the idea of emotional labour and the tension between the individual and the collective in representations of the office girl.

In this thesis I will extend and revise the idea of the office girl as a version of the New Woman by focusing on how she escapes the everyday life of office work, and the boredom that is part of this often repetitive job, through daydream and distraction. Authors that depict the wandering mind of the office girl contrast the boredom of her work with the creative act of daydreaming. I will also extend existing arguments concerning the relationship between the office girl's work and her romantic life by introducing to this discussion the idea of emotional labour. Undertaking caring duties as part of their role, the intimacy of the office space is explored in novels, with forced intimacy leading to an alienation of the office girl's emotions. This concept of emotional labour thus alters our understanding of her relationships in and out of the office. I also offer a new analysis of the office girl's relationships with other typists, arguing that there are inherent tensions in these texts between such characters. While office girls express hopes for the job to be indicative of mass advancement of women's rights, and for typists to be regarded as a kind of collective, such hopes are typically rendered fraught by an exceptional individual typist being brought into contrast with the mass of typists. This narrative of exceptionality, in which a particular office girl outstrips her colleagues in ambitions

---

Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Pamela Thurschwell, 'Supple Minds and Automatic Hands: Secretarial Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Literature', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 37.2 (2001), 155-68; Lena Wånggren, *Gender, Technology and the New Woman* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

and, sometimes, fulfilling those ambitions, interferes with hopeful notions of a collective through suggesting more creative or meaningful work is not available to all.

The novelty of the technologies of typewriter and telegraph aided the perception that the office girl was distinctly modern. The rise of typewriting and telegraph technologies occurs at the same time as women's increasing entry into office roles, and these technologies aided in the perception of these roles being 'new'.[4] As such, these new technical jobs helped to at least somewhat calm concerns that women would steal other, long established jobs from men. Working with machines was not exclusively depicted as deadening and mechanical and the office girl's affinity with technology was also emphasised in order to indicate the modern, emancipating aspects of her work.

The office girl's affinity with these technologies also allowed her to conduct her work automatically – through touch-typing, for instance. This habitual, automatic attention is not simply portrayed in a negative manner to indicate the boredom of the office girl. Instead, such automatic attention offers a way to escape from work. Working automatically permits a freedom of mind, and allows attention to drift into a daydream that offers moments of escape from everyday work life. These momentary daydreams resemble Michel de Certeau's notion of *la perruque*, or the 'worker's own work disguised as work for his [sic] employer.'[5] The office girl's wandering mind subverts the mandates of the workday, indulging creative imaginings that are a more distinctly personal and pleasurable kind of work.

---

[4] Gregory Anderson, 'The white-blouse revolution' in *The white-blouse revolution: Female office workers since 1870*, ed. by Gregory Anderson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 1-27 (p. 10).
[5] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 25.

This examination of the office girl's drift between attention and distraction allows for an analysis of her everyday life; so too analysis of her everyday life leads to an awareness of the significance of her emotional labour. I argue that this is a key aspect of her work that has previously not been considered, and which affects intimate office relationships and thus alters the office girl's experience of work. Emotional labour entails, as Arlie Hochschild has described, inducing or suppressing feelings in oneself in order to make colleagues or customers feel a certain way.[6] This is not just a pretence to certain feelings but rather an obligation to carefully manage and perform one's own emotions.[7] This can lead, Hoschild has argued, to alienation from one's feelings.[8] In particular, I argue that affective labour is demonstrated in office girl texts to lead to a distorted sense of relationships and intimacy. Having to undertake caring duties also blurs boundaries, which certain colleagues take advantage of in these texts, and as such contributes to the harassment these women experience from their co-workers.

By considering the category of emotional labour, I bring a novel perspective to considerations of the office girl's sexual identity. Katherine Mullin has previously argued that typists and telegraph workers are typically portrayed as sexually assertive and glamorous.[9] Christopher Keep, too, has described the glamour of the typewriter girl as being a key component of her identity.[10] However, I note that overt glamour is rare in novels about office girls from the era I am focusing on: while conventionally described as attractive, their scarce resources tend to curtail the office girl's ability to be fashionable. Their sexualisation by others, particularly male

[6] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003, p. 7.
[7] Ibid., p. 17.
[8] Ibid., p. 7.
[9] Mullin, p. 2.
[10] Christopher Keep, 'The Cultural Work of the Type-Writer Girl', *Victorian Studies*, 40.3 (Spring 1997), 401-25 (p. 404).

colleagues, is more common – this is distinct from being glamorous, of course, as glamour implies agency and a choice in self-presentation by the woman worker. Additionally, I argue that while the office girl's sexuality certainly is a focus of these texts, emotional labour renders such love affairs more complex and fraught as intimacy has become distorted by such affective work. Indeed, while the sexuality of the office girl affords an opportunity for potential escape from work, and narratives of typists and telegraphists frequently involve a career plot disrupted by a potential marriage plot, I suggest these texts are not simply reverting to the conventional notion that work is a temporary stage prior to marriage. Instead the office girl's desires are portrayed as conflicted, torn between love and work.

Narratives about the office girl explore the complex nature of the everyday experiences of work at a time when it was hoped that women's work would be politically meaningful – that is, leading to the advancement of the position of women. I suggest that as well as there being an anxious relationship between the typist and her male colleagues, there is also a notable tension in the opposition found in these novels between an individual office girl and the collective of typists. Other critics have noted the difference in how the typist and the secretary were perceived, with the latter being considered a more respectable, complicated job necessitating a higher degree of education.[11] But I argue that there is not only a differentiation between roles: rather, there is a wider conflict in these texts between the desire to depict the typing masses as a unified collective, and the portrayal of exceptional, individual office girls. In particular, texts often examine this conflict by describing a proto-feminist collective of typists hoping for fulfilling, meaningful work that

[11] This is discussed with particular reference to Grant Allen's *The Type-Writer Girl* in Price, 'Grant Allen's Impersonal Secretaries', p. 132; Thurschwell, 'Supple Minds and Automatic Hands', p. 160.

furthers the position of women. But ultimately, several of these texts also centre around a single, especially talented office girl in such a way as to suggest that emancipation and vocation might be available to this specific individual, but are not necessarily available to all.

There is a hope present in these texts that work will be personally meaningful then, aiding feelings of independence and self-sufficiency. This idea of work being personally meaningful connotes a kind of work that is self-fulfilling, or which grants a sense of selfhood. This tends to be seen in particular through a job that expresses one's skills and abilities, and in doing so gives the worker a sense of identity that is invested in work.[12] Nick Crossley, in his examinations of subjectivity, has argued that individuals have a 'situated subjectivity' which is understood in relation to a specific historical moment and its 'cultural particulars' which is in 'dialogue' with the period in history in which one lives.[13] Applying such ideas to the office girl, I argue that her subjectivity is drawn from various sources including work, the women's movement, her potential for creativity, and her relationships with others.

The office girl is also distinctly aware of her identity as something which is in process and which – she hopes – has the potential to change. This can be seen in her characterisation as distinctly ambitious, with a variety of aspirations which she hopes can bring self-fulfilment and contribute to her perception of her own identity. As Zygmunt Bauman has suggested, modern identity is a 'target of effort' for which one must 'struggle' – but because identity is also a process, it is 'forever

[12] This definition nuances Morag Shiach's notion that in this era there is a desire to 'read selfhood in and through the activity of labour' by specifically focusing on the sense of identity that comes from the expression of skills and abilities via work. See Morag Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture, 1890-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 2.
[13] Nick Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994), p. 191.

incomplete'.[14] Identity is composed of both what one currently 'is' and what one feels one 'ought' to be.[15] The narrative of the office girl thus positions her as possessing a distinctly modern identity that has the potential for change and development; her identity is not fixed. Certainly there is a sense of forming a new identity through work for the office girl: a degree of independence is gained and self-fulfilment is hoped for, and for some it is attained. But the office girl's desires also reach beyond the rather dreary office world. She is a representative figure for the advances being made to the position of women in turn-of-the-century Britain, but also communicates the notion that further change needed to be made.

In the late nineteenth century the number of women employed for clerical office work, including typing and telegraph operation, rose significantly.[16] This rise in numbers of women entering the office led to a desire to portray these roles as distinctly feminine. The rhetorical feminisation of certain kinds of office work encouraged the belief that it was a particularly suitable job for women, assuaging concerns about women stealing these roles from men. As the phrase 'born a man, died a clerk' attests, such jobs were never regarded as particularly masculine.[17] The hiring of women in the office coincided with technical change in these jobs with the development of typewriters and telegraphs in the 1800s: the apparent novelty of these kinds of work now that new technologies were a key component of such work

[14] Zygmunt Bauman, *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi* (Cambridge, Polity: 2004), p. 15.
[15] Ibid., p. 20.
[16] Meta Zimmeck, 'Jobs for Girls: the Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914' in *Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918* ed. by A.V. John (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 153-78; Katie-Louise Thomas 'A Queer Job for a Girl: Women Postal Workers, Civic Duty and Sexuality 1870-80', in *In a Queer Place: Sexuality and Belonging in British and European Contexts,* ed. by Kate Chedgzoy, Emma Francis and Murray Pratt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 50-70 (p. 52).
[17] Anderson, p. 16.

aided in its being feminised.[18] The electric telegraph was beginning to be used commercially in the 1830s, and continued to be perfected over the nineteenth century with the development of wireless radiotelegraphy in 1895.[19] The typewriter, invented in 1868, began to be commercially produced by inventor Christopher Sholes collaborating with Remington and Sons in 1873, and usage of the typewriter increased in Britain during the 1880s.[20] Office work was often discussed in distinctly feminine terms. As Jill Galvan has pointed out the typist or telegraph operator is a mediator in communications; portrayals of these workers underlined the need for feminine sensitivity, while also insisting the office girl be a demure, non-invasive conduit for communications.[21] I work to extend such arguments by underlining how this sensitivity can be connected to theories of emotional labour, which necessarily involves being sensitive to others while also obfuscating the notion that this is a kind of labour in order to make such sympathy appear natural. Other forms of feminisation of the office girl role can be seen by the way in which typing in particular was compared to piano playing and delicate feminine hands were seen as especially suited to this relatively new skill.[22] In George Gissing's *The Odd Women*, a novel about a training school for typists, a character notes one's hands while working must be 'light and supple and quick'.[23] A feminising presence in the office would be of benefit, it was believed; the 'office wife' could raise the tone of a previously predominantly masculine workplace.[24] Indeed, this domesticating of the office can be seen in one journal's advice to secretaries, which instructed 'Be as

[18] Ibid., p. 6.
[19] Galvan, p. 3.
[20] Ibid., p. 3.
[21] Ibid., p. 12.
[22] Ivan Raykoff, 'Piano, Telegraph, Typewriter: Listening to the Language of Touch' in *Media, Technology and Literature in the Nineteenth Century: Image, Sound, Touch*, ed. by Colette Colligan and Margaret Linley (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 159-88 (p. 173).
[23] George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 43.
[24] Anderson, p. 16; Thomas, p. 55, 61.

lady-like [in the office] as you would in the parlor'.[25] There was, this suggests, an effort to ensure that the female office worker was seen in traditionally feminine terms, which aimed to detract from the potentially challenging notion of the young, independent woman worker.

Beyond the desire to regard these roles as somehow feminine, office work was appealing to many young women – and these women appealed as workers to employers, too. An article in *The Girl's Own Paper* from 1901 informed its readers that the job was the 'best and easiest to enter' for many: it was skilled in that it required some specialist education, but also attainable as it needed only six months training.[26] That the role entailed some skill made it respectable, and for typewriting work in particular this respectability was added to by the fact that the office was a more private space and did not involve direct interaction with the general public as a job such as shopgirl did.[27] At the same time, it also benefited from being less restrictive than some alternatives such as becoming a governess, in which one would have to live with one's employers.[28] The feminisation of the job was primarily connected to necessity, of course: as offices expanded and became more specialised, with an increased division of labour, employers found themselves needing more low-level employees.[29] Women could provide cheap labour. Their pay was unequal, and their wages were described as 'pin money' – a term indicating a small amount provided for personal and usually inessential expenses – a choice which was

[25] Qtd. in Alan Delgado, *The Enormous File: A Social History of the Office* (London: John Murray, 1979), p. 45.
[26] 'Shorthand and Typewriting Clerks', *The Girl's Own Paper*, 1144.18, November 30 1901, p. 136.
[27] Teresa Davy, '"A Cissy Job for Men; A Nice Job for Girls": Women Shorthand Typists in London, 1900-1939' in *Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work*, ed. by Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover (London: Macmillan Education, 1986), pp. 124-44 (p. 127).
[28] Ibid., p. 127.
[29] Zimmeck, p. 154.

allegedly justified by the expectation that a male family member would aid in supporting these women.[30] Moreover, the lack of career progression for most typists and telegraph workers was excused by the belief that many of them would marry, after which the marriage bar would ensure the end of their career.[31] Unequal pay coupled with attempts to describe the role in traditionally feminine terms curtail any straightforward understandings of the job as an emancipating one for women; nonetheless, office work provided some independence and was generally considered a respectable and skilled role.

In this thesis I will be analysing literary representations of this historical phenomenon of women entering a new workplace. The chosen texts were all published between 1890 and 1925, broadly following the period of the significant increase in women working in clerical roles. Because of the historical specificity which guides my thesis I restrict my geographical focus to texts set in Britain and Ireland. While I am not intending to catalogue every representation of women office workers during this era the range of texts chosen is representative of key themes that are prevalent in texts about the office girl, as I will outline in further detail at the end of this introduction.

This particular array of texts also allows me to examine a multitude of perspectives regarding this 'type': in this vein I survey both male and female authors, recognising that there is a gendered point of view in representations of office girls and both perspectives are needed to analyse the development of this character type. This gendered point of view frequently entails complex ambivalence towards feminism, or differing kinds of feminist views, rather than a straightforward divide between male authors being anti-feminist and women authors espousing

[30] Davy, p. 129; Zimmeck, p. 163.
[31] Davy, p. 142; Thomas, p. 58.

feminist views. Like Lena Wånggren, I argue that analysing 'multiple – often conflicting voices', and considering 'different articulations' of the debate, including those perspectives that may be gendered, is key to understanding New Woman texts.[32] Prior critics have understandably desired to bring to light lesser-known New Woman texts by women, arguing that these are a key component of feminist literary history worthy of study.[33] But as a means of further understanding the prevalence of this character type, works by both men and women and both more straightforwardly canonical literature and popular texts will be analysed. While I will also allude where relevant to the context of the authors' relationship to office work – some used typewriters, some worked in offices, and some hired typists to transcribe their manuscripts – this is by no means a key focus of the thesis, as I am instead interested primarily in representations of female office workers.[34]

Beyond fictional texts I will extend recent scholarship through also examining periodicals and advertisements; while other critics have made use of similar kinds of media I focus in particular on a periodical not previously analysed which was written specifically for typists, *The Typist's Gazette*. Studying such periodicals – as *The Woman Worker* article with which I opened this introduction indicates – demonstrates that the office girl was also a well-known fictional character 'type', the subject of comment and critique in the press. Specifically examining journals designed for office girls such as *The Typist's Gazette* leads to a consideration of texts aimed at women workers – which office girl literature was not necessarily – and the issues that interested these groups, including in particular the

[32] Wånggren, p. 18-19.
[33] See, for instance, Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing* (London: Virago Press, 1987).
[34] For an example of how the use of technologies impacted literary texts see Hannah Sullivan, *The Work of Revision* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

desire to be seen as a collective, and fears concerning how the office girl 'type' noted above was slipping into a stereotype that was the object of mockery. Exploring different forms of text alongside one another enables me to show the development of the representation of the female office worker.

The scope of this thesis entails analysing both Victorian and modernist texts in spite of boundaries conventionally being drawn between literature from these two periods of literary history. This idea of rupture between modernism and Victorian literature is, of course, inherited from modernists themselves who often represented their art as determinedly breaking away from prior literary traditions. While not wanting to elide the important differences between Victorian and modernist texts, particularly in terms of literary form, this thesis will argue for the importance of exploring the significant continuities between these kinds of texts.[35] The office girl is a character type who traverses this perceived divide, and crystallises some key issues that continue across these literary texts including ways of thinking through a distinctly everyday kind of modernity, in particular through the experience of *la perruque*, emotional labour, and issues of the individual versus the collective – all categories which are affected by gender. Before outlining my chosen texts and their place in my thesis, I will turn to analysis of these three aspects as they have been explored in recent relevant critical material in order to situate my thesis within a larger critical framework.

[35] In this regard I am adding to recent critical efforts from, for example, Rachel Bowlby, 'Woolf's Untold Stories' in *Everyday Stories: The Literary Agenda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) pp. 146-169; Jessica Feldman, 'Modernism's Victorian Bric-a-brac', *Modernism/modernity*, 8.3, (September 2001), 453-70; Kristin Mahoney, *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian into Modern*, ed. by Laura Marcus, Michèle Mendelssohn and Kirsten Shepherd-Barr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

The office girl is a version of the New Woman whose experience of the world tends to be more mundane and characterised by habit; the office girl as a literary representation thus allows for an exploration of the everyday, often frustrating, experiences of women of this era. The office girl's work is distinctly routinised, with little variation. Mastering the technology with which she works requires a repetition that becomes embedded in the body with such practices as touch typing. But while such an understanding of the everyday might suggest that the experience of it is deadening, the everyday can also give pleasure: habit and repetition might bore, but certain routines can be a source of joy. As Ben Highmore has described in his studies of the everyday, the everyday has the potential to 'delight or depress'.[36] As I revise these ideas to apply to the office girl I note that in these texts the everyday itself can also be a place of resistance. For Henri Lefebvre, the everyday is suffused with homogeneity and alienation in the Marxist sense of the word; the repetition of everyday life is the repetition of industrial capitalism.[37] If individuals are able to recognise this alienation, Lefebvre suggests, perhaps they can transform and overcome the everyday: the everyday is something to be escaped, then.[38] But I argue that while the office girl wishes to escape her world of work, she is typically returned to her everyday rather than fully escaping it; her momentary escape is an important instance of rebellion, nevertheless, and thus to be valued.

I contend that these momentary escapes from the mandates of the workday typically come through daydream or distraction. Michel de Certeau's descriptions of

[36] Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 1.
[37] Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. by Sacha Rabinovitch (London: Allen Lane, 1971), p. 33.
[38] Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory*, p. 144.

the practices of everyday life emphasise what he calls 'tactics', or as he also refers to them, *la perruque*.[39] These tactics serve to evade the disciplinary structures that oversee our lives, diverting resources away from producing profit for one's employer and instead deploying these resources for one's own chosen activities.[40] These tactics could involve, for example, a cabinetmaker borrowing a lathe to make a piece of furniture for himself, or – all the more pertinently to my own work – a secretary writing a love letter while at work.[41] In novels of the office girl, I argue, diversions of attention from paid work allow for moments of more pleasurable, creative work. Distracted from her mandated tasks, these moments in her everyday life – often simply involving escapist daydreaming – permit freedom and pleasure.

The office girl's desire to get away from her everyday is, paradoxically, enabled by her everyday habits. As noted, her version of Certeau's tactics of everyday life is to daydream while working. These moments of daydream take place while still conducting some element of work, as much of her work can be conducted automatically. Touch-typing or tapping on the telegraph, some of the most routine elements of the office girl's workday can be conducted automatically such that her mind can drift to other matters. Thus as Bryony Randall has argued, the preoccupation in some literature with the daily fluctuations of attention and distraction provides a way of investigating the experience of the everyday.[42] Randall explores this through a focus on a variety of modernist texts, examining how daily time passes during everyday life – which Randall terms 'dailiness.'[43] However, I suggest that the ebb and flow of attention as a subject is especially well suited to

[39] Certeau, p. 25.
[40] Ibid., p. 25-6.
[41] Ibid., p. 25.
[42] Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 35.
[43] Ibid., p. 2.

being explored through the character of the office girl due to the repetitive routine of her work and office life, which necessarily entails moments of distraction. Attention and distraction are shown to form a spectrum in these texts, as Jonathan Crary argues in relation to his own understanding of late-nineteenth century models of attention, and the mind is portrayed as drifting along this spectrum during the course of the day.[44] While Crary applies such ideas to painting from this era, I will of course be examining the significance of these models of attention in office girl literature. The office girl's distracted moments are significant, I contend, because they are expressive of her frustration with her position in society, and through daydream they offer escape – even if only briefly – from the demands of her work.

Thus, the office girl is a version of the New Woman who enables exploration of a particularly everyday version of modern femininity. While the rise of the female office worker was a historical phenomenon, through literature the office girl also becomes a discursive figure. In this way she is akin to the New Woman. 'New Woman' was a term coined around 1894, first used by author Sarah Grand and extracted from Grand's article to become the title of an article by Ouida – although notably the phrase 'new women' appears in George Gissing's 1893 novel *The Odd Women*, suggesting a wider cultural sense of there being a new, modern type of woman in society.[45] 'New Woman' became a shorthand to refer to modern young women striving for rights and independence. Contemporary debates concerning the position of women were so prevalent that one article complained:

---

[44] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 47.

[45] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the* Fin-de-Siècle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 9; in Gissing's novel, Everard describes Rhoda Nunn as 'one of the new women', a phrase which suggests common knowledge between the characters of the idea of a 'new woman'. See Gissing, p. 95.

> …it is not possible to ride by road or rail, to read a review, a magazine or a newspaper, without being continually reminded of the subject which lady-writers love to call the Woman Question.[46]

The debate around women's issues was important and real, then, but the figure of the New Woman was an emblem used in the debate. As Lyn Pykett has argued, the New Woman was 'a representation'; similarly, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg dubs the New Woman a 'condensed symbol of disorder and rebellion'.[47] The New Woman as a representation built up various associations, including, as Talia Schaffer has pointed out, independence, self-reliance, the desire for education and a career.[48] But she also became associated with a series of clichés: cycling, smoking, wearing 'rational dress' and possessing her own latchkey.[49] The term New Woman was also used to mock such women, then, and Sarah Grand herself disdained what the idea of the 'New Woman' came to connote with time.[50]

The New Woman was thus a textual representation used to explore real women's lived experience. In fictional narratives the New Woman is used to investigate female ambition, and as Lyn Pykett has argued, to explore women's desire to 'transcend the ideological and material conditions of middle-class femininity' while also depicting the power of such conditions.[51] Notably, Pykett's

---

[46] Qtd. in Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, 'Introduction' in *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact:* Fin-de-Siècle *Feminisms*, ed. by Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 1-38 (p. 1).
[47] Lyn Pykett, *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 137; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 247.
[48] Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 13.
[49] Ibid., p. 25.
[50] Angelique Richardson 'Who *Was* the New Woman?' in *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian into Modern*, pp. 150-67 (p. 151).
[51] Lyn Pykett, 'Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman: representations of the female artist in the New Woman fiction of the 1890s' in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, ed. by Nicola Diane Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 135-50 (p. 148).

discussion refers in particular to representations of female artists. Unlike such renderings of the New Woman as an artist, office girls, as Gillian Sutherland notes, had a 'mass presence' providing the kind of visibility that meant they too were 'substantial harbingers of change.'[52] Mullin has recently described the 'working girl' – a term which she uses to denote the middle and lower-middle class professions of shopgirls, barmaids, typists and telegraph workers – as a version of the New Woman.[53] As Mullin demonstrates the New Woman was more aspirational as a figure, undertaking higher education and creative work.[54] But I will revise Mullin's arguments, which largely focus on sexuality, by focusing specifically on office girls, and on key, everyday aspects of their lives and work which Mullin does not touch upon such as their experience of *la perruque* and emotional labour. Moreover, through this focus I will demonstrate how the office girl has a multiplicity of aspirations, rather than a single-minded ambition, involving aims for self-fulfilment through economic independence, finding a vocation, love and creativity. The desire for self-fulfilment frequently leads the office girl to try to escape from the rather constricting office world – though this escape is not always achieved – and narratives of the office girl are typically characterised by frustration with the boredom of their work, and a subsequent ongoing sense of longing.

With industrialisation came also the standardisation and routinisation of the workday, leading work in this era to be characterised by routine and repetition. This is not to say that such characteristics and rhythms of work were entirely absent from pre-industrial labours – agricultural work necessitates repetition too, to give one example – but rather to pinpoint the particular kind of modernised and routinised

[52] Gillian Sutherland, *In Search of the New Woman: Middle-Class Women and Work in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 161.
[53] Mullin, p. 5.
[54] Ibid., p. 5.

everyday experienced by the office girl. The everyday is thus, as Felski has described, 'a way of experiencing the world', typically characterised as habitual; similarly, Ben Highmore has described the everyday as 'those most repeated actions, those most travelled journeys, those most inhabited spaces that make up, literally, the day to day.'[55] This is, as Highmore has noted in another work on the ordinary, an understanding which sees the ordinary and the everyday as a 'grammar', a way of experiencing something, rather than a specific practice.[56] As noted previously this is not to posit a wholly negative understanding of the everyday – habit, as Felski suggests, is a part of 'being-in-the-world' that has the potential to be a source of joy – but to frame it as that which is typical and routine.[57] The office girl's particular version of the everyday, I suggest, entails her experience of the world of work and the tensions between progress and excitement, and repetition and boredom, which are inherent within it. I argue that this experience is emblematised by the movement between attention and distraction, with her daydream being as noted a version of *la perruque* that allows her to escape the dullness of everyday and express her creativity.

Literature, especially the particular realist and modernist texts I examine in this thesis, is particularly well-suited to depicting the everyday, as is seen in office girl narratives. If the everyday is normally characterised by our inattention to it, literature can defamiliarise the everyday through directing our attention towards it, as Ella Ophir has described.[58] The suitability of literature to portray the everyday is not simply because of its ability to focus on that which normally goes unnoticed; the

[55] Rita Felski, 'The Invention of Everyday Life', *New Formations*, 39 (1999), 15-31 (p. 31); Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory*, p. 1.
[56] Ben Highmore, *Ordinary Lives: studies in the everyday* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 2.
[57] Felski, 'The Invention of Everyday Life', p. 28.
[58] Ella Ophir, 'Modernist Fiction and "the accumulation of unrecorded life"', *Modernist Cultures*, 2.1 (2010), 6-20 (p. 7).

novel's form is especially adept at portraying everyday life. Laurie Langbauer has suggested that serial novels particularly suit the portrayal of the everyday thanks to their 'expansiveness, their repetitiveness, their complication of closure'.[59] But novels that concern the lives of office girls are, I argue, particularly adept at depicting the everyday thanks to their subject matter as they investigate the habitual, repetitive elements of their work, highlighting their difference from the more aspirational New Woman whose life is more typically characterised by novelty and difference. This focus on the everyday might be at points a backdrop to a sudden change in the office girl's narrative: as Ben Highmore has described, fiction deals with the 'minor and major disturbances of life', but as he also points out it is nevertheless significant that these are set 'against and within a world of day-to-day habits', the world of the everyday.[60] While novels of the office girl aim also to show moments of escape from the everyday, I suggest that such moments are ultimately incorporated back into the everyday and a life of routine.

The narratives of office girls are differentiated from New Woman novels then, but they do both experience a distinctly feminised modernity. For some, the sense of change in modernity was so deep that it was felt to have affected subjectivity: Georg Simmel talked of the individual living in the city being over-stimulated by the environment, leading to a numbed, blasé attitude.[61] This sense of modernity as being so distinct from the past it was experienced as a kind of rupture led Virginia Woolf to famously declare, even if in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek

[59] Laurie Langbauer, *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 2.
[60] Highmore, *Ordinary Lives*, p. iii.
[61] Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Modern Life', in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), pp. 11-19 (p. 14).

manner, 'On or about December, 1910, human character changed.'[62] Yet in spite of the implication made by Simmel and Woolf that such changes in subjectivity were universal, women were often still valorised as existing outside the modern. Modernity, as Felski has pointed out, is frequently associated with the masculine sphere of rationalisation and production, and as such is perceived to be distinctly unfeminine.[63] Woman thus conventionally comes to represent nature, as Felski has noted: this is both the inner nature of 'bodily self-presence untouched by the constraints of the symbolic' and 'organic nature'.[64] As such, woman is supposedly not troubled by the sense of alienation that is felt by modern man.[65] Felski and others have complicated this argument, however, by underlining the contradictory notion that there is a close relationship too between modernity and consumption.[66] Consumption, and a rampant desire for goods, is typically perceived to be feminine. In a similar vein mass culture is typically associated with femininity; as Andreas Huyssen has explored, as mass culture is a key component of modernity, a close association between modernity and women is created.[67]

Gendered perceptions of modernity are not exclusively male, then, and femininity cannot be simply confined to an idealised past or primitive conceptions of nature. Moreover, modernity is not experienced in a singular way. Susan Stanford Friedman has argued that there are, instead, 'polycentric modernities and modernisms at different points of time and in different locations' and, I would

---

[62] Virginia Woolf, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), pp. 384-8 (p. 385).
[63] Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 30.
[64] Ibid., p. 54.
[65] Ibid., p. 54.
[66] Ibid., p. 61.
[67] Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other' in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 44-62 (p. 50, 53).

suggest, for those of differing identities.[68] Thus I further develop arguments regarding feminised modernity by suggesting that the office girl emblematises another particular, feminised modernity that can be differentiated from that of the female consumer: as another version of New Woman, she strives for independence and achieves it through both her job and through living alone in the city. She experiences too a distinctly everyday modernity through the mundanity of office life.

As well as the office girl's experience of modernity being feminised, her experience of the everyday is distinctly feminised. The everyday has often been gendered feminine. As Henri Lefebvre famously declared, 'Everyday life weighs heaviest on women'.[69] But Lefebvre problematically goes on to assert that women are incapable of recognising the everyday, as he attests 'they are incapable of understanding it.'[70] This derogatory gendering of everyday life is reflected also in Reinhard Kuhn's study of boredom: he argues that 'ennui', which his book is focused upon, is a 'higher' form of boredom.[71] The more banal, everyday boredom – which he is not interested in – is gendered feminine and is, he attests, exemplified by the suburban housewife.[72] A gendered hierarchy and gendered stereotypes exist within understandings of boredom and the everyday.

But feminised boredom can be expressive of deeper political, societal problems than critics like Kuhn seem willing to acknowledge, and I contend in office girl novels boredom signals frustration with the contemporary, restricted situation of women. In this vein, Allison Pease has argued for the bored woman in modernist

---

[68] Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies', *Modernism/modernity*, 13.3 (September 2006), 425-43 (p. 426).
[69] Lefebvre, p. 73.
[70] Ibid., p. 73.
[71] Reinhard Kuhn, *The Demon of Noontide: Ennui in Western Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 7.
[72] Ibid., p. 7.

novels as a type of feminist trope, expressive of frustration and a form of rebellion, even if not an active one, against the political situation of women.[73] Boredom can be a response to a lack of change, including societal change: as Patrice Petro has contended, boredom can be a production of the 'nothingness that accounts for women's experiences of modernity (especially in relation to the promises and failures of social change)'.[74] Revising these ideas in the context of the office girl specifically, I argue that her boredom is thus distinctly feminised in that it is indicative of a desire for more rapid progress in the position of women, as well as a longing for a further expansion of opportunities and choices available beyond the office itself.

The environments of everyday modernity can also be considered gendered: typically, modernity is associated with the urban. The *flâneur*, as envisioned by Charles Baudelaire, has become a symbol of the modern individual in the city, and is gendered masculine.[75] But there has been considerable critical effort to recover a *flâneuse* figure in order to assert the importance of considering the feminine experience of the city. While Janet Wolff argues that women visible in the urban environment in the nineteenth century typically had 'illegitimate or eccentric routes into this male arena' – in Baudelaire's work, for instance, women observed in the streets are often prostitutes – more recent work has contested this notion, arguing that women's presence in the city was in fact both significant and growing.[76] Certain spaces in the city that were targeted towards women, such as shopping centres,

---

[73] Allison Pease, *Modernism, Feminism, and the Culture of Boredom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. x.
[74] Patrice Petro, 'After Shock/Between Boredom and History' in *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 265-84 (p. 272).
[75] Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life' in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964), pp. 1-40.
[76] Janet Wolff, 'The Invisible *Flâneuse*: Women and the Literature of Modernity', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 2.3 (1985), 37-47 (p. 44).

denote women's presence in the urban environment.[77] The end of the nineteenth century in particular marked an increase in women's presence in the city according to certain critics: Deborah Parsons has argued that a female figure 'corresponding to the social figure of the *flâneur*' can be found from the late nineteenth century onwards, as women achieved greater liberation and took advantage of their ability to be 'walkers and observers in the public spaces of the city.'[78] Not only were such women present in the city: Parsons notes that women could see the city as 'constituent of identity'.[79] The perspective of this *flâneuse* is different from the *flâneur*: she walks in the city in a more self-conscious and less leisured manner, and she is also more 'consciously adventurous', Parsons suggests.[80] As Lauren Elkin has pointed out, the *flâneuse* can be an 'unstable' figure, as she can alternately be understood as a carefree wanderer of the city or an 'object of the male gaze'.[81] Thus the *flâneuse* is not simply a feminine version of the *flâneur* but a distinct type, aware of the potentially radical gesture of her presence in the city. Space and occupying space is a feminist issue, as Lauren Elkin has contended.[82] Women's experience of the city may be markedly different from men's – and, moreover, women's experience of the city is not universal, varying according to other categories such as class, race and age – but women are present in the city, and become all the more visible towards the end of the nineteenth century. Office girls are emphatically part

[77] Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (New York: Metheun, 1985); Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), p. 16.
[78] Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6.
[79] Ibid., p. 7.
[80] Ibid., p. 42.
[81] Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Vintage, 2017), p. 286.
[82] Ibid., p. 286.

of the urban environment, commuting to work and wandering the city streets, and the city becomes part of their modernised identity.

While existing accounts of the *flâneuse* have highlighted women walking in the city, my study of the office girl brings into critical focus other spaces beyond the streets which are shown to be key to the geography of modernity. Some recent works have sought to destabilise the link between modernity and public spaces and understand private, domestic spaces as also associated with modernity.[83] This has particular ramifications, of course, for women's experience of modernity and ensures they are not omitted from narratives of modernity. But I argue that it is also important when analysing the office girl character to consider the places that are inbetween public and private, such as the office or the boarding house. The office is at once a public and private working space: it is public because it is a workplace; but it is also closed off from prying eyes, making it somewhat private. Indeed, women office workers were thought to bring a domesticating presence to the office. Nonetheless, its modernity inheres in its being a workplace, and one in which women can newly work. The boarding house where the typist would typically live is another symbol of modernity: it is a place where a woman might live alone, independently. Additionally, as Sharon Marcus has explored with regards to apartment blocks, these city dwellings differ from the traditional private family home which would be, at least in the middle-class ideal, a whole enclosed house.[84] In apartment buildings and boarding houses there is more of an exchange between

---

[83] Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei, *Domestic Modernisms, the Interwar Novel, and E.H. Young* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Wendy Gan, *Women, Privacy and Modernity in Early Twentieth-Century British Writing* (Basingstoke: Pan Macmillan, 2009); Judy Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb: Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Morag Shiach, 'Modernism, the City and the "Domestic Interior"', *Home Cultures*, 2.3 (2005), 251-67.

[84] Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), p. 2.

public and private, with public hallways leading to supposedly private rooms. The public and private divide, with its association with a division between masculinity and femininity, is undermined by such spaces. These spaces are all the more easily associated with modernity, therefore, but additionally serve to destabilise the very assumption that the private, supposedly feminine sphere is to be associated with tradition and the old-fashioned.

The work of the office girl is at once modern, novel and indicating progress, and characterised by routine, repetition and boredom. Yet, the everyday is not always dull and deadening: it holds within it the possibility for pleasure and for gestures of resistance, even if on a small scale via tactics that resemble Certeau's *la perruque*. The way in which the office girl experiences her everyday life, and the scenes of boredom that are shown in narratives of the office girl, are indicative of the frustration of the young women for whom opportunities are restricted and social change is not occurring quite quickly enough. Her distraction from her work and moments of daydream indicate a desire for escape from her position, as well as her ambitions beyond the workplace as she fantasises about other opportunities. Yet these moments of distraction are also enabled by her carrying on her work automatically as a well-practiced habit; escape from the everyday is ultimately a part of, and incorporated back into, the everyday.

EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Emotional labour informs the office girl's everyday; it impacts both her experience of work, and her relationships with others. Theories of emotional labour have not previously been applied to office girl texts but they provide a vital understanding of how the feminisation of the typist in the late nineteenth century led to duties of care

being part of the job: production and management of emotion was expected of the typist. While ideas of emotional or affective labour are generally applied to more current forms of work, theorists have argued that such forms of labour are not exclusive to our own moment in history and can be applied to roles found in prior eras such as that of the secretary.[85] As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out, this type of work, to 'perform care and nurturing,' tends especially to be required of women.[86] This emotional labour, a newly prominent feature of the office girl's role, is frequently seen in narratives of her work.

Emotional labour typically entails, as touched upon previously, inducing or suppressing feelings in oneself in order to make colleagues or customers feel a certain way.[87] This is not just a pretence to certain feelings but rather an obligation to carefully manage and perform one's own emotions.[88] Emotional labour in the public sphere serves to internalise the commands of the workplace, and affects too the emotions of the worker outside of work. As Maurizio Lazzarato has argued, emotional labour involves participative management, in which the worker must manage her or himself: 'one *has to* express oneself, one *has to* speak, communicate, cooperate, and so forth'.[89] The mandates of work thus become internal to the worker; the worker's identity is produced and altered by this form of work and self-management. As Michael Hardt notes emotional labour means that 'production has become communicative, affective, de-instrumentalized, and "elevated" to the level of human relation – but, of course, a level of human relations entirely dominated by

[85] Hochschild, p. 11.
[86] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), p. 134.
[87] Hochschild, p. 7.
[88] Ibid., p. 17.
[89] Maurizio Lazzarato, 'Immaterial Labour' in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. by Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 133-47 (p. 135, original emphasis).

and internal to capital.'[90] Relationships and the supposedly private realm of feeling become part of the world of work; as Arlie Hochschild has described, the '*emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself*'.[91] Such work involves what Hochschild refers to as 'deep acting'; extending beyond simply disguising what one feels, one manages feeling by inducing a particular emotion in oneself. What is problematic about this performance is that such labour calls upon coordination of mind and feeling, and can draw 'on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality.'[92] Thus, in spite of apparent differences between emotional and physical labour, both involve a similar cost, and Hochschild draws upon Marxist theories of alienation to explain the impact: 'the worker can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of the self—either the body or the margins of the soul—that is *used* to do the work.'[93] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have drawn similar conclusions regarding emotional labour leading to alienation, suggesting this term is useful for explaining the selling of something so intimate as one's ability to make human relationships.[94]

This is not to suggest emotions induced in the private sphere are necessarily always better or purer, but rather to indicate how emotional labour can affect both the worker and their perceptions of how emotions function in more intimate relationships. Kathi Weeks suggests that Hochschild's analysis of emotion management is somewhat contradictory as it insists on the 'social construction and malleability of emotions' but at the same time supposes that they are 'fundamental to

[90] Michael Hardt, 'Affective Labor', *boundary 2*, 26.2 (Summer 1999), 89-100, (p. 96).
[91] Hochschild, p. 5. Original emphasis.
[92] Ibid., p. 7.
[93] Ibid., p. 7. Original emphasis.
[94] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2005), p. 111.

the self such that alienation is a problem'.[95] Additionally, Hochschild's arguments can lead to an idealisation of the private realm of feeling management, assuming such emotional work is negative exclusively when taking place as part of wage labour. Yet it is possible to use Hochschild's analysis without necessarily privileging private emotion management. As Johanna Oksala suggests, to resist or question affective labour is not to reify 'private authenticity' but can instead be an 'attempt to mediate, shape and manage our affects through freer and less exploitative social relations'.[96] While emotion management is not exclusive to the workplace, there is a clear distinction in terms of who is in control of the emotion management, and who profits. But a focus on emotion work in the office can lead to recognition of the manifold ways in which emotions can be managed and deployed; it shifts perspective on the useful outcomes of emotion management. So too emotional labour that is undertaken in the workplace in office girl novels can lead to an expectation of exploitative relationships which carries over into the private sphere.

This inclusion of emotional labour as a component of the office girl's work is inextricably linked to the role being feminised. Friedrich Kittler's influential reading of typist jobs has linked the feminisation of such roles with the technology of the typewriter, specifically. His reading of the significance of the typewriter goes so far as to suggest that discourse networks – that is, a network of technologies and institutions that process information – serve to produce the human subject, rather than vice versa.[97] The typewriter, Kittler argues, allowed women to enter discourse

[95] Kathi Weeks, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics', *ephemera*, 7.1 (2007), 233-49 (p. 244).
[96] Johanna Oksala, 'Affective Labor and Feminist Politics', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 41.2 (2016), 281-303 (p. 296).
[97] Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans. by Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 347.

production where they had previously been absent.[98] This is a problematic statement, of course, and Kittler has understandably been criticised for such a position which notably, and bizarrely, ignores women writing prior to the invention of the typewriter.[99] Kittler's argument is also reliant on the premise that machines desexualise the person working with them: he notes machines 'do away with polar sexual difference', and as the typewriter was accessible to women they were permitted to enter the world of cultural production.[100] But female typists were discussed in emphatically gendered terms: there was a notion, as noted previously, that clerical work was particularly well-suited to women, and that these women would invariably serve to feminise the office. Representations of female typists in texts by both men and women also suggest this figure is not desexualised as the importance of being a woman in work is felt strongly by these office girls; additionally, their colleagues and employers are invariably intrigued by the presence of a woman in the office. Pamela Thurschwell has observed this gap in Kittler's argument: she argues that following the desexualisation Kittler posits there is an 'instant resexualisation' of the secretary.[101] As such, 'women are still expected to act like women' in this new workplace.[102] As Geoffrey Winthrop-Young has noted, Kittler presents women's supposedly new access to discourse production almost as a kind of promotion for women.[103] Yet as Winthrop-Young contends, this argument is troubling as it also negates the women's presence, as they are part of discourse production only while recording and relaying male speech.[104] While certainly worth revising in some important ways then, Kittler's account does serve as a way of

[98] Ibid., p. 351.
[99] Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, *Kittler and the Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 126.
[100] Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, p. 351.
[101] Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking*, p. 94.
[102] Ibid., p. 95.
[103] Winthrop-Young, p. 126.
[104] Ibid., p. 126.

complicating machine-human relationships due to his suggestion that the individual is produced by media rather than existing outside or prior to it. As such Kittler's theory allows us to consider how machines can produce new or at least revised identities. Nevertheless, the sexualisation of the role is worth emphasising, and I work to extend such arguments regarding the feminisation of the job by demonstrating the significance of emotional labour as part of the role, which is especially associated with femininity.

While emotional labour necessarily entails exploitation, specifically the exploitation of feeling, there was nevertheless a sense that the office world opening to women indicated the expansion of access to the public sphere. It expanded, too, the potential choice of work available, bestowing a greater sense of agency upon women in the late-nineteenth century who wanted or needed to work. As Lise Shapiro Sanders points out, women's entry into a range of modes of employment in the late-nineteenth century is indicative of significant social and cultural transformations.[105] Work is itself a term which can designate a variety of activities and which shifts in terms of meaning and association according to historical context, as Martin Danahay has argued.[106] But while Danahay goes on to suggest work was still associated with masculinity in the Victorian era, the entry of women into new workplaces suggests otherwise.[107] The middle-class Victorian ideology of the separate spheres, in which the public and private realms could be understood as gendered, may have always been a cultural construction of the Victorians and one

[105] Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2006), p. 2.
[106] Martin A. Danahay, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 12.
[107] Ibid., p. 12.

which was being continually revised, as Mary Poovey has established.[108] Nonetheless women's entry into a range of new professions, particularly amongst these middle classes, did work to destabilise somewhat such gender ideologies. As such, the representation of women in paid work in this period lends itself to depicting women's work as inherently indicating the progression of the position of women in modernity and, frequently, bestowing upon the individual worker a sense of emancipation. This idea of emancipation through work is necessarily complicated by such factors as emotional labour, but is nevertheless still present in office girl texts.

In historicising the understanding of the term 'work' and contextualising it within this late-nineteenth century period, attention must also be paid to shifts in work patterns that came with industrialisation. Raymond Williams has argued that 'work' as a term became specialised in the nineteenth century, newly indicating 'regular paid employment'.[109] A move away from the understanding of work as quite probably seasonal, and towards an expectation of being employed and given a salary by someone who controls productive effort, is traced back by Williams to nineteenth-century industrialisation.[110] This idea of continuous employment being a key definition of work in this period can be seen by the fact that unemployment increasingly became understood as a status, rather than a natural part of the rhythms of work, in the late 1800s.[111] Work changes with the coming of urban modernity, then: as Sos Eltis has argued in discussing this shift in the meaning of work in this

---

[108] Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 4.
[109] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, 1976), p. 335.
[110] Ibid., p. 335.
[111] Krishan Kumar, 'From Work to Employment and Unemployment: the English Experience' in *On Work: Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*, ed. by R. E. Pahl (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 138-164.

period, both the factory worker and the office worker are not selling the products of labour, but the labour itself.[112] This is a Marxist understanding of how industrialised work affects the worker: Marx argued that workers being divorced from the products of their work caused them to feel that the self is divided or denied in work, a condition which Marx described as alienation.[113] The worker's estrangement from the products of their labour, compounded by their work lives being controlled by their employer, instils in the worker a sense of powerlessness. Scholarly interpretations of nineteenth and early twentieth century work frequently build upon Marx's argument concerning the idea of the division of labour and the ensuing distance between the worker and the products of their work that is created, which leads to the individual being negated by work. As Anson Rabinbach has explored, the nineteenth-century concept of 'labour power' indicates how work was abstracted from the individual subject; it emphasises, he suggests, 'expenditure and deployment of energy as opposed to human will, moral purpose, or even technical skill.' [114] The individual, in this understanding, is negated by their work rather than finding a sense of identity through it.

While Marx and subsequent Marxist readings tend to primarily focus on industrial work, the notion of work as potentially alienating or negating the individual has been applied to post-industrial forms of employment in addition, with theories of emotional labour being one key component of such applications. Factory work's division of labour meant that the worker was divorced from the final product and yet the office girl's work is all the more abstracted or alienated from a

[112] Sos Eltis, 'Representing Work' in *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian into Modern*, pp. 463-80 (p. 464).
[113] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), I, p. 34.
[114] Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), p. 4.

straightforward notion of productivity as no material product that is of monetary value is produced. For Allison Pease, scenes of women working in offices in modernist texts repeatedly represent such work as not producing value or creating a sense of selfhood; rather, she suggests, it is portrayed as deeply alienating.[115] However, I would note that the texts I examine vary in the degree to which they describe office work as alienating. Additionally, as noted previously I suggest that another kind of alienation via emotional labour should be considered in order to analyse the specific conditions of the office girl's work. Ultimately office jobs must also be differentiated from factory work: they did not after all involve the manual labour of industrial work – even if they were disparaged as mechanical in terms of the style of work involved.

The degree to which office work was perceived as being akin to other forms of work, manual or mental, has ramifications in understanding how such work was valued, both in economic terms and in personal terms for the worker herself. Positioning office work amidst other types of work becomes all the more complicated when attempting to ascertain the degree to which the role involved some mental labour. The commodification of mental labour in the late nineteenth century was typically associated with the rise of the professional classes. This designation of 'professional' described work that was increasingly based on credentials – alterations to the qualifications of medical practitioners is one key example of the rise of professionalism.[116] As such, this type of work relied less upon the struggle for a share in material production, and instead translated mental labour

[115] Pease, p. 21.
[116] Jennifer Ruth, 'The Victorian Novel and the Professions' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Novel*, ed. by Lisa Rodensky (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2013), pp. 398-411 (p. 399).

into value.[117] Factory workers, as noted, had an increasingly alienated relationship to the economic value of their work due to division of labour, but professional work was not without its own problems concerning its valuation. As Jennifer Ruth underlines, professional work was paradoxically 'functionally inside but symbolically outside the market'.[118] There is a desire, this suggests, on the part of professional workers to see their work as finding its value from a sense of vocation, not tainted by the market – but it necessarily has a relationship to the market. While the office girl has a more obvious relationship to the business world, in some representations of her work there is a similar desire to emphasise other aspects of and motivations for her work. Suggestions that office work involved skill, at least some education, and knowledge convey the importance to the worker of connecting her work to ideals of mental labour. Describing office work in this way is suggestive of the ways in which the office girl wants her role to be seen as respectable and involving intelligence and, thus, how she wishes her work to grant her a particular sense of selfhood.

Novels from this period do not exclusively see work as alienating, instead exploring also work's potential to be self-fulfilling. Morag Shiach has underlined how, as British society becomes industrialised, there is a tension between the 'fragmentation and mechanisation' of labour which lends itself to the 'negation of the individual', and the desire to 'read selfhood in and through the activity of labour.'[119] In texts of this period, as Shiach points out, work's negative qualities are recognised while there still remains a desire to build an identity based on work. Often texts will veer between the two modes of understanding the ramifications of

[117] Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 116; Ruth, p. 400.
[118] Ruth, p. 401.
[119] Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood*, p. 2.

labour. As noted, there is a feeling in some of the texts examined that the woman worker can inherently find meaning in her work because it represents progression in women's position. Threaded through novels of office girls is the aspiration for meaningful work, and moments in which this seems attainable. Martha Vicinus has described how many women in this period believed strongly that paid work could be 'redeeming', giving 'dignity and independence.'[120] The emphasis is split between the fulfilment found in work itself, and the significance for women of the independence that a wage brings. Olive Schreiner, writing in 1911, advocated against 'sex-parasitism' – that is, women not undertaking paid employment and instead having to rely on men to live.[121] Allowing women to work and to enter all spheres of labour was necessary, Schreiner argued: indeed, she suggested to do so would be natural, as in 'savage' times women always worked.[122] Images of degeneration versus the healthy, energetic woman working recur in Schreiner's text; the association between degeneration and modernity is not unusual, but Schreiner's application of such an association to the unemployed woman demonstrates an interesting use of nostalgia for the figure of the working woman in order to suggest work is vital to her well-being.[123] In an era in which many forms of work were being cast as self-negating, there was nonetheless a determination that paid employment could grant not only economic independence but also a fuller sense of selfhood.

Fiction about the women office worker frequently presents a tension between her being independent, emancipated and adventurous, or being repressed or exploited by her work. Moreover, the fiction frequently fails to resolve this tension.

---

[120] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985), p. 6.
[121] Olive Schreiner, *Woman and Labour* (London: Virago, 1978), p. 77.
[122] Ibid., p. 34.
[123] Ibid., p. 121.

Some recent critical texts have noted this tendency in office girl fiction to vacillate between representing her job as deadening or emancipating.[124] In this thesis I will extend such critical analysis by contextualising such debates via such categories as emotional labour, noting how this contributes to the alienation of the typist. Moreover, while emotional labour in the public sphere is a duty distinct to modern jobs, and thus is a component of the characters' modernised femininity, it nevertheless is typically represented as repressive and a way in which to associate office girls with the domestic. The edited collection *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture*, which examines both real and fictional secretaries, poses the question:

> Was the secretary a sexually adventurous, independent feminist, or an economically depressed drudge looking for a way back into domesticity via marriage? What stories about the female bourgeois subject made these two seem like mutually exclusive options?[125]

As Thurschwell and Price suggest the dialectic presented here was hardly absolute, even if these options might appear mutually exclusive. This conflict in the office girl's representation is often dwelt upon via the way in which fictional representations of the office girl typically portray her as adamantly independent while also noting her poor wage. Significantly, however, these narratives underplay the near-impossible task female office workers would face in supporting themselves on their wages, as this would detract from the emancipation that is key in the portrayal of these characters. Emotional labour, I suggest, is one particular part of the office girl's role not previously examined that also complicates interpretations of her job. These conflicting, competing representations which might seem theoretically mutually exclusive thus frequently coalesce in the figure of the office girl, with authors attempting to navigate these tensions. Embodying seemingly contradictory

[124] See Price and Thurschwell, 'Introduction' in *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture*; Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture*, p. 58.
[125] Price and Thurschwell, 'Introduction' in *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture*, p. 7.

positions, the office girl is deployed not exclusively to portray an ideal of work, but rather to represent a more everyday, typical experience of work which can be at once frustrating and nonetheless beneficial.

Motivations for working usually impact the experience of work: the office girl's strong focus on independence encompasses the desire for a living wage, but also for an identity realised through work. The office girl's labours are frequently a necessity: as Lawrence Rainey has pointed out, in a significant number of texts about female office workers the protagonist is an orphan, needing to earn her own wage.[126] Rainey argues that this trope functions as an excuse for work, in which a naive middle class young woman – typically, she is orphaned later in life, and was not necessarily expecting to have to work – is uprooted into the modernity of the marketplace.[127] Yet, while their being orphans grants a certain vulnerability to these characters, as Rainey himself points out these women have a great degree of agency as they are also outside of parental control; he argues that the reader can choose to lay emphasis on the idea that the typist is either working out of necessity, or because she enjoys working.[128] But while Rainey suggests that this trope is what might inform a 'genre' of secretarial fiction, I suggest that this complication of motivations cannot be viewed separately from the everyday experience of work that office girl novels are invested in portraying. Rather, such motivations must be examined alongside the experience of such work – its mundanity, which is coupled with exploitative emotional labour – and together, these factors can be understood to further problematise understandings of work as simply vocational or aspirational. I also critique the notion that one can solely emphasise the idea of working out of

[126] Rainey, 'Secretarial Fiction', p. 308.
[127] Ibid., p. 327.
[128] Ibid., p. 327.

necessity rather than choice as I show that the ambitious nature of the office girl is always present in these texts, even if the goal of their ambitions switches and changes, and even if such ambitions exist within straitened circumstances.

The question of the degree to which the office girl could be fulfilled by her work seems to hinge also, for several critics, on the complex effects of the new gendering of the job and the concomitant sexualisation of the office girl. Yet critics do not consider as part of this sexualisation and feminisation the significance of emotional labour. The feminisation of clerical roles was so emphatic that Jonathan Wild's book concerning male clerks in this era features extensive discussion of contemporary anxieties concerning the clerk's masculinity, or lack thereof.[129] As the role of the typist and telegraph worker became increasingly feminised, these women workers were also sexualised, rendered an object for consumption by their male colleagues. While some office girl characters are represented as happily entering relationships with these colleagues, there are instances too of sexual harassment occurring in the intimate office space, or in the city streets on their commute home. Morag Shiach has suggested that the typist's selfhood is restricted by her sexualisation, ensuring her work is ultimately alienating.[130] Yet, as Mullin has pointed out, this sexualisation does not overwhelm the challenging nature of the woman in the office.[131] Mullin argues that the working girls she writes about, including office girls, are portrayed as more 'palatable, accessible, and compelling' as an envisioning of emancipation because they are more glamorous and often less politically didactic than the New Woman.[132] They do not simply moderate the threat

[129] Jonathan Wild, *The Rise of the Office Clerk in Literary Culture, 1880-1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
[130] Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood*, p. 77.
[131] Mullin, p. 8.
[132] Ibid., p. 5.

of the New Woman by being sexualised, but serve to make the figure of the New Woman more seductive, and are thus nonetheless radical.[133] Similarly, Keep has noted how the attractive nature of the typewriter girl serves to overcome anxieties concerning the middle-class working woman; although he is less optimistic than Mullin about the ramifications of this, he does suggest this offers a 'prospect of agency'.[134] While the sexualisation of the office girl can be troubling because it reduces her to an object, detracting from the sense of work as enabling self-realisation, it does not entirely take away from her sense of agency and in some narratives there are additionally intriguing recognitions of the office girl's own desires. In this vein, as Lawrence Rainey points out, certain texts which involve office women having pre-marital sex attempt to revise the Victorian convention of the 'fallen woman', or at least try to reveal the 'baleful effects' of an ideology that informs the fallen woman plot.[135] As such, texts about the office girl indicate, at least in certain instances, a degree of sympathy and even frankness in the portrayal of feminine sexuality. She is objectified but not lacking in desire herself.

While the impact of the office girl's sexuality and sexualisation upon her work has been analysed by a number of critics, I suggest it is also necessary to consider her affective labour when contemplating intimate office relationships. Connecting arguments concerning sexualisation to affective labour furthers the understanding of the intimacy of office work and the effects such work has. In particular affective labour is shown to potentially lead to a distorted sense of relationships and intimacy, as well as to troubling instances of self-repression. Management of emotions can carry over into romantic relationships, further

---

[133] Ibid., p. 8.
[134] Keep, 'The Cultural Work of the Type-Writer Girl', p. 404.
[135] Lawrence Rainey, 'From the Fallen Woman to the Fallen Typist, 1908-1922', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920,* 52.3 (2009), 273-297 (p. 294).

affecting the identity of the office girl. This understanding of work's impact upon the worker through emotional labour, which I explore further in Chapters Two and Three, thus complicates the idea of work creating or aiding the development of selfhood.

Even when work proves disappointing, the office girl continues to be characterised as distinctly ambitious. As Lyn Pykett has noted, New Woman fiction explores ideas of feminine ambition; these tend not to be simply stories of female heroism – nor, when ambitions fail, are these stories designed to contain the feminine.[136] Rather they are intended to show the complexities of the feminine experience in late-nineteenth century Britain. While Pykett is discussing more aspirational, creative professions, I extend Pykett's arguments by suggesting that such comments regarding ambition can be applied to office girl narratives too. However, I note that office girl narratives are further complicated as ambition is connected not only to work, but also to desires for alternative forms of work, or escape from work, and so serves to underline the office girl's complicated relationship to her labour. Characterised by her hopes for the future but often frustrated in her aspirations, the office girl is ambitious in her work and hopeful for the self-fulfilment it might grant her but her ambitions also extend beyond her everyday, mundane job.

The expansion in choice of employment at the end of the nineteenth century indicated social transformations; as such, work in office girl novels is typically portrayed as indicating both political progress, and granting a personal sense of emancipation to the individual worker. Yet, the experience of work is not entirely positive: there is a sense as with other forms of industrial work that with its division

[136] Pykett, 'Portraits of the artist as a young woman', p. 148.

of labour and separation from the product of labour, office jobs can create in the worker a sense of alienation. Particular to the office girl was the alienation caused by the requirement for emotional labour: carefully managing her own feelings and those of her colleagues, she could become alienated from her own emotions as she necessarily developed the ability to manipulate them. The office girl's position is further complicated by her recurrent sexualisation, with objectification potentially compounding the feeling of alienation that elements of her work give her. Moreover, office romances – a recurrent trope in these texts – are also distorted by her affective labour, which warps and changes her relationships with her colleagues. Emotional labour thus affects both the experience of work, but also the office girl's relations with others; additionally, her sense of herself as part of a bourgeoning mass of typists contributes to her relations with others in the same profession.

THE INDIVIDUAL VS. THE CROWD

In novels concerning the office girl there is frequently a conflict within such texts between wanting to portray office girl characters as part of a coherent, politicised collective, and to single out exceptional individuals who seem superior to their work. Often, this is conveyed as a conflict between the individual and the crowd, or mass of typists; and via this conflict comes the sense that not everyone is able to access the possibility of attaining emancipation, or a more aspirational form of work. The idea of office girls as a collective is expressed particularly in journals: sometimes this idea is framed in terms of a politicised collective, in other instances it is simply portrayed as the desire to discuss with other office girls their experience of their work. Either way, a sense of unity amongst office girls is expressed. However, in office girl novels a protagonist is singled out. This may in part be simply due to

conventional novel structure, but it nevertheless also often leads to a sense that the protagonist is exceptional, displaying some kind of particular genius or talent – frequently, this is expressed through a move from mechanical typing to becoming an author, and displaying a skill for a more creative kind of writing. Novels typically display such talents as either an inherent aptitude of the protagonist, or as being due to a particularly impressive education, but in either case, there is a sense that opportunities beyond the office are not necessarily available to all. This tension between the individual and the collective is akin to that between major and minor characters. Alex Woloch has noted that this tension is often, in nineteenth-century novels, consciously expressive of the lack of interconnection inherent to the busy city.[137] Extending this argument specifically to office girl novels I note that this tension between major and minor character is all the more fraught due to the proto-feminist desire for collectivity expressed in these office girl texts. Nevertheless, in spite of these fraught relations, in some novels hope is expressed for the close connection that can be brought by the technologies of the typewriter and telegraph that the office girl deploys. Extending beyond relations between office colleagues, the connections brought by technology and the woman using it suggest the possibility of making communities all the more intimately interrelated.

The sense that office girls shared a collective identity was expressed in journals such as *The Typist's Gazette*, which described itself as being aimed at the 'ever-increasing army of Typists'.[138] This journal, which has not been examined in critical works on office girls thus far, was established in 1896; clearly, there was a notion that office girls made up a discernable market, and, moreover, the creation of

[137] Alex Woloch, *The One vs. The Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 233.
[138] 'Salutation', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.1, July 16 1896, p. 3.

the journal shows a feeling that they were invested enough in their identity as typists to purchase this periodical. Discussions were published about the experience of being an office girl, which included articles concerning discrimination faced in the office; jokes about the office world; tips regarding how to become a more accomplished typist; and competitions, such as a regular feature challenging typists to create images just using their typewriters. Mentions of unions were made in these articles, but the collective was not necessarily politicised in this sense: indeed, another journal, *The Woman Worker*, lamented office girls' reluctance to unionise. Women's willingness to take the salaries they were offered, whether 'good, bad' or 'indifferent' was a source of contention, and some condemned office girls for taking 'pocket money' salaries because they could live at home.[139] Several letters to *The Woman Worker* implored women to join the National Union of Clerks.[140] Some acknowledgement of women's reasons for not unionising were made, especially regarding how under-cutting male wages was key to their getting hired at all.[141] Even if not necessarily advocating for unionising, discussions of ensuring fair treatment and conditions in offices were explored in *The Typist's Gazette*.[142]

But even when not taking part in a more formalised political collective, there is a sense purveyed within these journals of comradeship or sisterhood. Barbara Green, following Lauren Berlant's idea of the 'intimate public', has explored how periodical culture acts as an interface between everyday life and feminist

[139] 'Mimi', 'Thoughtless Women Clerks', *The Woman Worker*, 18, October 2 1908, p. 454; Annie C. Tyler, 'Are Women Selfish?', *The Woman Worker*, 19, October 19 1908, p. 468.
[140] See, for instance, 'Manchester Typist', 'Letter to the Editor', *The Woman Worker*, 26, November 29 1909, p. 647; National Union of Clerks, 'Letter to the Editor', *The Woman Worker*, 3, January 20 1909, p. 63.
[141] 'Women Clerks', *The Woman Worker,* 17, September 25 1908, p. 438.
[142] 'Fair Typists and their Treatment', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.13, October 8 1896, p. 269.

communities.[143] For Berlant, the 'intimate public' is an 'affective scene of identification amongst strangers' involving 'recognition and sympathy between nondominant groups'; the emphasis here is on sympathy and understanding, rather than a political collective as such.[144] Such scenes can be seen in these periodicals of the office girl: while there is mention of some political issues, primarily these articles allowed typists to recognise and help form their group identity and bond over such an identity as a collective.

While trade journals indicate a hope for collectivity, novels typically single out an individual, often exceptionally talented office girl who is superior to her mundane work as their protagonist. In part this stems from the requirement of novel structure, which tends to be suited to portraying an individual main character and their ensuing development. Nevertheless, as I explore further in Chapter One, there are usually other typists established as minor characters in such novels. When this is coupled with an expression of hope for a feminist collective, there tends to be a tension expressed between the collective and the exceptional individual: while all hope for self-fulfilment and emancipation via work, when an exceptional protagonist outstrips her colleagues in terms of ability and, potentially, success, there seems to be a suggestion that such aspirational goals are not available to all. In Chapter One I note this occurs in particular with regards to a transition being made by a central character from mechanical typing to creative writing.

This differentiation between the individual office girl and the crowd of typists is not necessarily the hierarchical differentiation between typist and secretary

---

[143] Barbara Green, 'Complaints of Everyday Life: Feminist Periodical Culture and Correspondence Columns in *The Woman Worker*, *Women Folk* and *The Freewoman*', *Modernism/modernity*, 19.3 (2012), 461-85 (p. 465).
[144] Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), p. viii; Green, p. 465.

which has been noted by other critics; indeed, often the individual protagonist is in a more lowly-regarded, typist role.[145] Instead, I argue that the more significant conflict being established is that between the individual and the mass of typists and these novels explore the concomitant issues regarding collectivity that this suggests. While the exceptional individual office girl may not always attain her goals, she nevertheless has the potential to fulfil her ambitions for creative or politically meaningful work; for others, this seems to not be an option.

The distinction between the individual and the crowd is, then, also that of the distinction between major and minor character. As Alex Woloch has discussed in connection to nineteenth century novels, minor characters can serve to highlight the experience of the modern city.[146] Specifically, there is a tension between the massification of the densely populated modern city, in which people are 'packed' into the same space, and the 'dispersion, fragmentation' of people in the city which Woloch associates with urban modernity. [147] This tension, he argues, is conveyed through the tension between major and minor characters in nineteenth century novels.[148] I extend and apply this argument specifically to office girl characters, whose individuality is in tension with the idea of a collective in the texts I examine. Further to this, as I explore in Chapter Five, there is the strong potential for minor characters to slip into stereotypes or, to use E.M. Forster's terms, flat characters. Such use of stereotypes exacerbates the sense of 'fragmentation' between people that Woloch notes, as it suggests the difficulty of knowing others deeply within the urban environment. As I argue with relation to the typists of James Joyce, when characters

[145] Price, 'Grant Allen's Impersonal Secretaries', p. 132; Thurschwell, 'Supple Minds and Automatic Hands', p. 160.
[146] Woloch, p. 233.
[147] Ibid., p. 222.
[148] Ibid., p. 222.

are glimpsed at only briefly and understood by other characters largely through the stereotype into which they seem to fit, a deep disconnection between characters is established and the difficulty of knowing others in the busy city environment is made clear.

While there is a tension or even conflict between the individual office girl and the mass of typists, some office girl texts express optimism about the interconnections and relationships which are enabled by the technologies used by typists and telegraph workers. Firstly, the connection between office girl and machine is emphasised; and in turn, this close relationship between bodies and technologies turns into a way of examining how technologies can also aid close connections between individuals. There is, as noted in my previous discussion of Friedrich Kittler, a tradition of desexualising and disembodying the individual working with the machine. Like Kittler, others have argued that the mechanised writing produced by such machines leads to a sense that writing has been disembodied for the writer: that is, the absence of individualised handwriting, replaced by standardised typeface, estranges writing from the self. Heidegger commented, 'The typewriter tears writing from the essential realm of the hand, i.e. the realm of the world.'[149] The disconnection between hand and writing, made clear through the mechanised letters of the typed document, disrupts the relationship between body and world, and language and world. There is a focus in Heidegger's comment upon the space in which technology and body join through the attention which is drawn to the hand rather than the body as a whole, but the effects of the touch on a typewriter are not individualised as they would be in writing by hand,

[149] Qtd. in Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 198.

according to Heidegger. Yet, the typewriter itself — especially early models — did not necessarily create entirely uniform writing. This fact is exploited in some nineteenth-century detective fiction in which typewriting is shown to have individual nuances as I explore further in Chapter Two. These individual nuances occur through machine malfunctions; through the wearing out of a machine; through individual inclinations to certain typos; or, as is consistently cautioned against in typewriter instructions, through uneven touch by the typist.[150]

Following on from Heidegger, and also neglecting to mention the potential for individuation in machine-writing, Mark Seltzer suggests that the

> typewriter, like the telegraph, replaces, or pressures, that fantasy of continuous transition [between self and writing] with the recalcitrantly visible and material systems of difference: with the standardised spacing of keys and letters.[151]

Seltzer suggests that through the switch to mechanised letters, the typewriter and the telegraph disrupt the myth that language is closely associated with the body, in particular the individual body; they reveal, he argues, a condition of alienation from the world. Morag Shiach similarly argues that the typewriter makes clear the 'staging of language as process, as structure, as apart from the self.'[152] Certainly, this shift to mechanised writing is regarded with some anxiety in texts about office girls. Yet I argue this apparent estrangement of the self from language hardly seems as total as these critics suggest: self-expression occurs through writing, including typed writing, for some of the female office workers I discuss. Moreover, the distinctly embodied, sensory experience of working with machines troubles the disembodiment that

---

[150] Louisa Ellen Barnes, *How to Become Expert in Typewriting: A Complete Instructor* (St Louis, MO: Arthur J. Barnes, 1890), p. v.
[151] Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 10.
[152] Morag Shiach, 'Modernity, labour and the typewriter' in *Modernist Sexualities*, ed. by Hugh Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 114-29 (p. 115).

critics such as Kittler and Seltzer emphasise in their arguments regarding technologies.

Within these considerations of the relationship between human and machine in literature, there is a recurring preoccupation with the body-machine relation. While Kittler focuses upon a feeling of disembodiment, there is an alternative critical tradition highlighting a distinctly embodied sense of the human-machine relationship. Typically, this is figured through an idea of technologies as prosthesis. For Tim Armstrong, machines bring about both 'a fragmentation and augmentation of the body', suggesting technology can highlight that the body is lacking or imperfect, but also offer the possibility of compensating for this lack.[153] This can include literal prosthesis, but also devices like the typewriter – initially designed for the blind, notably.[154] Hal Foster has similarly identified what he dubs the 'double logic of prosthesis', whereby the body and machine 'conjoin, ecstatically or torturously' and technology can be a '"magnificent" extension of the body or a "troubled" constriction of it.'[155] The notion of technology as prosthesis, particularly in its positive sense, can be traced back to media theorist Marshall McLuhan's 1964 book *Understanding Media*, in which he argued that media technologies are extensions of man.[156] McLuhan's description of technologies as prosthesis is distinctly andro-centric in its approach, but this notion of an embodied interaction with technologies presents an understanding of the relationship between technology and human as symbiotic.

---

[153] Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology and the Body: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 3.
[154] Ibid., p, 3.
[155] Hal Foster, 'Prosthetic Gods', *Modernism/modernity*, 4.2 (1997), 5-38 (p. 5).
[156] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Sphere Books, 1964), p. 11.

The sensory experience of interacting with technological objects emphasises this entwined and embodied relationship. Typing or working with a telegraph entails use of muscle memory and a distinct awareness of touch, after all. As Colette Colligan and Margaret Linley have argued, technologies can retune the senses, and the body and technology thus become 'enmeshed'.[157] This idea concerning the interaction of bodies and machines can be understood as technologies serving to alter bodies. For Keep, touch-typing has a negative effect as the typewriter 'supplements and extends the capacities of the natural body' but in doing so it 'dismembers it'.[158] Working with the machine, Keep suggests, alters the typist's body – and, he believes, does so in a negative and violent way, rendering her an 'absence' who is simply a 'conduit for information'.[159] Keep's focus on how the body interacts with the machine ultimately concludes with ideas of disembodiment. Yet, the encounter of bodies and technologies need not necessarily involve violence but can offer potential improvements to the body and its abilities. This development of skill also alters the office girl's sense of her own identity which can be newly invested in her position as a worker, conducting a role she can potentially take pride in.

The 'enmeshed' relationship of bodies and technologies can be seen as a blurring of boundaries that opens up the possibility of a new or altered sense of identity. Katherine Hayles, discussing twenty-first century technologies and the idea of the posthuman, has noted that notions of boundaries between human and machine being breached have led to anxieties about the dissolution of the self; yet, she suggests that such a breach could be seen as the creation of a 'distributed system'

---

[157] Colette Colligan and Margaret Linley, 'Introduction: The Nineteenth-Century Invention of Media' in *Media, Technology and Literature in the Nineteenth Century: Image, Sound, Touch*, ed. by Colette Colligan and Margaret Linley (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1-22 (p. 4).
[158] Christopher Keep, 'Blinded by the Type: Gender and Information Technology at the Turn of the Century', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts,* 23.1 (2001), 149-73 (p. 159).
[159] Ibid., p. 159.

incorporating human and machine, enabling the 'full expression of human capability'.[160] This isn't to suggest such boundaries entirely collapse: she is careful to explain, 'there is a limit to how seamlessly humans can be articulated with intelligent machines, which remain distinctively different from humans in their embodiments.'[161] Rather, these boundaries are complicated, or at times make the human and machine interconnected. This nuance is worth emphasising, as here Hayles differs significantly from Kittler: she accentuates rather than abandons the idea of embodiment, and Hayles goes on to argue that the human-machine interaction can in fact entail 'extending embodied awareness'.[162] Thus for Hayles the posthuman subject has revised liberal conceptions of the human through focusing on interactions between human and machine; but, she argues, in posthumanist theory embodiment must be written back into the picture of the subject.[163] As Laura Otis has suggested in the context of applying such theories to nineteenth-century texts, the opening up of boundaries in Hayles' theory suggests the possibility of individuals being more closely interconnected, forming part of a network.[164] This network is composed of connections between humans and technologies, and individuals who are connected via machines.

Technologies thus also offer figurations of more closely intertwined and networked individuals which allow for a positive interpretation of the individual office girl's relationship to the crowd. Communication technologies are made use of in literature to envision how individuals can become more easily and quickly connected to one another. The telegraph is perhaps the more obvious device to

[160] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 290.
[161] Ibid., p. 284.
[162] Ibid., p. 290.
[163] Ibid., p. xiv.
[164] Laura Otis, *Networking: Communicating with Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), p. 221.

analyse in this regard. Richard Menke has argued that the speed and ubiquity of communication through the telegraph offers a figure for 'connections of interest and intersubjectivity that linked the members of a society'.[165] The telegraph heightens connectivity between individuals, and leads to new formations of intersubjectivity. Menke explains that, in his usage, intersubjectivity refers to the notion that consciousness can exist outside or between people.[166] Communication technologies which 'register thought across vast distances' serve to 'relocate consciousness in the electric pulses of the network'.[167] Adopting the term intersubjectivity from Menke, I revise this idea somewhat as narratives of office girls do not necessarily veer to this extreme of a shared consciousness: however, I explore how this term can be used to describe the interconnections between individuals which are heightened by communication technologies.

Intersubjectivity as a term thus allows for an understanding of how subjectivity is socially formed and not entirely self-contained. As Nick Crossley suggests, 'subjects come into being within a common world: subjectivity is intersubjective'.[168] In novels, focus upon communication technologies aids exploration of intersubjectivity thanks to the ways in which such technologies connect individuals. The connection brought by technologies in these texts is not an inherent feature of such technologies; rather, they offer the opportunity for this interchange and in novels they often become a vehicle for such interchange. These technologies can, after all, also problematise communication and add confusion, and the difficulty in understanding others that is created by communication technologies

[165] Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 6.
[166] This is derived, as Menke explains, from Sharon Cameron's understanding of consciousness in the fiction of Henry James. Ibid., p. 201-2.
[167] Ibid., p. 202.
[168] Crossley, p. 28.

is also frequently a feature of texts about women working in offices. Nevertheless, novels of the office also deploy technologies in order to explore the potentials of heightened interconnection. Similarly to Menke, Laura Otis has examined the ways in which communication systems are figured in nineteenth-century fiction, noting the recurrence of figurations that compare bodily nets and nerves and the networks of communication devices.[169] In these figurations, sympathy and connection are emphasised; individuals are defined as transmitters rather than isolated, 'bounded cells'.[170] While Menke and Otis focus on the telegraph, I extend this discussion to the typewriter. Typewriters were of course used for communication via the transcription of letters, and typists typically learned shorthand – the inventor of which, Isaac Pitman, felt had 'revolutionary potential' to be a universal written language aiding communication and our ability to understand and sympathise with others.[171] As such, I note the importance of how these technologies further enable exchange between individuals, and are regularly deployed in texts to indicate interchange and sympathy. I will connect this also to my arguments concerning emotional labour, particularly in Chapter Two, noting how this sympathy is a component of the office girl's affective labour. As part of these portrayals of technologies in office girl narratives, then, new models of intricate connections between individuals are created.

If communication technologies can aid the traversing of boundaries between individuals, technologies are also made use of as a vehicle for exploring how boundaries between identity categories can be blurred. Such a blurring of boundaries between humans and technologies is explored most famously in Donna Haraway's

[169] Otis, p. 2.
[170] Ibid., p 221.
[171] Helen Groth, 'The Soundscapes of Henry Mayhew: Urban Ethnography and Technologies of Transcription', *Cultural Studies*, 18.3 (December 2012), 109-30 (p. 118).

'Cyborg Manifesto', in which the cyborg is a metaphorical figure who contradicts notions of technological innovation as the 'illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism'.[172] Instead, the cyborg represents the '*pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries', leading us to recognise too our '*responsibility*' to be aware of the construction of the boundaries by which we establish identity.[173] Specifically, Haraway is referring to boundaries between human and animal; between organism and machine; and between physical and non-physical. There is a 'leaky distinction' between these categories, she contends, and we must work to deconstruct such dualistic ways of perceiving subjects.[174] This is not, as it has sometimes been treated, a vision of a transhumanist, post-gender utopian dream of techno-enhancement.[175] Instead, the cyborg is used as a trope to resist ideas of the organic wholeness of the human subject in order to recognise the significance of identities that can be 'contradictory' or 'partial'. Using the example of women of colour not seeing themselves reflected in predominantly white Anglo-American feminist spaces, Haraway asserts the significance of recognising intersectional identities.[176] So too the cyborg challenges traditional views of the human-machine relationship as alienating, with technology as an industry dominated by men; gendered female, the cyborg is portrayed as an empowering, politicised and embodied figure.

This affinity between human and technology is not only applicable to the twentieth- and twenty-first century technologies Hayles and Haraway discuss. These recent understandings of technologies can be useful for thinking through the

---

[172] Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991), pp. 149-82 (p. 151), original emphasis.
[173] Ibid., p. 150.
[174] Ibid., p. 152.
[175] Nicholas Gane, 'When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done?: Interview with Donna Haraway', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 23.7-8 (2006), 135-58 (p. 140).
[176] Haraway, p. 155-8.

representation of machines in nineteenth-century literature, as Tamara Ketabgian has argued. She contends that factory machines lived a rich figurative life, whose 'regulation of fire, coal and steam' led them to be perceived as 'living instinctive organisms' which allied them more closely with the human body.[177] As with a number of critics mentioned above, she suggests we can examine the relationship between individuals and machines through the figure of prosthesis. Ketabgian traces back the historical meanings of 'prosthesis' to argue it didn't necessarily indicate a 'lack' in the self, simply an addition, so the idea of human-machine relation as prosthesis could indicate 'human amplification and self-perfection'.[178] She argues that in Harriet Martineau's writings on women in factories there seems to be a suggestion of how interaction with the machine leads to 'superhuman skills and strengths', and indeed perhaps the 'feminine tolerance for bodily manipulation' makes them especially well-suited for interaction with the machine.[179] While Ketabgian discusses factory machines, her idea of a technology representing skill and strength can also be applied to narratives of workers interacting with typewriters and telegraphs. Moreover, the recurring argument in narratives of office girls that women are especially adept at working with and adapting to such technologies is indicative of how, with time, the identity of these office girls becomes intertwined with their machine.

A focus on the New Woman and technologies reveals a close relationship between the two, an affinity exploited in literature to connote ideas of progress and modernity for women, as well as to explore their ability to connect with others. Such technologies enable, too, the entry of women into new spaces such as the office, as

---

[177] Tamara Ketabgian, *The Lives of Machines: The Industrial Imaginary in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 2.
[178] Ibid., p. 29.
[179] Ibid., p. 37.

Lena Wånggren has recently argued in her study of New Woman fiction and technology, which examines typewriters, bicycles and medical tools. Wånggren avoids technologically deterministic readings such as those that are found in Friedrich Kittler's work, noting how Kittler has a tendency to erase individuals and social movements in his arguments.[180] Because of this, Wånggren argues that Kittler's arguments ignore the agency of the person using the machine.[181] This is an especially significant omission, she contends, when discussing women interacting with technologies as the idea of agency is highly important to understanding women's history and the development of feminism.[182] As such, Wånggren notes that there is 'no inherent emancipatory value in technologies themselves': instead, we must focus on 'how specific technologies are employed or taken up in a social context' and therefore can be used in emancipatory ways.[183] Wånggren's primary focus in her book is technologies; I will add an additional nuance to my own analysis of office girls and their technologies through focusing on this topic via the concept of intersubjectivity. I will offer a further development of this topic by linking it back to theories of emotional labour, and will also provide a fresh perspective on the relationship between the office girl and her technologies through connecting the use of such technologies to the everyday, repetitive nature of the office girl's work.

The office girl's relationships with others of the same profession are often framed in novels as a single, exceptional individual versus a crowd. There is a hope expressed in such texts, and in journals, regarding a proto-feminist sense of collectivity, and as part of this a desire to see the mass advancement of these women through their entry into the workplace. However, such advancement is limited for

[180] Wånggren, p. 42.
[181] Ibid., p. 42.
[182] Ibid., p. 28.
[183] Ibid., p. 29.

some women, as certain exceptional office girls are indicated to have the ability to ultimately conduct more clearly creative and politically meaningful work. The fragmentation of the hoped-for collectives is made clear in part by the differentiation between major and minor characters, and in some texts this differentiation is emphasised, played with or even questioned in order to expose this disconnect. Yet, when focusing in particular on the office girl and her technologies, a more positive valence is made clear: in this instance, the individual connects not simply with a crowd of her colleagues, but a more generalised mass of others. This is a component of her required emotional labour, which necessitates expressions of sympathy and close communication. The office girl is thus in certain texts rendered a more interconnected individual whose identity is informed by technology, and who is part of a network of humans and machines.

Across the chapters of my thesis I analyse a range of authors, choosing texts that are representative of the key concerns and themes that cluster around literary representations of female office workers. Some of the texts chosen have been discussed in prior scholarship regarding office girls; however, I also look at texts which are less familiar in this context, including Rebecca West's *The Judge*, Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* and Mina Loy's 'Eros of Offices', as well as periodicals such as *The Typist's Gazette*, making use of these lesser known texts to provide novel perspectives on more canonical works. Moreover, I provide new frameworks and contexts through which to examine such texts: this encompasses ideas concerning emotional labour; daydream and *la perruque* as a way of introducing moments of creativity and freedom to the workday; and the conflict

between the individual and the crowd. Through this contextualising, I provide fresh analysis of office girl literature.

In Chapter One I will focus on issues around the meanings of work, and women's work in particular, exploring the tension between an ambitious desire for a career and the disappointing experience of often-dull office work in texts by George Gissing, Grant Allen and Ivy Low. As part of their analysis of the typist, these authors analyse the potentially too-close relationship between the mechanised writing of the typist and the process of creative writing for a market; this, in turn, leads to an examination of the individual, especially talented typist being contrasted to the mass of typists, and the concerns regarding the difficulty of maintaining a hoped-for collective that manifest from this. Foregrounding issues around the meanings of work, George Gissing's *The Odd Women* (1893) is an early example of a literary representation of typing work. Gissing's thematic concern with work is highlighted by the title of this text, which alludes to single 'odd' women who were unable to find male partners and must find work instead. Gissing was a reader of New Woman fiction; similarly, Grant Allen was interested in the figure of the New Woman and became well known for the scandal surrounding his controversial New Woman novel *The Woman Who Did* (1895).[184] Allen's *The Type-writer Girl* (1897) transplants the New Woman figure to the office, and all the more explicitly highlights the conflicts and similarities between mechanical and creative writing. Ivy Low, whose novel *The Questing Beast* (1914) I examine alongside Gissing and Allen, provides a more personal perspective as she was once a typist herself, but she shares a similar concern for the meanings of women's work and the portrayal of

[184] Emma Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman, and Urban Culture* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), p. xix.

feminine ambitions for a more creative kind of writing.[185] Indeed, while Low's text was published much later than those of Gissing and Allen, she read and admired Gissing's novel: the ending of *The Questing Beast* clearly alludes to *The Odd Women*, inviting comparison between her own text and that of Gissing.[186]

Moving in Chapter Two to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), a highly popular Gothic novel, might seem a departure from the texts of my first chapter, and one that also entails a shift in focus from the waged to the unwaged typist. But *Dracula* incorporates a range of technologies including the typewriter, the telegraph and the gramophone and becomes, as Richard Menke has described, a kind of 'bureaucratic romance of information management' as it is Gothic and strange, but also rooted the in use of mundane office technologies.[187] In this chapter I will analyse the relationship between body and technology, noting the ways in which technology is constitutive of identity. In particular, I will argue that when the office girl's mechanical work is coupled with her emotional labour, a less self-contained, more interconnected form of identity is explored. In *Dracula*, the vampire-hunting collective is unified by the labours of Mina Harker, who transcribes individual narratives into a single document and whose emotional labour works to bring the group together. The typist, coupled with the technologies she uses, is central to the construction of this intimately connected collective.

The relationships of office girls are a frequent concern of these texts, then, and in Chapter Three I will further explore ideas concerning the office girl and her emotional labour through an analysis of the use of the marriage plot in texts about the office girl. Frequently in office girl narratives a career plot is disrupted by a

[185] John Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), p. 36.
[186] Ibid., p. 18.
[187] Menke, p. 10.

marriage plot but I argue that this is not a conservative reversion to traditional narrative form in order to send the woman back to the private sphere. Rather, the desire for both marriage and career is fraught with difficulty: authors of these texts naturalise the desire for both, while recognising the societal realities that make achieving both difficult. Moreover, the affective labour involved in an office girl's work further complicates her experience of intimacy. Rebecca West's *The Judge* (1922), Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* (1919), and Arnold Bennett's *Lilian* (1922) all provide explorations of this conflict between love and work, with varying degrees of optimism. West's novel is the primary focus of this chapter; although her feminist journalism attested to the importance of both career and intimate relationships for women, her fictional treatment of this issue is more pessimistic.[188]

In Chapter Four I turn to another form of escape from work through arguing that the office girl's moments of distraction and daydream can be seen as a version of Certeau's *la perruque*. Henry James's short story 'In the Cage' (1898) is considered alongside Dorothy Richardson's novel sequence *Pilgrimage*, with a particular focus on *The Tunnel* (1919). Both authors had their own connection with secretarial work – James as the employer of typists, and Richardson through her own work as a dentist's secretary. Their experience with this type of work contributes to their special focus on the mundane, everyday experiences of office workers. In particular, these authors focus on how the office girl's attention fluctuates throughout the day. To analyse in particular fears about the limitations of the capacity of attention I will outline contemporary medical understandings of attention, noting the concern that loss of attention is indicative of societal degeneration. I will especially concentrate on notions of habit and automatic

[188] See Rebecca West, *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982).

behaviour, a subject which is treated with more ambivalence and even positivity by William James. The office girl, I argue, is an especially suitable subject for portraying these understandings of attention. Cultivating habit allows for freedom of mind for other tasks; in office girl texts, automatic attention permits a drift of mind to daydream and fantasy, more pleasurable and creative forms of work which subtly subvert the mandates of the workday.

In Chapter Five James Joyce's typists in *Ulysses* (1922) and the short story 'The Boarding House' (1914) will lead to an analysis of what happens to the typist character when she is no longer a protagonist, and has developed into a well-known 'type' or even stereotype in fiction. In Joyce's texts, the typist becomes an all the more narrow type, characterised primarily by her exaggerated sexualisation. While Joyce's methods of characterisation are distinct from many of the other texts explored in this thesis, he is deliberately borrowing a character type from realist fiction. Thus, I suggest he is self-consciously deploying a stereotype. This use of stereotype, with its particular emphasis on the office girl's distinct sexualisation, is used to think through how individuals tend to judge the sexuality of others as well as how we perform our own sexual identity. Joyce's typists are made use of to confront the idea of character tropes collapsing into stereotypes, and I suggest how this stereotyping is rooted the difficulty of knowing others in the overwhelming environment of urban modernity. This connects also to aforementioned issues of the individual and the crowd: in Joyce's works, there is a deep disconnection between individual and crowd that is explored.

This array of texts is thus primarily organised thematically, but there is a chronological arc across the chapters in commencing with George Gissing and concluding with James Joyce, to allow for a sense of how the female office worker

character developed. It allows too for recognition of how, as the article from *The Woman Worker* complains, she became a well-known and well-worn character type. The office girl as a version of the New Woman is a vehicle for exploring modern feminine identity and ambition, but her ambitions are conflicted and complicated. Entry into a new workplace such as the office indicates the opening up of new elements of the public sphere to women, and as such the office girl often interprets her work to be not only meaningful for her as an individual but more widely indicative of the progress of the position of women: she hopes to be part of a politically significant collective. Yet the daily routine of office work deadens this sense of self-fulfilment, as it is frequently found to be limited and limiting and entailing exploitative emotional labour. As the office girl's work is typically dull and poorly paid, she repeatedly seeks out alternative forms of self-fulfilment, hoping for more creative work or for a love affair, or even for moments of escapism to break up the routine of the workday sought via daydream and distraction, a version of *la perruque*. She is a less aspirational version of the New Woman then, but she hungers for more: her distinctly modern feminine identity is always in process and never quite complete or fixed. The office girl indicates that the position of turn-of-the-century women was progressing, but she also represents the need for further change.

Chapter 1: Representing work in the typewriter girl novels of George Gissing, Grant Allen and Ivy Low

> '"What *is* your work? Copying with a type-machine, and teaching others to do the same—isn't that it?"
> "The work by which I earn money, yes. But if it were no more than that"—
> "Explain then."' – George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (1893)[1]

George Gissing's *The Odd Women* focuses on a school that trains women for office work. One of the organisers, Rhoda Nunn, discusses her work with a potential love interest who is baffled by her dedication to the school; he lists her duties and says somewhat deprecatingly, 'isn't that it?' (203). While this might be an accurate (if crude) job description of her waged labour, Rhoda concedes, she expresses the feeling that her work is 'more than that' (203). Typing and office work, as jobs newly available to women in the period in which *The Odd Women* was published and set, were considered to be desirable roles for the ambitious, modern and independent young woman. That such work granted independence and was relatively respectable and skilled ensured a sense that it could mean 'more than' simply its everyday duties and wage. Rhoda does not have a chance to fully express what this work means to her, but this vague sense of such work being 'more than' its duties recurs in texts about female office workers. This difficulty in expressing the importance of such work – and the ensuing feeling that often occurs in these texts that perhaps it is not, in fact, 'more than' its somewhat mundane tasks – leads to a tension between the hope for work to be self-fulfilling, and the sense that it is perhaps actually rather limited and limiting. This tension is established repeatedly in *The Odd Women*: the other woman who runs the typing school, Miss Barfoot, does not necessarily glamourise typing work which isn't 'ideal'; but, she adds, the world

[1] George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 203. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

is ‘far from ideal’, and she approves of refusing to enter only those professions that are deemed suitable and ‘womanly’ (152). Women must invade the workplace, Miss Barfoot declares, and through this be made ‘strong and self-reliant and nobly independent!’ (153). Such work might not be ideal in and of itself – but it can contribute to the realisation of one’s own ideals and aspirations.

In this chapter I will further analyse the tension found in office work noted in my introduction between work as potentially granting a new sense of selfhood and work being experienced as repetitive, mundane, and not entirely liberating. Self-fulfilling work is of a kind that can express one’s skills or abilities and in doing so affirms a sense of identity found through work. The tension between work being self-fulfilling and being deadening and dull is emphasised in three novels concerning typists and their work: George Gissing’s *The Odd Women* (1893), *The Type-writer Girl* by Grant Allen writing under the pseudonym Olive Pratt Rayner (1897), and Ivy Low’s *The Questing Beast* (1914). All three take typewriter girls – a term used in these texts to refer to typists – as their primary subject; while Low’s work was published two decades after Gissing’s, it makes a direct reference to his novel in its conclusion, underlining her aim to interrogate a similar subject matter. All three novels analyse the experience of office work, exploring the possibility for fulfilment of ambitions as well as indicating how typing work can stifle these ambitions.

The need to earn a wage is a key element of the motivations for working in these texts: these authors are taking up an issue uncovered by the 1851 census, which revealed nearly half of adult women in Britain were without the support of a partner.[2] There was a surplus, this suggested, of 400,000 single women, a problem which gained further attention in W.R. Greg’s 1862 article ‘Why are Women

[2] Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 35.

Redundant?'. As Greg explores in his dramatically-titled piece, following the earlier census it was felt that there was a need to find alternative means of income for the disproportionate number of single women in England – with his particular solution being to send these women to British colonies to be wives for single male colonisers.[3] The novels examined in this chapter, however, proffer the idea of finding some form of suitable and respectable work in order for their characters to be self-supporting. The title of Gissing's *The Odd Women* indicates that the 'surplus' of women is a key concern of his novel; in a description for the *Athenaeum* he outlined his novel in these terms:

> It deals with the lot of women who, for statistical or other reasons, have small chance of marriage. Among the characters, militant or conventional, are some who succeed, and some who fail, in the effort to make their lives independent.[4]

In a letter to Eduard Bertz, he explained his title: 'the women who are *odd* in the sense they do not make a match; – as we say "an odd glove."'[5] The lack of partner and need to find work is underlined by a group of single sisters in Gissing's novel who are orphaned at the beginning of his text, one of whom attempts to become a typewriter girl in Rhoda and Miss Barfoot's school. The protagonists of Allen and Low's texts are also orphans – this is a trope of typewriter girl texts, as Lawrence Rainey has observed.[6] Rainey argues that this allows readers to potentially lay emphasis on the material necessity of work, rather than desire to work, thus allowing

---

[3] W. R. Greg, 'Why are Women Redundant?', *The National Review*, 28, April 1862, 434-60.
[4] George Gissing, *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist*, ed. by Pierre Coustillas (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1978), p. 299.
[5] George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, January 15 1893, in *The Collected Letters of George Gissing*, ed. by Paul F. Mattheisen and Arthur C. Young (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1993), V, p. 84.
[6] Lawrence Rainey, 'Secretarial Fiction: Gender and Genre in Four Novels, 1897-1898', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 53.3 (2010), 308-330 (p. 308).

for a reading which makes these office girls seem less threatening and politicised.[7] However, I would argue that while material necessity is emphasised in all three of these texts, it is impossible to ignore that characters in these novels express the notion that work can advance women's rights, as well as their own personal sense of liberty.

In these novels this optimism about typing work gives way, even if temporarily, to instances of seeking self-fulfilment elsewhere. In *The Odd Women* this search leads to love affairs, although this is not a happy retreat to the domestic as these typically have tragic endings in Gissing's text. *The Type-writer Girl* and *The Questing Beast* on the other hand play with the contrast between mechanical writing and creative writing, with the protagonists of each novel making efforts to become authors themselves. I intervene in prior critical arguments concerning how office girl novels portray the relationship between typing and creative writing by noting how this trope can be viewed as creating a conflict in which having a specific calling or a vocation seems unavailable to all: instead, it is only accessible to certain exceptional women who have some form of genius or talent.[8] Ideologies expressed in these texts regarding the hope for the mass advancement of women's rights through work contrast with this sense that fulfilling, purposeful work cannot be attained by all. These narratives of exceptional women being differentiated from the crowd adhere more closely to artist narratives of the New Woman, in which the protagonist is

[7] Ibid., p. 327.
[8] See Katherine Mullin, *Working Girls: Fiction, Sexuality and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Leah Price, 'Grant Allen's Impersonal Secretaries: Rereading *The Type-Writer Girl*' in *Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the* Fin de Siècle, pp. 129-42; Morag Shiach, 'Modernity, Labour and the Typewriter' in *Modernist Sexualities* ed. by Hugh Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) pp. 114-29.

regularly represented, as Ann Heilmann describes, as a 'misrecognised genius'.[9] But with the typist character there is the added complication of the presence of other typists who force recognition of this problem of the exceptional individual being differentiated from the mass of women workers. Attempts to escape from office work are not always easily achieved, moreover, and often even these exceptional women are characterised more by their unmet ambitions than by their achievements – and, indeed, nor do these ambitions necessarily have a clear direction for many of the characters of these novels, beyond a general desire for something more than is currently available to them.

This contrast between the individual and the crowd provides, as noted, an added nuance to readings of the parallels between creative and mechanical writing. Katherine Mullin has pointed out that typists are used in typewriter girl texts to hint at 'anxieties about mechanical writing, [and] creative autonomy'.[10] That is, typist characters are made use of to explore the mechanical elements of creative work. I will work to refine the connections made by Mullin between typing and creative writing in *The Odd Women* by arguing that the anxious relationship between the two must be analysed in terms of how it further contributes to the complex tensions between the exceptional individual and the crowd that are explored in the novel. As part of this, I turn my attention to an aspect of the text which Mullin does not consider. Mullin is concerned primarily with the absence of scenes of labour and Gissing's rapid composition of *The Odd Women* due to material need as an indication of his anxious sense that typing may be analogous to creative writing.[11] I suggest that more significant for my own argument, and key to my linking the issue

[9] Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 6.
[10] Mullin, p. 13.
[11] Ibid., p. 86.

of creative writing for the market to the idea of the divide between the masses and the exceptional individual, is the way in which the mass of women in *The Odd Women* are portrayed in terms of their consumption of novels. Gissing ponders the potentially destructive nature of reading popular novels and its effects on people, particularly some lesser-educated women of the typing school, and thus the potential for his own labours to be levelled with a similar charge. Thus, it is not only the association between creative writing and money-making that is worried over, but also how texts are being consumed, and how the differing manners in which they are consumed further separate the exceptional typewriter girl characters and the masses.

Additionally, I will note how the relationship between typing and creative writing is dealt with very differently in the other two texts I examine. Mullin describes an identification between Allen and his protagonist, especially as Juliet becomes a creative writer, and suggests this is indicative of an implicit sense of the 'erosion of distinctions between communications labour and creative writing'.[12] Leah Price has also observed Allen's exploration of the relationship between typing and writing in this text, arguing that the division between the more respectful role of secretary and the more mechanical role of typist ultimately functions to represent the differentiation between creative writing and typing.[13] I work to revise and extend such ideas by emphasising that the parallels between creative writing and typing are a less troubling prospect for Allen, who had a far less anxious relationship to the idea of writing for material need than Gissing. Further, I again relate this to concerns regarding the relationship between the individual and collective and thus revise Price's ideas by arguing that in fact Juliet suggests there is an affinity between typing and creative writing, in part to maintain an identification with the mass of

[12] Ibid., p. 51.
[13] Price, p. 132.

typists as sisterhood is repeatedly shown to be important to her, in spite of her clear talents which render her as capable of attaining ambitions outside of the office.

Finally, turning to *The Questing Beast* which Mullin does not examine, I note that while some anxiety concerning the similarities between typing and creative writing could be implicit in this novel the relationship between the two is figured very differently in this text. As Morag Shiach notes briefly in her discussion of *The Questing Beast* creative writing in the novel is the 'antithesis of the typewriter'.[14] Extending such arguments, I note how this opposition between the two forms of writing serves to reinforce the aforementioned divide between the exceptional individual and the mass of typists. Indeed, Low works to separate the two forms of writing so strenuously that material needs are all but ignored at the end of the novel. While this denial of identification between the two forms of writing could be perceived as anxious I contend that more significant is the way in which Low embraces the story of the rise of the talented individual who is distinct from the masses who surround her by contrasting the two forms of writing, creating a narrative that resembles her own escape from the office.

Typing and creative writing are compared in these novels as a way of analysing how the value of these kinds of work can be ascertained. Efforts by economists to ascribe value to the work of writers in the nineteenth century were typically fraught. Daniel Hack has explored how Adam Smith described men of letters as 'unproductive', because they did not produce a material good – the printing of the book was, he argued, separate from the author's contribution.[15] This designation of 'unproductive' work carried weight not only for its economic

[14] Shiach, p. 125.
[15] Daniel Hack, *The Material Interests of the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), p. 63.

implications but because the term 'unproductive' can imply moral judgement and ideas of idleness as opposed to industriousness.[16] Following on from Smith, John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* tried to suggest authors were indeed productive by arguing that the writer was part of the production of a material object, the book, though this was a contested assertion.[17] As Hack notes, authors often wished to be regarded as defying or being indifferent to the market – but disliked also being described as unproductive.[18] Cathy Shuman points out there was an increasing professionalisation of authors in the mid-nineteenth century through the formation of writer's groups, an effort which suggests a desire to formalise their status as a collection of workers.[19] I argue that this context of the troubled considerations of how to evaluate the worth of the author's labour sees writers alternately trying to reject or ignore the market, adhering to a more Romantic ideal of the author, or aligning themselves to the literary market. This was an especially pertinent issue given the potentially highly lucrative nature of the literary marketplace in the nineteenth century.[20] Representations of typing work provide a way of thinking through these issues of the value of writing labour. Typing, after all, was also somewhat problematic in terms of the difficulties found in evaluating the productivity and value of this work, but it was much closer to business markets, and thus provided an analogy for considering the relationship between creative writing, the market and material gain. Such analogies are brought to the fore in typewriter girl novels as attempts to become creative writers are made. The parallels between typing and creative work are portrayed in some texts with a degree of anxiety: these

[16] Ibid., p. 63.
[17] Ibid., p. 63.
[18] Ibid., p. 68.
[19] Cathy Shuman, *Pedagogical Economies: The Examination and the Victorian Literary Man* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 19.
[20] N. N. Feltes, *Literary Capital and the Late Victorian Novel* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 4.

novels display ambivalence about attempting to evaluate artistic labour through the market, as well as concerns about the potential for the novel to become a disposable commodity; additionally, they suggest the consumption of such commodities further distances the educated individual from the crowd.

The novels focused upon in this chapter veer between celebrating the independence that typing work brings and the degree of self-fulfilment it can grant, and tracing the ways in which this particular job can be deadening and mundane. It is this acknowledgement of the mundane aspects of work that make typewriter girl novels distinct from many New Woman texts that focus upon more aspirational forms of work. This chapter will be organised by three key themes which recur in these novels: firstly, I will analyse how texts of the typist are preoccupied with exploring the complexities of the meanings of and motivations for office work. Material need, vocational ideals and the progress for women that such work connotes – as women enter a new arena of the public sphere, and individual women are granted independence – are considered in relation to typing work in all three texts. Secondly, I will argue that there is a conflict in these novels between the desire to portray typists as a politically aware, proto-feminist collective, and the way these texts highlight exceptional individuals. The desire for meaningful work – by finding meaning in typing work, or by leaving it for another form of more creative, fulfilling work – leads to a differentiation between exceptional individuals who can find more aspirational forms of work and the masses, for many of whom finding a higher calling seems unlikely. At points this serves to highlight that even when advances in women's positions are being made the lack of education available to them as girls impedes their abilities as adults. Finally, I will turn to consider how frequently this individual exceptionality is expressed through a transition from typing to creative

writing. Concern regarding the effects of popular novel reading is made clear as part of this, and such reading further separates the intelligent individual and the masses. Analogies are drawn between creative writing and the more explicitly economically driven typing, although whether this parallel is ultimately accepted or denied varies between texts.

REPRESENTING WORK

In George Gissing's *The Odd Women* the tension between vocational ideals and material need is analysed, and debates between characters articulate conflicting perspectives on work and its meanings for the worker. The importance of material need for work, as well as the strain such a need can create, is made explicit by Gissing's careful delineation of the salaries of many of the major characters. The Madden sisters find themselves in particularly straitened circumstances as they must support themselves after the death of their father and opt for such roles as governess, shopgirl, typist and teacher, through which they earn £12-15 a year, an amount which varies according to their employment which at times they lose entirely. They have had no training due to lack of foresight from their father, who believed work to be 'such sordid care' which reduces humans to experiencing daily life as 'struggle' (6). Their father's notion of work as a struggle which should be avoided if possible is shared by various male characters: the man who Monica Madden eventually marries, Edmund Widdowson, has given up a life of work following the death of his brother which grants him a private income of £600 a year. Widdowson was formerly a clerk, a more old-fashioned version of the role taken on by the typists of the novel: he laments such a life, noting 'A clerk's life–a life of the office without any hope of rising—that is a hideous fate!' (52). The male cousin of the woman who founded the

typing school of the novel, Miss Barfoot, similarly asserts that 'to work for ever is to lose half of life' (94). Cousin Everard has the privilege of a private income of £450 per year, of course — and, like Widdowson, his brother dies in the course of the novel increasing his earnings to £1500 per year — and this has allowed him to resign from his job as an engineer. Miss Barfoot advocates work as a form of '[s]ocial usefulness', but Everard contends that the 'mass of men don't toil with any such ideal, but merely to keep themselves alive, or to get to wealth' (94).

Miss Barfoot, by contrast with her cousin, has the most straightforward sense of work as a kind of vocation in the novel because she connects her beliefs about work to her feminist convictions. While she too has a private income which frees her from pressing economic concerns she uses this to run the training school combining, as Rhoda puts it, 'benevolence with business' (27). Miss Barfoot's sense of her work as a kind of vocation is guided by her feminist principles, as is highlighted by her giving a speech titled 'Woman as Invader' in which she advocates women invading the workplace. Significantly, although she discusses the importance of economic independence she goes on to state that her chief concern is not the earning of money, but that 'women in general shall become *rational and responsible human beings*' (152, original emphasis). In this argument, women's work has significance because of its indication of historical progress as well as its ability to create a new, modern identity for women.

Thus, at points in the novel vocational ideals seem to be in conflict with material need. For many of the women in the text, vocational ideals do not sit easily with material necessity – those seeking the latter sometimes seem to struggle to find the former. For many of the men, the vocational ideal seems too idealistic and does not cohere with their own experience of work which they give up when possible.

Susan Colón has noted the gendered dynamics of perceptions of work, arguing that for men in the novel work is 'presumed normative' and so ideals of vocation are not sufficient 'inducement to professional labour', whereas for women the 'vocation of emancipation' drives their desire to work.[21] She goes on to suggest that Gissing's treatment of work in the novel more generally fails to recognise the importance of material benefit to the worker. As she explains, the professional classes sought for an ideal of work which 'necessarily involves' such a dialectic between material benefit and 'service' to wider society.[22] In Colón's definition of the professional, his or her work would necessarily entail an understanding that work is at once a calling that benefits society, and is also motivated by economic need.

But I contend that Colón neglects to consider how Gissing does not condemn the material motivation for work entirely in *The Odd Women*. While work driven purely by material gain is often portrayed as damaging, or at least unpleasant, there are characters for whom material gain is part of the self-fulfilment found in work. This is most clearly seen in the character of Rhoda Nunn: in a debate with Miss Barfoot's cousin Everard, she sees the material necessity for work that stems from the existence of odd, single women — herself included — as an opportunity that leads to the ability to find purpose through work: 'It gives me a sense of power and usefulness which I enjoy' (204-5). Echoing Miss Barfoot with her deployment of the word 'usefulness' as a way of expressing an understanding of a kind of work that is meaningful, Rhoda turns Miss Barfoot's idea of being socially useful into a personal feeling gained from work and the wages earned from it. As such, for women in particular, gaining a salary indicates independence which can in and of itself be

[21] Susan Colón, 'Professionalism and Domesticity in George Gissing's *The Odd Women*', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 44.4 (2001), 441-58 (p. 453).
[22] Ibid., p. 442.

fulfilling. The variety of perspectives provided concerning work voiced by the characters in *The Odd Women*, and the ultimate lack of conclusion about the meanings of work, suggest that Gissing is exploring how work's meanings differ for different individuals. *The Odd Women* is not typically definitive about the debates around work and the women problem, and, as Patricia Comtini has noted, Gissing's novel has a tendency to make use of mixed ideological signals.[23] As such, it acts as a site for the playing out of potential answers to a social problem rather than necessarily providing an answer.[24] Extending this argument specifically to ideas of vocation and material need the meanings of work are shown to be multiple, influenced by social and individual conditions.

Gissing also does not avoid exploring the ways in which office work is not fulfilling for all, or how ambitions might extend beyond this world. Monica Madden is a shopgirl at the start of the novel, taking part in exhausting work for 'thirteen hours and a half' every day that brings her into dangerously close proximity to the public, before retiring to a crowded dormitory (31). Brought into the typing school by Rhoda, she works 'without enthusiasm' but nonetheless feels a 'growth of self-respect', content to do work that 'her friends judged to be useful' (81). As noted, 'useful' is a word deployed by both Miss Barfoot and Rhoda to indicate their own positive sense of their work; but Monica does not seem able to feel this about her own work, and this judgement of her work's usefulness is instead attributed only to her friends. Rather than continue to work, she marries an older man, Widdowson, who she met during her stint working as a shopgirl. But she is unhappy in this marriage too; she disagrees with his perception of her need to spend all day doing

[23] Patricia Comitini, 'A Feminist Fantasy: Conflicting Ideologies in *The Odd Women'*, *Studies in the Novel*, 27.4 (Winter 1995), 529-43 (p. 541).
[24] Ibid., p. 530.

wifely 'duties', asserting that leisure is important: '"I wish to do my duty," she said, in a firm tone, '"but I don't think it's right to make dull work for oneself, when one might be living,"' (182).

While Monica's position sounds similar to Everard's contention that life is for pleasure, not just for work, her argument is thrown into contrast with Widdowson's perception of a wife's duty and thus is indicative not simply of a desire to abandon work for a life of leisure, but also of a consciousness of the limitations imposed upon her as a woman. This understanding of Monica Madden's failed marriage offers an explanation too for Rhoda's brief romantic interest in Miss Barfoot's cousin Everard. While this affair does not necessarily suggest a deep dissatisfaction with her labours it does seem to indicate that she feels forced to choose between work and love; this state of longing indicates the ongoing desire for more, which is a condition of these women's restricted position in society.

In *The Type-writer Girl* material need is mixed with the desire to work in an office, but in Grant Allen's comic mode both vulnerability and the ideals of vocation are less emphatic. Allen's novel does not make reference to Gissing's though the two had met prior to Allen's having written *The Type-writer Girl*, with Gissing telling a friend subsequently that Allen was 'delightful' though he didn't admire his writing: 'he ought not to be writing fiction at all.'[25] Like the Madden sisters of *The Odd Women*, a large part of Juliet's independence comes from her being an orphan: her father has died shortly before the opening of the novel, giving her work some urgency – while also ensuring she is free of patriarchal control. As she declares, 'Poverty emancipates'.[26] Her being an orphan is one way in which there seems to be

[25] George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, 23 June 1895, *Collected Letters,* V, p. 352.
[26] Grant Allen [as Olive Pratt Rayner], *The Type-writer Girl* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1897), p. 140. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

an establishment already of the typist as a distinct character type in Allen's text, and one who is closely related to the New Woman. Juliet fulfils many of the clichés of the New Woman as she is a Girton girl who enjoys cycling and smoking, and she dabbles in radical politics by briefly joining an anarchist commune. Juliet notes when describing her profession:

> I did not then know that every girl in London can write short-hand, and that type-writing is as diffused as the piano; else I might have turned my hand to some honest trade instead, such as millinery or cake-making. However, a type-writer I was, and a type-writer I must remain. (20)

By underlining the prevalence of young women typists Allen asserts that there is a new type of woman with particular associations of independence, and the reader must recognise Juliet as one of these types. Because of this there is an element of mockery of Juliet's assertiveness, as her adherence to type – recurrently referring to herself as a typewriter girl – somewhat contradicts her positioning of herself as radical. Discussing her work, Juliet mentions her paltry salary, and when she finds a job she describes how she has won 'the prize of modest starvation' (28). The struggle to support herself is connected to the women's movement, as Juliet sardonically describes how she is 'deeply impressed with the fact that in this age the struggle for existence has become one of the rights of woman' (21). Underlying this joke there seems to be a questioning of whether the gaining of rights and the ability to work is necessarily progress for women; as for certain characters in *The Odd Women*, work is perceived not to be a prize, but a struggle.

As such, some scepticism towards the women's movement is betrayed here; there is the sense that Allen is potentially exploiting the popularity of the New Woman character in his writing for his own material gain while undermining her politics. *The Type-writer Girl* was published after Allen's New Woman novel *The Woman Who Did*, a text which had great commercial success but received some

scathing criticism from certain women readers. Millicent Fawcett declared 'his little book belongs very much more to the unregenerate man than to women at all.'[27] Allen's personal views of the woman question were explicated in his essay 'Plain Words on the Woman Question'. In this article he argued that the 'natural duties' of women – producing children – cannot be forgotten, and that while women should be educated, they should not be 'unsexed' by being educated as men are.[28] Grant Allen's use of the female pseudonym Olive Pratt Rayner has therefore been described by Christopher Keep as an attempt to attract a readership of women while subverting the radical nature of the modern young woman.[29] While Allen spoke out against certain inequalities women faced, such as in marriage, the particular form of biological essentialism he espoused which led him to believe women's primary function was to be a mother showed the limits to his support of equality for women – this could suggest there is a underlying mockery in the novel for Juliet's enthusiasm for work.[30]

Yet, I critique arguments such as that of Keep that suggest Allen is completely subverting the New Woman by noting that Juliet is not simply the subject of mockery: she is intelligent and energetic, and challenges the gender politics of the world she finds herself in. She finds an advertisement for 'Shorthand and Type-writer (female)' (21), a phrase which she repeats in a tongue-in-cheek

[27] Millicent Garrett Fawcett, '*The Woman Who Did*', *The Contemporary Review*, 67, May 1895, 625-31 (p. 631).
[28] Grant Allen, 'Plain Words on the Woman Question', *Popular Science Monthly*, 36, December 1889, pp. 170-181 (p. 171, 175).
[29] Christopher Keep, 'The Cultural Work of the Type-Writer Girl', *Victorian Studies*, 40.3 (Spring 1997), 401-25 (p. 415).
[30] For further discussion of Allen and the woman question see William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers, 'Resituating Grant Allen: Writing, Radicalism and Modernity' in *Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the* Fin de Siècle, ed. by William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 1-22 (p. 12-13).

fashion to poke fun at its parentheses. 'Female', she notes, is not exactly a 'poetical' description, but the nineteenth century nonetheless 'has a chivalry all its own':

> If it speaks of us as females, it has given us the bicycle, and it almost admits that we are as fit for the franchise as the forty-shilling lodger. It puts us a little lower than the navvies. I call that magnanimity. (21-2)

Here, she contests the inbetween status of women in the nineteenth century, treated neither with chivalry nor with the full respect of being a citizen able to vote. While she considers the idea of emancipation through work with some humour, she notes her labours do give her freedom to roam around the city and work alongside men, rather than being confined to being a 'lady' (140). Her mention of her education as well as her frequent literary references additionally demonstrate that she is not just a mechanical drudge but a skilled, intelligent worker who perceives her work as granting economic independence, but also freedom. When applying for a job she notes how a male clerk stares at her, scrutinising every aspect of her body as if she is a 'horse for sale' (24). While this could be deeply demeaning, her sly description of this 'pulpy youth' and her quick lie that she can type 197 words per minute in order to be hired give the impression that Juliet is subverting their position of power and asserting her place in the office (24). When working she mocks the male clerks again, referring in a tongue-in-cheek manner to the 'superior sex' and drowning out their inane chatter about women by loudly working on her typewriter, a 'counter-irritant' that is like 'music' by comparison (32). Her work might be characterised by mundane repetition – she notes of her daily labours, 'I continued to click, click, click, like a machine that I was' (34). But nevertheless her ability to gain employment, leave when bored in order to join an anarchist group, and then return to London and her role as typewriter girl indicates some degree of agency, as Lena

Wånggren has argued.[31] This, coupled with the humorous critiques noted above, means the novel is not simply an extension of Allen's personal views; instead, it entails the creation of a distinctly independent typist character. Recognition of the limitations of typing work – its poor salary, the rudeness of male colleagues in the office, and at points the mention of the repetitive nature of the work itself – could potentially connect to Allen's beliefs in women's natural place being within the family. But for the most part, critiques of work are portrayed as the fault of the limited opportunities presented by society for women; and, moreover, Juliet frequently celebrates the elements of her job that present the potential for emancipation.

Ivy Low's *The Questing Beast* examines the liberating aspects of office work, but is more emphatic in finding them lacking than Gissing and Allen's novels. Low herself worked as a typist in the Prudential Assurance company as a young woman.[32] I argue that the semi-autobiographical nature of the text, including its investment in portraying the growth of its central character into an artist, leads to a more explicit rendering of the deadening qualities of typing work. Like the characters of Allen and Gissing's novels, Low's main character Rachel Cohen is an orphan — unlike Low, who was brought up by her mother and stepfather after her father died when she was five — who must support herself.[33] It is mentioned that her wage is not a living wage, and she is supported by her brother: Low is keen to emphasise the unequal, poor pay through the brief mention of this brother who otherwise does not appear in the novel. Rachel's work is thus clearly aligned with

[31] Lena Wånggren, *Gender, Technology and the New Woman* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 54.
[32] John Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), p. 36.
[33] Ibid., p. 30.

material motivation, although she does gain some sense of self-fulfilment from her work:

> Intelligence, though not an essential attribute of a good clerk, is seldom a disadvantage, and intelligence nobody denied to Rachel. Besides, the girl was an artist, and took an artist's pride in the appearance of her work and had an innocent vanity which made her wish to excel. She really enjoyed being one of the quickest typists in the office, and the constant tributes to her wonderful memory.[34]

The work of typing is presented here as at least somewhat skilled, and Rachel thrives on the recognition she receives as one of the cleverer typists on staff. Some characters are able to find self-fulfilment through this kind of work, as Rachel's colleague Janet gains great pride from announcing to her family that like her brother she wants to be 'self-supporting' (54).

Yet Rachel largely experiences office work as unfulfilling and a struggle, as connoted by her physical experience of this work: in the afternoons she feels an 'awful weakness', which is 'compounded partly of boredom and partly of sheer physical exhaustion' (24). The very limited role of the typist in her firm is also emphasised: 'Letters to the company were answered by men clerks, in as brief a form as possible, and sent up to the women's department to be expanded and typewritten' (25). This division of labour suggests that male clerks formulate replies in shorthand and the typists simply copy them out, impeding any semblance of creativity or ownership over their work. The alienation Rachel experiences in work is described as her never having to employ 'a very full consciousness', as she instead performs her duties 'mechanically' (233). This, coupled with the explicit mention of the division of tasks, recalls Marx's arguments concerning alienation of the self

[34] Ivy Low, *The Questing Beast* (London: Martin Secker, 1914), p. 83. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

under the conditions of industrialised, divided labour.[35] In Low's novel, office work is characterised as mechanical and repetitive, and it leads to a fragmentation of the self. While some pleasure can be taken in doing well at her tasks, and other workers take pride in earning a wage, Rachel's intelligence marks her out as different, and as someone whose ambitions extend beyond the office.

THE TYPIST MASSES VS. THE INDIVIDUAL SECRETARY

Typing is a form of work that employed a mass of young women, and the idea of a collective sisterhood of typists can be seen in contemporary journals. *The Typist's Gazette*, as noted in my introduction, dedicated itself to the 'ever-increasing army' of typewriter girls.[36] It expressed the belief that typists must

> long have felt the need of some vehicle of communicating their thoughts and desires, or of ascertaining the latest news in their profession, of seeking information as to the various appliances for aiding them in their labours, and generally to feel that there was at least one little cherub sitting up aloft to look after their interests.[37]

A sense of collectivity comes from a variety of different desires, according to the journal: its readers, it suggests, are unified by the need to discuss and find help with practical issues, but also by the hope of talking with others like themselves and to look after one another's interests. Typists were often reluctant to join unions, as was lamented by the National Union of Clerks, and women typists were critiqued for accepting poor salaries – although there was a degree of recognition that it was often on this basis that women were being hired at all, and thus negotiating with employers might prove difficult.[38] Nevertheless, within *The Typist's Gazette* there were

---

[35] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by Ben Fowkes (Penguin Books, 1976), I, p. 34.
[36] 'Salutation', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.1, July 16 1896, p. 3.
[37] Ibid., p. 3.
[38] 'Mimi', 'Thoughtless Women Clerks', *The Woman Worker*, 18, October 2 1908, p. 454; 'Women Clerks', *The Woman Worker,* 17, September 25 1908, p. 438.

assertions that women should receive equal salaries.[39] One letter of complaint regarding a salary noted how it seemed employers expected their office girls to live 'on air', with 'no boots, no lodgings, no office clothes'.[40] Thus in spite of a reluctance to formally organise, there is an expressed desire to collectively gain better rights.

Discussions surrounding an idea of a collective identity and how the office girl was thought of were prevalent, additionally. One article expressed a desire to quash the 'coarse and improper' jokes made about young women office workers, and responded angrily to suggestions that every typist was a 'husband-hunter'; stereotypes of the typist were often lamented.[41] One editorial lambasted an employer who referred to his typist as a 'vulgar leering siren.'[42] As such, mutual sympathy can be seen amongst the collective of typists regarding how their identities are perceived by others. Articles argued that the office girl must be respected. One piece noted that typists must be

> quick—quick in ear, quick in eye, quick in brain; she must grasp meanings and evolve contexts without any delay. It is not a profession for the mentally slow. Then, too, she must be intellectual, and have had a thoroughly good education.[43]

This advice concerning what qualities the office girl must possess in order to enter in the profession can be read as an assertion of a typist identity which differs from the perceptions originating from others who mock the office girl. Arguing that office girls must be intelligent and educated suggests a desire for this collective to be seen as such more generally. While there is mention of political issues in these journals,

[39] 'Our Views', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.18, 12 November 1896, p. 275.
[40] 'A Lady Clerk and her Salary', *The Typist's Gazette*, 2.64, 30 September 1897, p. 143.
[41] 'The Lady Typist', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.4, August 6 1896, p. 51.
[42] 'Our Views', p. 275.
[43] 'Incomes to be Earned', *The Typist's Gazette*, 2.55, 29 July 1897, p. 42.

then, primarily these articles allowed typists to help form their group identity and bond over such an identity as a collective.

But, as argued in my introduction, novels by contrast frequently single out individual, exceptionally talented typewriter girls as their protagonists. While a sisterhood of typewriter girls is established in these texts, the labouring mass of typists in offices often becomes a backdrop to the individual protagonist. Typically in these novels this singling out leads to a more intelligent, more ambitious protagonist being differentiated from the wider sisterhood of typists; this in turn leads to the idea that finding a sense of vocation in work is not available to all, but only to exceptional individuals. Invocation of a collective, particularly in novels which are concerned with the relationship with the young woman worker and feminist ideology, is at times in conflict with this portrayal of exceptional individuals outstripping their female colleagues. At points this contrast could be attributed to the difference in roles between the typist – who is one of many, seen as a cog in the machine in the bureaucracy of the office – and the adept personal secretary, who is singled out to complete more significant tasks and who works more closely with her boss. But nonetheless in these novels the contrast between the exceptional individual and the mass of typists creates issues with the hopeful sentiment that work could be self-fulfilling, as it seems only the exceptional individual with particular talents or genius can find creative or politically meaningful work; these types of work are not available to all.

As noted in *The Type-writer Girl* Juliet is a Girton girl who makes frequent references to literature and who is rendered as exceptional – comically so – to her work. Juliet's boss in her second job after she has left the anarchist commune is initially reluctant to hire her despite her skills, as he feels that she is seeking work to

increase what he assumes must be an already-substantial private income – this, he argues, is unfair on women seeking subsistence. He recognises, it seems, that Juliet is more upper class and educated than a typist would be typically be. But Juliet retorts that she does indeed need to support herself entirely, and so she is hired; later on in the novel Juliet encounters Elsie, her competitor for the role who is still unemployed. From the moment of Elsie's introduction in the novel, then, it is established that her abilities are inferior to Juliet's, and this continues as she and Juliet become friends. Juliet decides to try and help train Elsie so she can maintain a typist job but finds that Elsie is incapable of taking dictation, though she 'could type fairly well, though quite unintelligently, like a well-trained Chinaman … given a copy, she could reproduce each word with mechanical fidelity' (157). While Juliet has compared herself to a machine previously, Elsie is all the more mechanical in her work, uncomprehending of the language she inscribes and acting primarily as a conduit for the words of others.

By contrast, Juliet takes on the duties that were associated with the more highly regarded position of secretary, working closely with her boss who as she falls in love with she dubs her 'Romeo'. When Juliet asks Elsie to help her with some of her typing work as part of Elsie's training, Elsie struggles with typing up some poetry – such creative work confuses her, apparently – and Juliet takes over this role, especially pleased to do so when she recognises that this poetry is written in Romeo's hand. She takes on duties beyond the typical remit of a typist, beginning to aid Romeo with his poetry by advising him 'as to type and paper—sometimes also as to the choice of an epithet or point of cadence' (169). Although the initial tasks mentioned are fairly mundane, Juliet escalates until she is describing how she is essentially an editor of Romeo's poetry, a more extreme version of the personal

secretary who would help a boss compose letters. That Elsie and Juliet exemplify the division between the more lowly typist working mechanically, and the personal secretary who aids her boss, has been noted by Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell.[44] But this difference is not wholly explained by class and the opportunities this has brought to the more upper-class Juliet, as Juliet also differs from Romeo's fiancée Meta, an upper-class woman whose existence Juliet initially is unaware of – as Thurschwell has noted, there is a distinct similarity between Meta and Elsie.[45] Romeo abandons his fiancée for Juliet because his fiancée does not understand his poetry as Juliet does; he describes her as acting like a 'wax doll' (247). While Elsie is Juliet's machine-like counterpart in her work life Meta is Juliet's doll-like counterpart in her romantic life, and similarly is found not to measure up to Juliet.

Nonetheless, this conflict is resolved: with time Juliet realises she knows Romeo's fiancée from a chance encounter earlier on in the text. Her sympathy for Meta induces her to realise that to continue her relationship with Romeo would be 'treason to the eternal cause of woman', and she leaves Romeo and encourages him to marry Meta as he has promised (245). Although Meta – not realising her competition for Romeo is Juliet – curses the classless typewriter girl for attempting to take her fiancé, sisterly solidarity rules Juliet's choices in this instance. Lena Wånggren has suggested a similar solidarity exists between Juliet and Elsie in the novel.[46] Juliet does not dub herself a secretary after all, repeatedly referring to herself with the title of typist or typewriter girl, expressing that she is part of a

[44] Price, p. 132; Pamela Thurschwell, 'Supple Minds and Automatic Hands: Secretarial Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Literature', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 37.2 (2001), 155-68 (p. 160).
[45] Thurschwell, p. 160
[46] Wånggren, p. 57.

collective alongside Elsie. Certainly, sisterhood is of prime importance to Juliet; but admittedly, this is rendered as a comic underselling of herself and her talents. I contend that this narrative of essential exceptionality, emblematised in the character of Juliet, is not entirely surprising given Grant Allen's personal beliefs. He invoked ideas of eugenics in his journalism and referred to Francis Galton in one of his essays on the woman question, arguing that women could advance the evolution of man through choice of partner, propagating and bettering the race for the good of the nation's future.[47] While arguably it is Juliet's education at Girton college that has led to her distinctive capabilities, the training of Elsie only makes her more adept at working in a machine-like manner, and Romeo's attempts to encourage Meta to read his poetry prove fruitless, suggesting education cannot help these particular women. Juliet is thus portrayed as the clearly essentially exceptional individual who has a potential to attain both meaningful work and love, choices unavailable to her counterparts in the text, but at the same time Allen nevertheless underlines the importance of sisterhood to his protagonist.

In George Gissing's *The Odd Women* the disparity between the exceptional individual and the other, less capable women, is connected more clearly to access to education and training. This adheres to views he expressed elsewhere on the woman question. In a letter dated from the same year as the publication of *The Odd Women*, he couples apparent sympathy for women with contemptuous sentiment directed towards the 'average woman':

> My demand for female "equality" simply means that I am convinced there will be no social peace until women are intellectually trained very much as men are. More than half the misery of life is due to the ignorance & childishness of women. The average woman pretty closely resembles, in all

[47] Grant Allen, 'The Girl of the Future', *Universal Review*, 7, May 1890, 49-64 (p. 52).

> intellectual consideration, the average male *idiot*—I speak medically. The state of things is traceable to the lack of education, in all senses of the word.[48]

Education, he suggests, could improve the situation, although his harsh tone and disdain for certain women carries through to other letters: in a letter written two years later, he remarks with surprise, 'It is strange how many letters I get from women, asking for sympathy & advice. I really can't understand what it is in my work that attracts the female mind.'[49] While Gissing is not always compassionate towards women, he rallies against the restrictive education which holds them back. In *The Odd Women* the more educated women are distinct, far more capable than those who are untrained.

The descriptions of the bodies of the women in *The Odd Women* are a way to trace the divide between the exceptional, well-trained woman and other, less intelligent or capable women as bodies are, as the narrator notes, 'legible' (25). Rhoda is described as having a 'bodily vigour' from her first appearance in the novel as a young woman (7). Years later, she is still described as having 'a vigorous frame', and impresses one of the Madden sisters, Virginia, with her energy (25). Less respectable work can create or exacerbate bodily weakness, as with the fainting fits and the varicose veins that Monica describes of her fellow shopgirls (41). The uneducated Madden sisters, whose father never wanted them to work, seem to display a physical weakness that is near-impossible to overcome which betrays their inability to adapt to their new, vulnerable position in the world. Virginia, for instance, has a 'tall meagre body [that] did not seem strong enough to hold itself upright', and Alice Madden has stooped shoulders and a complexion spoiled by the cold (14). Instances of abstention from food exemplify the differentiation between

[48] George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, June 2 1893, *Collected Letters*, V, p. 113.
[49] George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, June 23 1895, *Collected Letters*, V, p. 351.

these characters: Rhoda puts herself through ascetic trials of self-denial following what she perceives to be a betrayal of her ideals by falling in love with Everard; the Madden sisters grow thin from poverty which forces them to subsist on plain rice, and Virginia in particular begins to starve herself in order to use what little money she has to purchase gin as she succumbs to alcoholism. Edmund Widdowson, upon discovering his sister-in-law's alcoholism, speculates that this 'degradation' might indicate 'family traits, weaknesses' (268).

But such a reading of these women's bodies — and Widdowson is a character who repeatedly misreads the women around him — is not supported by the text. The only mention of Rhoda Nunn's mother is to describe her as an invalid, not suggestive of a lineage of strong women; and the Madden girls are no doubt, as Rhoda herself suggests, damaged at least in part due to nurture rather than nature — Gissing is emphatic about their lack of education leading to poorly-paid jobs that exacerbate their physical ailments. Nonetheless, this focus on the vitality or weakness of the women communicates that there is a certain hierarchy amongst the women in the text both from the perspective of the narrative, and from the women's commentary on one another, which is suggestive of the possibilities for fulfilment of ambitions for the exceptional individual but not necessarily for the collective.

This hierarchy in which the sisterhood of feminist ideals seems not to be available to all is also found in the women of the typing school's views of women from the lower classes. Rhoda asserts, 'Miss Barfoot hasn't much interest in the lower classes; she wishes to be of use to the daughters of educated people' (28). This is a point of some contention — even the language surrounding class is debated, with the other women suggesting 'lower' is a hierarchical term which should be swapped for 'poorer classes' — but it is concluded that the feminist project is the remit of

middle-class women, with another student of the typing school asserting 'I really don't think … there can be any solidarity of ladies with servant girls' (62). Of course, feminist movements did not always entail inclusivity across class boundaries in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century England, and certain feminists relied on the assertion of some women's exceptional abilities as an argument for rights for these particular women.[50] Rhoda suggests that the denial of solidarity with certain classes is for the good of maintaining the close unity of the collective. Citing one lower-class woman who they did let into the typing school, Rhoda recalls how this woman subsequently ran away with a married man. Rhoda deplores this 'reckless individualism' and makes scathing remarks about those who would argue this woman was '*living out herself*' by following her desires (66, original emphasis). Rhoda's personal unease with any expression of desire for love and sex contributes to her judgment here, but this comment is also indicative of the problems with ideas of exclusivity and collectivity within the typing school. While at some points in the novel it seemed that lack of education caused differentiation between the women, there is also an expression of pessimism concerning education's potential to alter the lives of adult women, especially those from lower classes. At the end of the novel the women are excited about the possibility of creating an 'ideal woman's-paper' connected to the school (323). Rhoda tells the remaining Madden sisters they must read the paper the women of the school are publishing before declaring, 'The world is moving!' (371). While there are aspirations to forming a wider collective here,

[50] For the idea of 'narratives of exceptionalism' in feminist movements from mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century England, see Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985), p. 22, 33. For a focus on the Edwardian period see Anne Fernihough, *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

throughout the novel there recurs the suggestion that for some women it is too late, and lack of training or lower class origins cannot be overcome.

This singling out of certain protagonist typewriter girls for their intelligence is replicated in *The Questing Beast*, in which Rachel Cohen is able to leave her typing work behind to fulfil her ambitions to become an author. Her artistic aspirations throw her into contrast with her colleagues, and she spends her evenings writing:

> Rachel worked very hard indeed, in the evenings, for she used her whole self, while for her office duties she scarcely even employed a very full consciousness. She was there and performed her duties mechanically, not caring where her mind was. (233)

A clear line is drawn between the mechanical process of typing and creative writing and, indeed, she 'found some difficulty, both in public and in the privacy of her heart, in referring to her evening's occupation as "work"' (233). If her work is typing she feels she cannot possibly apply the same word to her calling, which makes use of her 'whole self' unlike the office work in which she is hardly mentally present. In Rachel's office there are a vast number of women typists who often exasperate Rachel. Whenever a job is demanded to be completed particularly quickly by the typists, the girls are happy as this work 'made a change' to their normal routine (40). But the phrase 'it "made a change"' is repeated with 'pathetic frequency', suggesting that brief change is another form of the repetition of office work, one which is replicated in the repetitive exchanges between the women (40). Work is made slightly more tolerable by the 'atmosphere of perpetual facetiousness' that the women cultivate through telling jokes or simply maintaining a 'jocular habit of speech' (40) — a habit that at times annoys Rachel, although she acknowledges such behaviour is needed to maintain levity in the office. Rachel at times keeps herself apart from these women, and during her lunch break she moves away from the

crowd to read poetry while the others look over periodicals. The women of the office refer to these periodicals as 'books' which 'always irritated' Rachel to overhear (21). Rachel discerns her difference from others, notably, and this aids her sense that she is above her office work.

There are moments of sympathy and fellow-feeling in the office, nevertheless. When Rachel is late to work repeatedly, her colleagues commiserate after she is scolded and bring her food. All the more importantly, the collective pulls together to help Rachel realise her dream of becoming an author. When Rachel's handwritten novel needs typing up, her colleagues volunteer to help her: 'It has become a platitude to say that trouble reveals to us the kindness of our fellow-creatures, but it is a most moving thing to discover for ourselves' (269), the narrator notes. There is sympathy and sisterhood between these women but there is also a sense that Rachel is distinctly different from her colleagues, and marked out for a success that seems to be unimaginable for the less talented women that surround her.

Women working in offices were a mass presence, demonstrating the advance of women into new spaces in the public sphere and indicating the new opportunities available for skilled, respectable work. Novels about typewriter girls necessarily single out protagonists, but narratives of exceptional individuals end up disrupting any straightforward idea of there being a unified, proto-feminist collective of typists. Hierarchies in these texts do vary: sometimes the difference between women seems to be ascribed to exceptional talent or inherent nature; in *The Odd Women* hierarchies tend to be more explicitly related to access to education based on class origins and differing family ideologies about educating women. Talent for creative writing in particular is often used as a device through which the typist might be able to outstrip her colleagues and the dreary world and wage of the office, and further

emphasises the divide between the exceptional individual and the crowd.

TYPING AND CREATIVE WRITING

Explorations of the value and meaning of typing work frequently generate in these novels a contemplation of the potential parallels between typing and creative writing; in some texts, this analogy draws creative writing into a closer connection to material motivations and the market. Evocations of the parallels between typing and creative writing are made clear in *The Questing Beast* and *The Type-writer Girl* through the protagonists becoming, even if briefly, creative writers. Ambitions for literary labour are a feature of some texts about male clerks too, as Jonathan Wild has highlighted, indicating the typicality of this trope of attempting to move from office writing to creative writing – although often, in the case of the male clerk, these characters remain a 'would-be writer' rather than achieving their ambitions.[51] *The Odd Women* on the other hand contemplates how mechanical, market-driven novel writing which is akin to typing can damage its readers, focusing in on the ramifications of women over-indulging in popular novels. This perception of this kind of novel-reading is interlinked with my argument concerning the complex, often fraught relationship between exceptional individuals and the crowd; the latter in *The Odd Women* also come to represent the mass market's voracious appetite for novels and the apparently destructive effects novel reading can have, which exacerbate differences between the members of the typing school's collective. In all three texts, parallels are drawn between typing and creative writing, with the noted affinity between the two being suggestively invoked or at times strongly rejected;

[51] Jonathan Wild, *The Rise of the Office Clerk in Literary Culture, 1880-1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 16.

ultimately, such parallels work to also comment on the relationship between the individual, exceptional typist, and the masses.

In *The Odd Women* the idea of vocational motivations for gaining work are not necessarily separated from material need. Nonetheless as critics such as Mullin have explored there is some anxiety regarding how novel-writing for economic gain might render artistic labour mechanical.[52] Indeed, as she points out, Gissing was himself deeply self-conscious of a need to sell his novels; this is denoted by, for example, his diary entries worrying about sales, as well as his meticulous detailing of his annual earnings at the end of his diaries.[53] I refine Mullin's arguments, which are mainly concerned with ideas of the author's motivations for writing, by turning my attention to the representation within *The Odd Women* of the effects of novels upon their consumers. Linking this back to my prior argument regarding the divide in the typist collective in the novel, I argue that the manner in which the women of the typing school read further separates the exceptional, intelligent individual typists – emblematised in particular by Rhoda – from the less-well-educated masses. As noted, the divide between these groups in *The Odd Women* tends to be related to class, but also education. There is within the text a contemplation of the novel as an object for consumption that leads to a troubling form of passive reading, and Rhoda in particular finds fault with women who indulge too much time in novel reading. It is, notably, the lesser educated women who were often regarded not fitting in with the proto-feminist collective of the novel who take part in this kind of reading. Discussing the woman who had been training at the typing school but then ran off with a married man, Rhoda declares:

All her spare time was given to novel-reading. If every novelist could be

[52] Mullin, p. 86-7.
[53] Mullin, p. 86; Gissing, *The Diary of George Gissing*, p. 368.

> strangled and thrown into the sea, we should have some chance of reforming women. The girl's nature was corrupted with sentimentality, like that of all but every woman who is intelligent enough to read what is called the best fiction … What is more vulgar than the ideal of novelists? They won't represent the actual world; it would be too dull for their readers. (67)

Rhoda, while condoning those who are intelligent enough to take part in careful, critical reading of certain higher forms of fiction, presumably only partakes of the 'bookcase full of works on the Woman-question and allied topics' (64) that are stored in the typing school. Like the girl who ran away, Virginia Madden while secretly drinking gin indulges her novel-reading habit. Her sisters comment that 'she seems to have become weak-minded. All her old interests have gone; she reads nothing but novels, day after day' (340). Widdowson is also anxious about his wife Monica's reading cheap, 'yellow back' novels (172). Novel-reading is aligned with excessive, intoxicating consumption, as well as indulgent sentimentality that leads to characters becoming fallen women.

By presenting novels as objects for unhealthy consumption, and aligning reading with physical responses of drunkenness or sexual desire, Gissing draws attention to the text as a material, commodified object that elicits embodied, unmediated and uncritical responses from its readers. As Karin Littau has suggested, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards there can be traced fears concerning the consumer appetite for fiction and, in line with this, a distrust of affective responses to reading, especially in terms of involuntary physiological reactions such as weeping, which were aligned with superficial forms of reading such as that Rhoda of *The Odd Women* complains of.[54] Kate Flint argues that Monica's reading of romance novels in particular enables Gissing

> to use the trope of reading not just for an isolated moralistic end, but as part

[54] Karin Littau, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies and Bibliomania* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p. 21, 38.

> of his whole protest against a system which constrains under-educated middle-class women into leading unfulfilling lives.[55]

This reiterates, then, the sense that assuming women do not need education or training is inherently damaging, and moreover, it shows that the condition of longing for something beyond the stifling options presented – of limited opportunities for work, or of an unhappy marriage – is prevalent for various women characters within the novel. Extending this argument, I suggest that desire for something more might manifest itself in these instances in ways which Gissing deems unhealthy, as reading these texts is seen to be pure pleasure seeking, but nonetheless it is indicative of the underlying need for some further form of fulfilment in these women. Ambition, or hopes for something more, are distinctly present in the characterisation of the crowd of typists present in *The Odd Women*; but frequently, Gissing suggests most of these women lack the ability or education to attain a fulfilling life. Descriptions of texts written for the masses thus serve to ultimately reiterate the divide between the more intelligent, exceptional women of the novel and the masses.

The analogy between typing and creative writing is explored all the more explicitly in *The Type-writer Girl*, in which Allen calls attention to the fact that his first-person narrative is supposedly written by Juliet with her typewriter. This is modelled too by the playful identification between Allen and Juliet, which Mullin has observed: indeed, when Juliet discusses the sale of her story to a periodical she is emphatic about its value noting that she earns 12 guineas, the same amount Allen earned for the sale of his first story to *Cornhill*.[56] Nuancing this point regarding identification I suggest that this less anxious connection between typing and creative writing is partially due to Allen's own relationship to the literary market. Indeed,

---

[55] Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 269.
[56] Mullin, p. 51; Peter Morton, 'Grant Allen: A Biographical Essay' in *Grant Allen: Literature and Politics at the* Fin de Siècle, pp. 23-44 (p. 26).

Gissing himself distanced his texts from Grant Allen's populist writing in a manner that is coupled — with perhaps a tinge of jealousy — with a mention of Allen's material success: '"The Woman Who Did" has for some time been bringing him £25 a week…' he noted.[57] Allen did himself associate his switch from science writing to fiction with the need for money, subsequently writing in an article reflecting upon the beginning of his writing career that he learned to respond to 'what the public felt and thought and wanted' in order to help sales.[58] Further extending this idea of an affinity between typing and creative writing being explored within the novel, I argue that another key element of Juliet's particular expression of this affinity can be attributed to her identification with a mass of typists and a desire to remain part of such a collective due to her proto-feminist beliefs.

The lack of distinction between the two forms of writing can be seen through Juliet's frank treatment of writing creative pieces not only to fulfil a calling, but for material gain, as noted. Juliet does critique other novels: she tends to cite more highbrow works in her literary allusions, and complains of male novelist's depiction of women 'as men wish us to be', lamenting that some women have aimed 'to model ourselves upon it' (199). Juliet tries to assert her difference, claiming that unlike these heroines of male creation her work is a memoir and as such she cannot simply alter her plot and turn on the 'vat' of love-interest for the sake of bettering the reader's experience (114). Of course, shortly after this claim to absolute realism in her depiction of the mundanities of being a typist Juliet encounters her Romeo; her previous comment thus in fact elucidates ironically Allen's own desire and need to satisfy his audience. This has the effect of both illuminating to the reader the

[57] George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, June 23 1895, *Collected Letters*, V, p. 352.
[58] Grant Allen, '"Physiological Aesthetics" and "Philista"' in *My First Book: the experiences of Walter Besant [and others]*, ed. by Jerome K. Jerome (London: Chatto & Windus, 1894), pp. 43-52 (p. 51).

pressures the market presents to a creative writer, while also bowing to these demands in the creation of a love plot. The relationship between creative writing and typing becomes a way of exploring the author's intimate connection with the literary marketplace. As Juliet remains a typist at the end of the novel, Allen demonstrates how material need is not obviated by or separate from creative endeavours, and artistic success does not instantly lift his protagonist out of her poverty.

Thus in *The Type-writer Girl* creative writing and typing are twinned, and this is not necessarily a cause for anxiety; moreover, this allows Juliet to maintain her identification with being a typewriter girl, and thus to identify as part of a sisterhood as typists. While the two kinds of work are certainly differentiated in terms of the experience of the labour itself, and ultimately creative writing is a preferable profession, both are acknowledged as potential callings that are pleasing in part because they lead to a wage. Juliet, like other typists in this early period of typing work, owns her own typewriter which she brings to work; her use of her typewriter for her own affairs elides the separation between her office writing and her more personal or creative writing. The typewriter is part of her identity out of work as well as in work, as she defiantly types a letter of resignation from her first job on her 'private and particular Barlock – the same on which I am inditing these present memoirs' (39). Leah Price has also suggested that the novel explores analogies between typing and creative writing, but argues that ultimately the distinction between the mechanical typist Elsie, and the intelligent secretary and creative writer Juliet, creates a 'distinction between creative production and mechanical reproduction which has traditionally underpinned literary attribution'.[59] However Juliet's typing work is not entirely separated from her creative work,

[59] Leah Price, 'Grant Allen's Impersonal Secretaries', p. 136.

suggesting a closer relationship between the two than Price suggests, as Juliet composes her creative work on the typewriter too. Juliet refers to her first short story as her 'poor little literary first-born', the analogy of reproduction recalling not only maternal reproduction but also the reproduction of the typist, who transcribes the words of others (172). There is a less distinct differentiation between Juliet's typing and her creative work. While her efforts at creative writing do indicate the limitations of typing work and her desire to do something less mundane, she maintains both forms of work as part of her identity. As such, her refusal to distance herself from other typists – even when she is emphatically differentiated from them in terms of her abilities – can be seen to contribute to her desire to twin creative and mechanical writing.

Juliet's ultimate return to the office following the loss of her Romeo is treated with some ambiguity – as well as brevity, as her fate is communicated through a short three-sentence paragraph – as the final line of the novel declares, 'I am still a type-writer girl – at another office' (261). There has, as noted, been a degree of satisfaction detectable in Juliet with regards to her profession at points within the text: it does give her independence, and Juliet's continual reference to herself as a 'type-writer girl' suggests a solidarity with other workers like Elsie rather than a desire to necessarily be seen as superior, in spite of her more impressive education and capabilities. But the novel's conclusion, reinstating Juliet in her former position, cannot be read as a straightforwardly happy ending, especially as it immediately follows her account of her loss of Romeo. The concise nature of this final paragraph in which there is a lack of reflection on the sadness of her fate and the loss of her love can be attributed to the novel's more generally light tone and, at least in part, to Juliet's self-declared belief that in her writing she has 'no knack of

pathos', preferring instead to 'see rather the humorous than the tragic side of things' (171). This preference for humour is given as a reason for not taking up Romeo's suggesting of writing a story about the 'pathetic figure' of the typewriter girl, indicating an underlying sense that the office girl is a pitiful character type in spite of Juliet's more general light-hearted attitude towards her job (171). The final scene of *The Type-writer Girl* might be ambiguous in its sentiment but read in light of this acknowledgement of the pathos of the figure of typewriter girl, Juliet's return to the office has a distinct tinge of disappointment. This is exacerbated by Juliet's having tried to leave the office twice at this point – once to join an anarchist commune, once to follow Romeo – suggesting some dissatisfaction with her position. The troubling repetition of the mechanical job of typing is thus reflected in Juliet's fate, as her recurring attempts to leave the office are repeatedly reversed.

If *The Type-writer Girl* works to reconcile typing and writing, *The Questing Beast* seeks to create a marked distinction between the two. As noted, Rachel Cohen is characterised as exceptional and talented, and her intelligence ensures she is frustrated by her typing work and perceived as distinct from her colleagues. While the world of the office allows her to maintain her independence – both in terms of money (albeit with some struggle) and in terms of allowing her freedom of movement around the city environment – it is also characterised as alienating, repetitive labour. Typing work is a necessity, but the novel that she works on at night is by contrast rarely directly associated with money-making. Rachel believes that once she has completed her novel she will not have 'a vulgar popular success', but she looks forward to the 'respect, perhaps even the admiration … of the living writers whom she cared about' – though she does imagine she could 'leave the office and live in modest comfort, entirely on the proceeds of her novels' (235). Low

adheres to the requirements of realism to a degree, though, as Rachel does make some concession to commercial demands: the first draft of her work is too short to be considered a novel and is described as lacking structure, coming across as a series of impressions instead – and so Rachel revises her work to ensure that it 'reached the required length and some sort of likeness to a story had been achieved' (263). Additionally, towards the end of the novel there is mention of Rachel's recent journalism, indicating a hint of an acknowledgement of her ongoing economic need following the success of her novel. Nevertheless, Rachel's poverty is surprisingly quickly overcome by her transition to a literary career. Low notably did not have to support herself financially through her writing as in spite of her taking on her office job her mother and step-father – and then after she married in her twenties, her husband – could ultimately care for her as she built her writing career.[60] This personal lack of concern for finances on Low's part contributes to the manner in which the end of *The Questing Beast* leads us to assume Rachel has become successful enough to be self-supporting, while not addressing too explicitly the relationship between authorship and money-making.

Thus while the need to make some concession to the literary marketplace is outlined, Rachel's novel is still described as a more highbrow literary text, distinct from popular fiction. Her condemnation for more populist works can be seen in the discussion of the novels her colleagues read:

> They read a new book every three days, but they usually give the realists a very wide berth. Costume-novels (I will *not* call them "historical"), swashbuckling novels, romantic, sentimental, pseudo-religious novels—those are the books they read. (292)

Like Rhoda in *The Odd Women*, her colleagues' novel reading leads to the trouble of 'idealised love', in Rachel's view (292). Interestingly, this delusion regarding love is

[60] Carswell, p. 79.

differentiated from sexual desire, and the expression of the latter is deemed radical and celebrated far more. Rachel has two affairs in the course of the novel and her sexual desire is connected to creative ambitions: it is after her affairs with men she feels the drive to write, and she notes laughingly that one reviewer says her first novel demonstrates her 'erotic mania' (290). Rachel becomes pregnant after one of these affairs, and with her giving birth in the same week as the release of her novel there is a suggestion of a creative, generative form of work that is vocational: the call of writing and the call of motherhood are twinned in the conclusion of the novel.

A hierarchy of types of work is made clear then, and Rachel's contentment at the end of the novel is attributed largely to her creative fulfilment. Attaining this type of fulfilment is due to Rachel's exceptionality, differentiating her from the mass of typists that surround her, and any notion of collectivity or sisterhood is abandoned at the end of the text. Low's conclusion is a revision of Gissing's *The Odd Women*, but one which is decidedly more optimistic for her protagonist. She moves away from the city to the seaside, and – somewhat unusually – the landlady of her London boarding house moves with her and helps her with raising her son. When the father of Rachel's son, who she has not continued a relationship with, comes to visit she assures him that she is doing well and 'flourishing like a green bay-tree' (294). Here Low alludes to the end of Gissing's *The Odd Women* in which Rhoda visits the Madden sisters who have moved away to a seaside town, and reports how she and the school 'flourish like the green bay-tree' (370). Yet, the tone of Gissing's novel is markedly different. In *The Odd Women*, Monica Madden's extra-marital affair led to her rejection by her husband, Widdowson. While her affair was unconsummated, and Widdowson ultimately recognises this and supports his child economically, following Monica's death in childbirth it is the other Madden sisters who raise the

baby. While there is some hope in this ending – Alice Madden has found her 'vocation' in looking after Monica's child, Virginia is recovering from her alcoholism at an institution, and Alice talks to Rhoda about potentially starting a school – Monica's disgrace casts a melancholy feeling over the ending of the novel (370). Monica's child is a girl, and the final words of the novel are Rhoda's, as she whispers to the girl 'Poor little child!' (370). The remark can be ascribed to the absence of the girl's mother, of course, but more than that it seems to comment on the complex, challenging situation for women of the period, and their difficulty in finding happiness and self-fulfilment; Rhoda's anxiety for the little girl suggests that in spite of her optimism regarding the position of women improving she recognises the ongoing nature of such problems. Low's conclusion is far happier, though Rachel's comment that she is 'so grateful' for having given birth to a boy acknowledges too the difficulties of being a woman (295). These typewriter girl novels describe a period of change for their characters, who strive to fulfil their ambitions and find independence, but there is a recognition nonetheless of the inherent difficulties that challenge these women.

Office work in these novels is represented as giving the opportunity for self-fulfilment through its provision of economic independence attained via a relatively respectable, skilled job. It is most frequently portrayed as fulfilling for those characters who are explicitly aligned with feminist politics, who can therefore perceive their individual entry into the public sphere as a sign of the wider progression of the position of women; characters who are less obviously politicised seem less content with the benefits of this kind of work and more aware of its everyday mundanities. These typist characters are distinguished by their ambitious natures, and there are moments in which escape from their work or alternative forms

of self-fulfilment are longed for – though they are not always fully realised. In spite of a distinct awareness that office work entails certain limitations to aspirations, there is acknowledgement that the experience of work for women of this era is especially complicated due to an inherent hopefulness regarding the emancipatory possibilities of work and the progress for women as a collective that comes with it. As such, these typewriter girls remain ambitious and characterised by a hope for finding a new, modern feminine identity through work and the independence it brings.

Chapter 2: ‘I continued to click, click, click, like a machine that I was’: technology, the typist and *Dracula*

In office girl narratives technology is constitutive of identity. While in my first chapter I explored this notion with regards to the emancipatory aspects of technology granting access to new workplaces, and touched upon the sometimes alienating experience of repetitive machine work, in this chapter I will delve further into the relationship between humans and machines and the ways in which they affect one another. In particular, I will firstly analyse the relationship between the body and technology, arguing that in office girl narratives the two become intertwined, adapting to and changing one another. This does not necessarily entail the negation or alienation of the human by technology, as instead this relationship often serves to create a re-focus on the body and the identity of the individual office girl operating the machine. Technologies are shown to alter the identity of the human interacting with them, frequently in beneficial ways such as bestowing a sense of one’s abilities and skills on the operator of the machine. Technologies, as they accumulate defects, also adapt and change with the person working the machine, showing the relationship between human and machine to be individualised. Secondly, I will argue that the office girl’s use of technologies which enable rapid interchange between individuals becomes a vehicle for exploring a less self-contained, more interconnected form of identity, especially when coupled with the emotional labour which is necessarily part of her duties. As such both the individual identity of the office girl and the intersubjective experience – in which subjectivity is formed in relation to others – are affected by technologies.

The office girl is transplanted to the world of the Gothic in this chapter through my focus on Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897): the novel features a typist,

Mina Harker, and brings a range of bureaucratic technologies into a horrific setting. As Jennifer Wicke has pointed out, the novel extends to include the 'banal' features of the modern world; similarly, Richard Menke has described *Dracula* as a kind of 'bureaucratic romance of information management'.[1] The generic shift in this chapter permits a more fantastical envisioning of how technologies affect the identity of the office girl, as well as the collective identity of the group hunting Dracula. The group make use of a range of technologies, with typewriters, telegraphs, phonographs, and Kodak cameras all featuring. These devices are used by the various characters of the group hunting Dracula to record their accounts of the plot of the novel, and these accounts are assembled into a single text by Mina.

The typist is the centre-point of *Dracula* then, and I argue is a version of the New Woman who is portrayed as compiling a multitude of documents into the text we are reading: she is not simply a conduit for the information of others as she is not negated by her position. As part of this, I argue that while previous critics have considered Mina's potential to be seen as a New Woman due to the work she dedicates herself to in the novel, they have neglected to consider the specific importance of her emotional labour.[2] While critics such as Jennifer Fleissner have examined Mina as a version of the secretary who is a kind of 'office wife', and Jordan Kistler has argued for the importance of Mina's sympathetic abilities, I will work to extend and nuance such arguments by applying current understandings of

[1] Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 10; Jennifer Wicke, 'Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and its Media', *ELH*, 59.2 (Summer 1992), 467-493 (p. 468).
[2] See, for instance, Matthew C. Brennan, 'Repression, Knowledge and Saving Souls: The Role of the "New Woman" in Stoker's *Dracula* and Murnau's *Nosferatu*', *Studies in the Humanities*, 19.1 (1992), 1-9; Jennifer L. Fleissner, 'Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, 22.3 (2000), 417-55 (p. 426); Jordan Kistler, 'Mesmeric Rapport: The Power of Female Sympathy in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 23.3 (2018), 366-80; Carol A. Senf, '*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman', *Victorian Studies*, 26.1 (Fall 1982), 33-49.

emotional labour to Mina's work.[3] Emotional labour connotes the work of managing the emotions of oneself, and of others.[4] Applying such ideas to the character of Mina Harker enables a new way of understanding how within her character there is not a straightforward divide between professionalism, and her emotional labour and the sympathetic manner of her personality. Her caring for others can be framed as a kind of labour; it is a component of her duties which Mina emphasises in the text as part of her desire to be regarded as a professional. It does not simply reflect the emotional labour seen in the private sphere as it is regarded by Mina as part of her professional identity. As such, this serves to further underline Mina's professionalism even in unwaged work and complicates our understanding of her apparent retreat into the domestic at the end of the novel. Throughout *Dracula* she is our distinctly present mediator, collecting, synthesising and understanding the narrative of the text.

The work that this particular office girl does – both her mechanical typing duties and her emotional labour – unifies the vampire-hunting collective around her and their subjectivities seem to be understood as inherently intersubjective. Intersubjectivity refers to the notion that subjectivity is socially formed and thus not entirely self-contained: in Nick Crossley's terms, it refers to how 'subjects come into being within a common world'.[5] Within the context of *Dracula*, this refers also to how communication technologies and Mina's emotional labour aid and develop intersubjective connections, offering further opportunity for interchange. This intersubjectivity, heightened by technology, is a counterpart to the boundary-crossing nature of the paranormal: Dracula's vampirism penetrates bodies and later

[3] Fleissner, p. 426; Kistler, pp. 366-80.
[4] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), p. 5-6.
[5] Nick Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994), p. 28.

on in the novel he is able to invade Mina's mind via a telepathic connection. In this instance, Mina becomes another kind of medium as she can channel Dracula's thoughts, an extreme form of the sympathy that is a part of emotional labour. This kind of boundary crossing is a Gothic trope designed to terrify.[6] A number of other boundary-crossings abound in the text: geographical boundaries are traversed, with the move from East to West by Jonathan Harker, and the Count's subsequent move to London; the border between sanity and insanity is explored with Renfield; and the liminal space between sleeping and waking is played with during Lucy's sleepwalking trances. The permeability of boundaries can suggest the vulnerability of the individual. As technology is rendered analogous to unwanted paranormal forms of exchange and the bodily invasion of Count Dracula, the novel seems to potentially be suggesting the dangers of the hyper-intimacy technology can bring. However, there is only a hint of this via analogy; if paranormal exchange creates terror, the technological exchange deployed by the office girl ultimately becomes a source of power against this terror, creating an intersubjective network of individuals and machines who fight against Dracula.

This chapter will explore how technology affects both office girls and the intersubjective collectives that form around such characters, bringing them closer together and deepening connections of sympathy and exchange. Before turning to *Dracula*, I will consider some key theories of the relationship between humans and technology. The frequent figuration of this relationship as alienating or negating the self will be noted; but I will explore too both the more mundane effects and the more beneficial envisionings of this relationship. As part of this I will analyse Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes story 'A Case of Identity' (1891), noting how the

[6] Patricia Murphy, *The New Woman Gothic: Reconfigurations of Distress* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2016), p. 27.

typewriter is used in the discovery of the identity of a mysterious individual. I will then turn to *Dracula* to consider further how technologies can be constitutive of identities in a setting that brings the world of the office girl into the Gothic realm. I argue Mina Harker's character is a version of the New Woman, but extend prior arguments concerning this perspective on Mina by suggesting she is a New Woman whose labours are not limited to her duties of typing and transcribing: rather, her modernised femininity encompasses too the duties of emotional labour associated with secretarial work, managing the emotions of herself and the rest of the collective. Because of this affective work, she coupled with her typewriter becomes the centre of the collective's narrative; she takes command too, via her connection with Dracula, of the paranormal networks of the novel.

BODIES AND MACHINES

The relationship between humans and machines is frequently dwelt upon through the figuration of the physical body-machine relationship. Such figurations provide examples of how the relationship between human and machine can be portrayed as alternately alienating or as positive and powerful. For some, working with a machine negates and disembodies the individual using it. Marx, for instance, in discussions of factory work uses machine metaphors to convey ideas of alienation: he describes how the worker becomes through his labours an 'automatic motor', and a 'crippled monstrosity' who is a 'mere fragment of his own body' and an 'appendage of a machine'.[7] The violence and loss of agency described is a product of the relationship between worker and master, and the inherent issues stemming from the capitalist's ownership of the means of production; it is not due simply to the experience of

[7] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), I, p. 281-2; Karl Marx, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. by David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 514.

working with machines. And yet, it is nevertheless the imagery of the machine that is used to communicate alienation.

The formulation of machines as alienating or rendering the human subject a machine is seen in analysis of office technologies including the typewriter. As noted in my introduction, Heidegger argued that the typewriter 'tears writing from the essential realm of the hand, i.e. the realm of the world.'[8] The typewriter and its mechanised writing disrupt the relationship between body and world, and language and world. Peter Capuano has suggested that in the nineteenth century there were some who would fetishise handwriting as it was perceived to stand for a refuge of handicraft and, through the systemisation of regulating handwriting in schools, it was also regarded as a handicraft that faced being eroded by a more mechanical system.[9] This idealisation of handwriting as more personal and individuated is seen in Heidegger's argument, in which the assumption that machine writing is necessarily deindividualised is perceived to perpetuate the systemisation of writing. Yet, this is not born out by the office girl novels in which the central character composes creative, personal texts on her typewriter, as examined in my first chapter. Moreover, as typewriters become defective they may no longer transcribe words in a systematic manner, meaning that machine writing can also be specific to an individual machine. Building on Heidegger's arguments, Friedrich Kittler extends the idea of fragmentation to suggest that the individual operating the typewriter is in fact wholly negated.[10] Thus although Kittler's assessment of the typewriter argues that this new technology allows women to enter new workplaces, his comments suggest this only

[8] Qtd. in Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 198.
[9] Peter Capuano, *Changing Hands: Industry, Evolution and the Reconfiguration of the Victorian Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), p. 195.
[10] Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans. by Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 351.

occurs through an erasure of the person working at the machine. As Lena Wånggren has noted, this silences the agency of the typist – but the expression of the agency of the typist is a prominent preoccupation of office girl texts.[11] Asserting the fragmentation or negation of the human subject operating a machine ignores the variety of experiences of interacting with technology.

Technology is not always portrayed as negating or alienating the office girl working with the machine. Moreover, it is not always the human who takes on machine-like qualities; as Christoph Asendorf has pointed out, as well as humans being figured as machines the machine often was assigned human characteristics in nineteenth-century discourse.[12] The relationship between humans and machines can be formulated as one of mutual exchange, then, as each has the ability to affect and change the other. Thus for Katherine Hayles, the relationship between human and machine can be seen as a 'distributed system', enabling the 'full expression of human capability'.[13] Such a system does not necessarily disembody the individual, she argues, but rather can accentuate 'embodied awareness'.[14] For Donna Haraway, the figure of the cyborg is a representation of the '*pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries', including between human and machine.[15] Investigations of boundary-crossing in texts by Hayles and Haraway analyse the interaction between human and machine: they observe the potential terrors of the traversing of boundaries, but also

[11] Lena Wånggren, *Gender, Technology and the New Woman* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 42.
[12] Christoph Asendorf, *Batteries of Life: On the History of Things and Their Perception in Modernity*, trans. by Don Reneau (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), p. 41.
[13] N. Katherine Hayles, *How we Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 290.
[14] Ibid., p. 290.
[15] Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991), pp. 149-82 (p. 150).

its benefits; and they argue for an understanding how the representation of this altering of boundaries changes how we regard our selves.

In texts about typists which examine the human-machine relationship, the body is not straightforwardly negated and instead there is typically a focus upon it. The identification between human and machine recurs in texts about typists: as the protagonist of *The Type-writer Girl* declares, 'I continued to click, click, click, like the machine I was.'[16] Contemporary materialist ideas about the body, in which the body was itself a kind of machine, are seeping into Grant Allen's novel here: he was initially a science writer, and in his first book *Physiological Aesthetics* he outlined his notion of the body as a steam engine.[17] This emphasis on materialism had been previously articulated as early as 1748 by Julien La Mettrie in *Machine Man*, in which he argued the human was a machine whose thoughts originated from automatic bodily processes.[18] The use of the machine metaphor for the body is not always intended to communicate a negative idea of the body being alienated or negated, then. Rather, it is a way of expressing an understanding of how the body functions and the unity involved in such processes. Indeed comparisons of the machine and the body can entail a re-focus on the body instead. One manual published for girls in offices by the Remington typewriter company in 1916, which was titled 'How to become a successful stenographer, for the young woman who wants to make good', included a section which advised on 'Making your body an efficient machine'.[19] To refer to the typist as a machine becomes a joke in *The Typist's Gazette*, with one 1896 article declaring both typist and machine to require

[16] Grant Allen [as Olive Pratt Rayner], *The Type-writer Girl* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1897), p. 34. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
[17] Grant Allen, *Physiological Aesthetics* (London: H.S. King & Co., 1877), p. 22.
[18] Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *Machine Man and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. by Ann Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xiv.
[19] Qtd. in Fleissner, p. 424.

'a little greasing now and then to make it go'.[20] In this instance the analogy between body and machine is not deadening or self-negating; rather, the author humorously expresses an identification and affinity between the typist and her typewriter. Examining expressions such as these of working with technologies allows for a broader perspective of the potentials for the relationship between human and machine.

Fiction too pays close attention to the body and bodily experience of the typists. The stress on the sensory nature of interacting with technology emphasises the engagement of the body taking place during office work. As well as the visual component of typing, there is the sound, with the emphatic rattling of typing leaving a writer of one article in *The Typist's Gazette* to remark of a crowd of typists in one room, 'I leave all who have heard a typewriter at work to imagine the noise made by 20 machines going all at once.'[21] In *The Type-writer Girl*, Juliet asserts her typing is like 'music', a 'counter-irritant' to the male clerk's inane chatter (32). Learning touch-typing entails the body acquiring the ability to automatically manipulate a machine, suggesting how bodies adapt to machines.

The mutually constitutive relationship between humans and machines is explored in Arthur Conan Doyle's 'A Case of Identity', a story of detection that is predicated on the human-like individuality of machines.[22] The story focuses upon a mystery concerning a typist, Miss Sutherland: she comes to Holmes to report that her fiancé is missing. She does not announce that she works as a typist – rather, Holmes

---

[20] 'Our Views', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.13, October 8 1896, p. 196
[21] 'Fair Typists and Their Treatment', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.13, October 8 1896, p. 269.
[22] Morag Shiach touches upon this story in her chapter on typewriters, concluding that the detection via a machine is related to the generic convention of detective fiction deciphering the 'apparently random experience of the modern and the urban'; I however emphasise how the story explores the ways in which human and machine affect and change one another. See Morag Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture, 1890-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 69.

deduces this is the case, telling Watson he noted that the 'double line a little above the wrist, where the typewritist presses against the table, was beautifully defined'.[23] The machine has left its traces on the typist's body; so too Holmes can tell Miss Sutherland is short-sighted, with marks on her face left behind by her glasses. He queries if her sight causes trouble to her work, and she explains that she has learned to touch-type: 'now I know where the letters are without looking' (51). As noted, touch typing serves to underline the sensory element of work, and its lasting effects on physical, muscle-based memory. In this case concerning the mysterious identity of her fiancé, a component of her own identity – her working identity – is legible through the way in which her machine has altered her body.

The solution to the mystery of the fiancé centres upon the technology of the typewriter: while this fiancé, who Miss Sutherland had only met in person once, asked her to handwrite her letters to him, his were always typed. She reports that he insisted on this: 'he said that when I wrote them they seemed to come from me, but when they were typewritten he always felt that the machine had come between us' (54). This sentiment is predicated on the fairly typical argument of handwriting being personal, and typing anonymous. But Holmes proves this is not the case as the typewriter used by the fiancé is what reveals the fiancé's true identity. The man in question, who Miss Sutherland met at a ball, was in fact her disguised stepfather who hoped by making Miss Sutherland fall in love with him and then jilting her, she would be heartbroken and never marry. If she was to marry, she would take the inheritance bequeathed to her by her uncle which while at home she granted to her mother and stepfather. Miss Sutherland never saw through the disguise her stepfather

[23] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'A Case of Identity' in *The Adventures and Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 1996), p. 58. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

wore; while this is premised in part upon her naivety in contrast to the shrewd perception of Holmes, as well as her short-sightedness, the typewriter seems to be all the more distinctive than the physical presence of the individual in this story. By comparing a love letter from the missing fiancé to a note Holmes receives from the stepfather in response to Holmes asking for a meeting, he matches the two identities. As he remarks, 'a typewriter has really quite as much individuality as a man's handwriting. Unless they are quite new, no two of them write exactly alike' (61). The 'characteristic defects' of the typewriter, visible from the marks on the page, are caused by the typist's use of the machine with some letters becoming more worn than others from use (63). These marks mirror those on Miss Sutherland's body, showing a correspondence between human and machine affecting one another. This play on the trope of mysteries that are solved via handwriting creates an alternative graphology and serves to demonstrate how even machine writing can be specific and individualised, and traced back to a particular user of the machine.

THE TYPIST OF *DRACULA*

The physical body-machine relationship in 'A Case of Identity' provides a way of exploring the connections between humans and technologies, and how the two can alter one another. In Conan Doyle's short story, technology becomes a component of the user operating the machine, legible on the typist's body and leading to the discovery of an unknown identity. *Dracula* too features a typist character whose identity is informed by her interactions with technology. Mina Harker is a version of the office girl: her work is not waged, but it is emphatically skilled and substantial. Through Mina the novel engages, albeit in a conflicted manner, with the idea of the New Woman. Understanding Mina as a version of the New Woman figure expands

perceptions of the New Woman beyond a narrow type: Mina has a distinctly modernised femininity as expressed by her technological skills enabling her to continue a form of fulfilling work during marriage. Moreover, her technological work is coupled with her emotional labour; such labour would be expected of office girls, and the emotional labour of Mina, while unwaged, does not simply reflect emotional labour typified by the private sphere. Instead, it informs her more mechanical work as typist of the narrative of *Dracula*, allowing her to understand and collect the narratives of others. As such Mina's emotional labour, I argue, cannot be understood simply as the feminine sympathy expected of women in the private sphere: instead, it is also a part of her professional identity and is often framed by Mina as a duty. Further, I will argue that understanding Mina's emotional labour leads also to a new perspective on her marriage to Jonathan as not simply a romantic partnership or a retreat into the domestic. Rather, this relationship shows how Mina's emotional labour seeps into her private life, and that Mina chooses the marriage in part because it allows her a way of fulfilling her desire for a vocation, and to retain aspects of her professional identity. As a version of the office girl, Mina is emphatically skilled and fulfils her duties both mechanical and emotional in such a way that leads her to organise the creation of a collective narrative needed to aid the destruction of Dracula.

The consistent focus upon Mina and her typing of the narrative emphasises her centrality to the technologised network that forms the novel, and office work is brought into – and eventually tames – the world of the Gothic. Mina's typing duties could suggest that she adheres to the trope of the typist as conduit having few words of her own, and taking down the dictation of others. Yet her letters and journals occupy a significant portion of the text and in a popular novel in which a number of

the narrators are different stereotypes, rather than rounded characters, Mina's voice is more distinctive.[24]

While Mina's work is not waged employment, it is nevertheless portrayed as substantial and skilled labour. Stoker's deployment of the office girl character type and the emphasis he places on her work even while bringing her out of the workplace positions Mina alongside – rather than subservient to – the other professionals who compose the vampire-hunting group. Indeed, the professionalism of the group is emphasised by their range of jobs: there is a psychiatrist, a lawyer, and a collector of expertise in Van Helsing who is a professor, a medical doctor and seemingly also well-versed in law – aristocratic Holmwood and Quincey Morris are the exceptions in this group of workers. *Dracula* thus plays with the trope from mystery fiction of conventional authorities, such as the police, being of little use as Ross Forman has noted; the novel establishes instead the importance of a group of experts and the strengths they find as a collective.[25] Mina's particular skills, I note, are key to the formation of this group.

As Mina is another version of the office girl she can also be understood as a kind of New Woman. Understanding her as such allows for a more expansive, encompassing perspective of what the New Woman could be, and is an acknowledgement of the variety of experiences of modernised femininity at the end of the nineteenth century. As noted, a number of critics have debated the influence of the New Woman stereotype upon the formation of Mina's character. Critics who argue that ultimately she is not a New Woman, and that Stoker's novel is a conservative rejection of this type, tend to devalue the work Mina conducts during

[24] The idea of rounded vs. flat characters is derived from E.M. Forster, 'People (continued)' in *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 71-84.
[25] Ross G. Forman, 'A Parasite for Sore Eyes: Rereading Infection Metaphors in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 44.4 (2016), 925-47 (p. 928).

the novel.[26] While Jennifer Wicke has similarly focused on the secretarial work of Mina, discussing how she analyses information and increasingly becomes the author of the text, Wicke largely discusses Mina's work via the category of 'consumption'.[27] In doing so, Wicke argues that Mina takes part in a kind of 'vampiric typewriting' that consumes words in order to reproduce them – much as Dracula consumes others to reproduce them as vampires.[28] This focus on consumption turns into a focus on mass culture in general and so reiterates an association between modernised femininity, mass culture and consumption; I instead focus on Mina's positioning of herself as professional, including with regards to her emotional labour, and how analysing these categories might expand our understanding of her work and her modernised femininity.

Mina does distance herself from the figure of the New Woman; but this rejection relies on the unflattering, pejorative stereotype of the New Woman found in contemporary journalism, rather than a fuller recognition of how the New Woman figure influenced and reflected modernised femininity. As Mina describes an afternoon tea taken with Lucy, she remarks, 'I believe we should have shocked the "New Woman" with our appetites' (86). Here Mina is relying on a particular version of the New Woman type: one who is austere, and refuses frivolous pleasures. But the New Woman was not always portrayed as abstemious and severe; imagery of the New Woman, for instance, veered between portraying this figure as skinny and boyish, or exaggeratedly voluptuous.[29] She mocks too the New Woman's supposedly

[26] For suggestions that Stoker is rejecting the New Woman in his novel see, for instance, Tanya Pikula, 'Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Late-Victorian Advertising Tactics: Earnest Men, Virtuous Ladies, and Porn', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 55.3 (2012), 283-302 (p. 289); Senf, '*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman'.
[27] Wicke, p. 469.
[28] Ibid., p. 476.
[29] See Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), p. 167.

assertive ways, contemplating how in the future such women might conduct their relationships: 'But I suppose the New Woman won't condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it, too!' (87). Yet opinions on romantic relationships varied amongst New Woman writers, as I explore further in my next chapter.[30] These rejections of the New Woman on Mina's part thus inadvertently underline that the New Woman is not always a straightforward or simple character type, even when considering stereotypes of the New Woman. While Mina might not self-identify with the New Woman type, we can see how the novel's most explicit denials of Mina as a New Woman are reliant on a stereotype that ignores the idea that the term 'New Woman' can encompass a diverse range of versions of modernised womanhood.

Mina is engaged, but plans to retain her identity as a worker in a new form when married. She has previously supported herself while single by working as a teacher; now, as she is planning to marry solicitor Jonathan Harker she describes learning typing and shorthand in a letter to her friend Lucy. She portrays her skill building as wanting to be 'useful to Jonathan' and allow him to dictate his work to her for her to transcribe.[31] Yet this seemingly subservient, domestic attitude belies her further remarks, in which she paints her duties as professional ones. She declares her journal, which she will write in shorthand, will not be one of those 'two-pages-to-the-week-with-Sunday-squeezed-in-a-corner diaries, but a sort of journal which I can write in whenever I feel inclined', that will be a kind of 'exercise book' (55). She will, she writes,

[30] See, for example, Mona Caird, *The Morality of Marriage* (London: George Redway, 1897); Hugh Stutfield, 'Tommyrotics', *Blackwoods*, June 1895, 833-45 (p. 835).
[31] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 55.

> try to do what I see lady journalists do: interviewing and writing descriptions and trying to remember conversations. I am told that, with a little practice, one can remember all that goes on or that one hears said during a day (55).

Mina might not earn a wage but she is certainly portrayed as a worker of sorts; training and developing skills, her point of comparison is the professional role of journalist. Her attempt to improve her memory seems to work too: she is adept at memorising train timetables both in Britain and, once the collective travel eastwards, abroad. This leads Van Helsing to dub her a 'so clever lady' and he declares that this ability is an unusual one for young ladies (164). This dialogue with Van Helsing is recorded by Mina in her journal. She notes that she transcribes the conversation verbatim, perhaps self-conscious of appearing immodest in her inclusion of Van Helsing's compliments (163). Nevertheless she does record Van Helsing's remarks, indicating a self-awareness of her talents and her desire for others to recognise them. Her talents are typically closely related to the technologies she deploys as is made clear by her praise for her traveller's typewriter (302). Mina has a repeatedly mentioned dedication to her work then, acquiring a multitude of skills that aid not only her husband but the group of vampire-hunters, aligning her own labours with their professionalism.

The office girl is frequently characterised by her ambitions and desires which extend beyond the world of the office; Mina dextrously fulfils her desire for marriage, as well as to do some form of work. As Jennifer Fleissner has suggested Mina is emblematic of the development of a particular kind of modern femininity, able to move between different spheres and skilfully process information like the discreet secretary, and then marry and turn to a more domestic life.[32] Yet I contend that this is not a simple move from public sphere to private: while the marriage bar

[32] Fleissner, p. 448.

might take her outside of the world of waged work, she remains a worker of sorts. Moreover, I argue that it is necessary to revise prior understandings of Mina's modernised feminine identity from critics such as Fleissner via an analysis of Mina's emotional labour. While Fleissner touches upon the idea of the secretary as kind of 'office wife', I contend that further detailing of the nuances of emotional labour and how theories of such labour apply to Mina need exploring.[33] In doing so, we can acknowledge that emotional labour is not a twentieth century phenomenon – it is often associated with post-industrial forms of work – but has long been a component of the office girl's work. Moreover, examining Mina's emotional labour expands our perspective on Mina's professional identity, which extends to these caring duties.

Emotional labour is the work of producing and managing the emotions of others, as well as the careful managing of one's own emotions and how they are conveyed to others.[34] As noted, while typically theories of emotional labour are applied to post-industrial forms of work in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, secretaries are commonly cited as examples of emotional labourers prior to this.[35] Office girls would commonly be expected to perform certain caring roles within the office. Private feeling and relationships thus become part of the world of work and, as Arlie Hoschild has argued, this has the potential to alienate the worker from their feelings and relationships.[36] With regards to *Dracula*, I will touch upon some of the alienating elements of emotional labour that can be perceived through Mina's relationship with her husband and with Dracula. However, Mina's affective work tends to largely lay particular significance not on the alienating, exploitative

[33] Ibid., p. 426.
[34] Hochschild, p. 5-6.
[35] See Michael Hardt, 'Affective Labor', *boundary 2*, 26.2 (Summer 1999), 89-100 (p. 93); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), p. 132.
[36] Hochschild, p. 7.

elements of this kind of work, but on the sense that emotional labour is a key part of her duties – as feminised emotional labour often is – and it is therefore something which she takes some pride in.

Mina's emotional labour is not exclusive to her taking on of a secretarial role during the course of the novel: indeed, her previous work as a teacher also seems to have involved emotional labour. In writing to Lucy, who was once her pupil, she describes herself as Lucy's 'friend and guide' (101). In a more motherly role in this instance, this positioning of her relationship to Lucy indicates her affective work: she was professionally guiding Lucy, yet also formed a friendship as a part of her duties. Mina's vocation as a teacher entailed emotional labour it seems, and this continues into her duties for the vampire-catching collective.

Mina's caring duties during the course of the novel strongly resemble those of the office girl, and thus reframe what might be seen as private feeling as part of a professionalised position. This affective labour is distinctly feminised, as that of the office girl would be: when Lord Goldalming is mourning the death of his fiancée Lucy, the other men surreptitiously exit the room, leaving it to Mina to comfort him – a role she perceives as her distinct duty (203). Awaking from a hypnotic trance she has been placed in later in the novel, she immediately goes to make tea for the group (298). While these might seem like conventionally feminine duties in the home, they can also be understood as versions of the emotional labour undertaken by the secretary when viewed alongside the other tasks Mina takes responsibility for in the novel, particularly her writing and transcribing. It is her emotional labour, combined with the skills of the typist, which make Mina a particularly adept compiler of the collective narrative. Mina's positioning as a version of the New Woman thus

encompasses the diverse aspects of her character and amplifies her suitability to be the centre of the collective combating Dracula.

As such, while Mina's femininity suggests she adheres to some of the traditional conceptions of womanhood this does not obviate her professionalism. She is described as having a 'woman's heart' (207), a phrase denoting a particular, conventional perception of femininity. Yet, this description, said by Van Helsing, follows on from his pronouncing that Mina has a 'man's brain', and that of a 'gifted' man in particular (207). This remark is made in response to Mina's idea of compiling a collective narrative from the accounts of events by different characters in order to create a chronology of what has happened so far, in the hope of tracking down the Count. As she declares, 'In this matter dates are everything' (202). The gender essentialism of Van Helsing's comments about Mina is typical of dominant middle-class Victorian views of gender.[37] Yet, as Jordan Kistler has pointed out, many New Women also believed in 'biological essentialism' and gender difference and celebrated what they perceived to be 'feminine' qualities.[38] The consistent ascription of qualities to masculine and feminine in the novel thus does little to challenge dominant gender ideologies, but this was not necessarily the project of all New Women, either. As Kistler also notes, Mina's ability to sympathise with others is typically seen as a particularly feminine power.[39] What Kistler frames as sympathy I argue should be repositioned as a key component of Mina's emotional labour: it is not simply a naturalised impulse, but rather a duty which entails a sense of obligation and which helps inform Mina's sense of herself as fulfilling a kind of professional

[37] Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 1.
[38] Kistler, p. 369.
[39] Ibid., p. 366.

vocation. Her sympathy is thus part of her emotional labour, as she works to understand others such that she can create a narrative.

Mina's capacity for emotional labour is underlined by her comprehension of shorthand, which brings together her work identity and her understanding of others. Shorthand had been standardised by Isaac Pitman in 1837; as Helen Groth points out, Pitman was a believer in the 'revolutionary potential for shorthand' to form a swift communication network.[40] Shorthand, Pitman hoped, could provide a universal written language that would aid interaction and sympathy. *Dracula* does not quite share this utopic view of Pitman's writing method, but nevertheless Mina's command of shorthand indicates how she outstrips other characters in her efforts to communicate and comprehend. There are two scenes of incomprehension at shorthand, both involving characters who are frequently defined as intelligent and knowledgeable, highlighting that it is a specialist skill and that understanding others is a particular strength of Mina's. Count Dracula, discovering Jonathan's letter to Mina written in shorthand, becomes angry due to his confusion at these 'strange symbols' — he wishes to monitor Jonathan's correspondence to prevent his escape (46). Mina hands Van Helsing her diary as a record of her experience, but initially gives him her shorthand diary which he cannot read as a joke, before revealing that she has transcribed the diary for him — leading him to dub her a 'so clever woman' (163). Shorthand functions both as a specific skill not accessible to all but also, as Mina has command of shorthand, it is a site of potential exchange and sympathy that is part of her emotional labour.

This particular skill of shorthand is one facet of Mina's more general positioning as the key emotional labourer within the novel. Mina records that writing

[40] Helen Groth, 'The Soundscapes of Henry Mayhew: Urban Ethnography and Technologies of Transcription', *Cultural Studies*, 18.3 (December 2012), 109-30 (p. 118).

in her diary gives her a sense of calm which is akin to that of writing in shorthand. She describes writing in her journal as being like 'whispering to one's self and listening at the same time', a comment which suggests the importance of sympathy and understanding, even of oneself (72). This sense of calm extends to her moments of emotional labour with others. Mina offers to transcribe Dr Seward's phonograph diary so that others might read it. He is concerned about her hearing his description of Lucy's death, as well as the destruction of Lucy once she has transformed into a vampire. But while Mina notes the device means the accounts are 'cruelly true' and she is pleased no one else will have to hear them again, she insists she is not distressed and coolly types up and organises Seward's accounts (237). This calm ability to comprehend, collect narratives and carry out caring duties can also be seen in her exchange with Seward's mentally ill patient Renfield: in this instance he is at his most sane and comprehensible, seemingly influenced by Mina's presence. At the end of this conversation, there is another instance of recording the act of recording, with Mina transcribing and compiling until 'all the records we have are complete and in order' (207). This purposeful inclusion of the act of recording serves to underline the moment when the collective officially forms: Mina triumphantly reports on the creation of a counter-Dracula committee swiftly after the collection of various records that follows Mina's conversation with Renfield. The committee is set up in direct response to the collective narrative that Mina helps assemble, then; it is this act, combining mechanical and emotional labour, which enhances the connection of the group, synthesising their perspectives into a more unified collective view to help counter Dracula.

Such an understanding of emotional labour can alter our perception of the relationships of the novel. Scenes of sympathy and intimacy can be linked with and

motivated by Mina's professional duties. As noted, critiques of the effects of emotional labour often cite a resultant alienation in feeling, in which the worker recognises the ability to change and distort their own feelings.[41] Intimate relationships can therefore be warped and changed by the recognition that emotional labour is a part of waged labour, too. As a teacher Mina seemed to have taken part in affective work; while her current role is unwaged she seems to retain a similar attitude in combining duty with feeling. Emotional labour can alter our perception of even Mina's relationship with Jonathan, then. As noted, while the marriage bar might mean she no longer has waged work, she seems determined to remain a worker of sorts, painting her duties as professional ones. Marrying Jonathan helps her in this, as she clearly foresees their future as entailing her working with him and is learning skills in preparation for this. And marrying Jonathan might also expand her opportunities: when he is in Transylvania, and prior to knowing anything has gone wrong, Mina speculates to Lucy that it must be 'so nice to see strange countries', and hopes that she and her husband might one day 'see them together' (55). Motivations for romantic relationships become more complex when an ability for emotional labour is taken into account, as one can recognise one's ability to make use of and control emotion. While this is not to suggest that there is a pretence to Mina's feelings towards Jonathan, her desire to marry Jonathan seems to be coloured by a desire for a continuing vocation and the potential for an expansion of opportunities to do things such as travel. Such intimate relationships necessarily become complicated in motivation when emotions have begun to be understood as a type of currency.

[41] Hochschild, p. 7.

Mina and her best friend Lucy have been compared for the differing constructions of their femininity, but the relationship between their respective femininities and ideas of emotional labour and collectivity should also be considered as a mark of the important contrasts between these two characters. Such comparison serves to further highlight the importance of Mina's emotional labour and how it interacts with her work unifying the band of individuals who fight Dracula. Lucy is markedly not an organised professional as Mina is: her diary-writing, taken up after being inspired by Mina's own journal, is far more erratic than that of her friend. Lucy's letters are, as Katherine Mullin has pointed out, more rambling, with important information such as the date of her wedding only added in as an afterthought in a postscript.[42] Lucy has a more girlish femininity and a distinct appetite for men and Lucy's vision of a collective is a romantic one, even if she discusses this idea jokingly: she asks her friend after discussing her various male suitors and her difficulty choosing between them, 'Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?' (60). This longing seems to almost come true: Van Helsing dubs her, once she has died, a 'polyandrist' due to the multiple blood infusions she received in an attempt to save her, all from her suitors (158). Lucy's desires become more explicit in her life as a vampire known as the 'bloofer lady'; encountering her suitors, she boldly asks Holmwood for a kiss (146). In Lucy, collectivity through blood transfusion is explicitly tied to her multiple suitors, and thus translates to a threatening polymorphous desire that is more plainly expressed once she has been turned into a vampire. The importance of Mina's work to her identity becomes clearer through her own, distinct relationship to ideas of collectivity, which entails the bringing together of narratives through

[42] Katherine Mullin, *Working Girls: Fiction, Sexuality and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 70.

technical and emotional work to create a closely-knit group story. This leads to the birth of the novel itself; so too notions of collectivity are reflected by Mina's reproduction, as her and Jonathan's son has a 'bundle of names [which] links all our little band of men together' (326).

Highlighting Mina's centrality to the novel underlines the importance of the narrative she compiles and the technology that enables her to do so. Even if the novel has a conflicted perspective on the New Woman, Stoker's use of the office girl trope suggests a more expansive perspective on the New Woman is necessary; for Mina, her modernised femininity encompasses professionalism and a work identity, including an affinity for affective labour. Her emotional labouring is key to her ability to compile a collective narrative and highlights her connections to others, as well as her ability to unify the group. Technology, as it is made use of by Mina, enhances collectivity and connectivity – the latter of which becomes a source of terror when related to the paranormal narrative of Mina's encounter with Dracula.

PARANORMAL NETWORKS

Modern technologies and paranormal forces are paired in *Dracula* through ideas of communication and intimacy at a distance: Mina becomes central to both networks in the second half of the novel. Towards the end of the nineteenth century this pairing of technology and the paranormal was not atypical, as technologies were used in paranormal research such as experiments in automatic writing on the typewriter; and analogies were made between the paranormal and technologies such as the communication networks of telegraphy and telepathy.[43] In *Dracula* the two are

[43] Jill Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859-1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 8; Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 14.

all the more emphatically aligned when a telepathic connection is established between Dracula and Mina in the final portion of the novel. In this vein, Jennifer Wicke has argued that mass culture is the social force most analogous to Dracula.[44] While Dracula's attack of Mina is a physical breaking of boundaries, including forcing her to drink his blood, a mental connection is also formed between them allowing each of them to read the other's thoughts. As both Wicke and Jill Galvan have pointed out, Mina functions as a medium in two senses in the novel at this point: she is a typing, secretarial medium, and also a spiritual medium, channelling thoughts from a different realm.[45] Yet, while both discuss the feminised nature of these types of mediumship, I will extend these arguments by incorporating into these ideas of mediumship the category of emotional labour. The emotional labour that accompanies technological work is manifested in Mina's relationship with Dracula, which she must work to cultivate in order to defeat the vampire.

Mina, as noted, is not simply a conduit for typing up the information of others but rather is able to emotionally labour to understand, analyse and synthesise their narratives. The less self-contained subjectivity that comes from such work can entail terrifying vulnerability when connected to the occult; but so too it can lead to a positive kind of correspondence between our selves and others, as seen through Mina and the vampire hunting group. While initially her telepathic relationship with Dracula does simply render her a conduit, with time she is able to control and understand her connection to the Count as well, and makes use of it to gain information. This pairing of technology and the paranormal in Mina via conceptions of communication furthers our understanding of the impact of both: they do not necessarily negate or alienate the body, but instead create a more porous subject.

[44] Wicke, p. 469.
[45] Galvan, p. 13; Wicke, p. 490.

Technology and the paranormal, in this guise, lead characters to being more immediately affected by external sources — and, also, more affecting.

Dracula's attack on Mina entails penetrating her body in two ways: there is a visceral, bodily assault, and latently this assault creates a mental invasion. Mina has been temporarily excluded from the collective's meetings after the others conclude that this is necessary in order to protect her and thus she is alone in her room when Dracula invades. Unable to fall asleep, she describes 'a lethargy creeping over me', and looking over at her window notes the mist that was outside seems to be seeping into the room: 'the mist was spreading' (226). Dracula's transformation into an almost immaterial mist prefigures his immaterial invasion of Mina's mind subsequent to his attack. When the group enter the room to find Dracula attacking Mina, the description of Dracula emphasises the scar on his forehead, a mark which is subsequently replicated on Mina's body when Van Helsing places a communion wafer on Mina's forehead as a blessing and it burns her; this mark underlines her new line of communication to Dracula. There is a terror in this intimacy that is initially very visceral: Seward describes discovering Mina with Dracula and notes how he saw Dracula holding both of Mina's hands and gripping 'the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom' (247). Holding Mina's face to his bare chest in which he has made a wound, the Count compels her to drink his blood. This is akin to 'a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink' Seward reports, but the initial description of Mina and Dracula seems far more sinister and sexualised than Seward's analogy acknowledges (247). The idea that this is akin to or alluding to sexual invasion is reiterated when waking from her trance Mina declares herself, 'Unclean, unclean!' and unfit to be near her husband: 'I must touch him or kiss him no more' (248). Mina tells of how Dracula claimed her as

'flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press for a while', and told her how she would later become his 'companion and helper' (252). This speech recalls the Biblical creation of woman, and seems a dark, violent version of a marriage service.

The sexualised, bodily intimacy which is forced upon Mina is replicated by the intimacy created by her telepathic connection to Dracula after the attack. The hyper-intimacy of such a connection is akin to that seen in 1886 novel *Tomorrow's Eve* by Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. In this strange and decidedly misogynistic novel, a fictionalised Thomas Edison offers to make a lovesick friend of his a machine-woman that will look like the woman he is in love with, Alicia. Edison assures his friend that this robot will be an improvement on the real Alicia, who is dubbed vapid by the men in the novel. The perfection of this robot extends to seamless communication between the lovers through telepathy, with Edison informing his friend, 'It will even be unnecessary for you to articulate the words yourself. Hers will reply to your thoughts and your silence'.[46] Telepathy is once again associated with technology and progress, as well as deeper intimacy; but the creation of a machine-woman for a man's pleasure is also a form of asserting patriarchal control and invading the female body. In *Dracula* the invasion of Mina is similarly sexualised – notably, many of the other vampires in the novel are women – and Mina feels both her mind and body are polluted by the attack.

Yet in *Dracula* telepathy becomes another instance which demonstrates the office girl's alignment with capability, knowledge and modernity, as well as the emotional labour which is a component of her duties. The rest of the collective veer between seeing the connection established between Mina and Dracula as a potential

[46] Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, *Tomorrow's Eve*, trans. by Robert Martin Adams (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 152.

vulnerability and a power: Van Helsing suggests 'we must keep her [Mina] ignorant of our intent' (281) in case Dracula exploits this telepathic connection. Mina, however, feels she can make use of the telepathic connection; she asks Van Helsing to hypnotise her in the hope this will put her in a state in which can she use her telepathic connection to Dracula to gather information about him. She believes this will enable her to communicate Dracula's thoughts to the group: 'I can speak, and speak freely' (271). Much as Mina's work as an office girl entails not simply being a conduit, Mina's requests to be hypnotised mark her out as not simply a manipulable hypnotised subject, but a medium with plans of how to gather information.

The scenes in which Mina is in a hypnotised trance can be compared to the scenes in which Dracula's presence puts Lucy in a trance to further indicate that Stoker is emphasising Mina's capability. Lucy's trances lead her only to further trouble: she is caught leaning out of the window looking for the Count, and sleepwalks outside if not barred in her room. Notably, Lucy's falling prey to Dracula is countered not by the contemporary practice of hypnotism, but on Van Helsing's advice by garlic flowers, a far more mystical and ancient apotropaic.[47] Hypnotism, on the other hand, is endorsed by the medical men of the collective. Earlier on in the novel Van Helsing is attempting to convince Dr Seward, who is initially sceptical of paranormal phenomena, that Lucy's supposed illness is in fact caused by a vampire attack. When Seward expresses disbelief in vampires, Van Helsing aligns hypnotism with such occult theories questioning,

> I suppose now you do not believe in corporeal transference. No? Nor in materialisation. No? Nor in astral bodies. No? Nor in the reading of thought. No? Nor in hypnotism— (171)

[47] Stoker is sometimes cited as the originator of using garlic against vampires, but using garlic as apotropaic is a tradition predating Stoker found in several different cultures. See Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial and Death: Folklore and Reality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 48.

At this point Seward interrupts to note that he does believe in hypnotism. 'Charcot has proved that pretty well,' (171) Seward retorts, referring to a French neurologist who would hypnotise patients supposedly suffering from hysteria at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris as a form of treatment.[48] Despite Seward's convictions hypnotism was a contested practice: in medical circles there were some fears about the ramifications of placing patients in a trance state and, notably, there were concerns that women were particularly susceptible to hypnotism and its effects.[49] Scepticism towards hypnotism is present in a British dictionary of psychology published just a few years before *Dracula*, which contended hypnotism was of little use to the medical profession.[50] This was due not only to concerns for the patient or beliefs that hypnotism was not helpful: its associations with the paranormal, which Van Helsing makes clear and can also be seen through the Society of Psychical Research's experiments into hypnotism as a way of proving thought-transference during the 1880s, contributed to scepticism about hypnotism.[51] Nevertheless, although the paranormal elements of hypnotism are brought out in this discussion, hypnotism is aligned more clearly with modern science through Dr Seward's endorsement of the practice.

Thus even when falling prey to the paranormal, Mina is associated with knowledge, information and scientific process – and an effective use of emotional labour. As Roger Luckhurst suggests, these trances of Mina's 'work *for* powers of

---

[48] Anne Stiles, 'Cerebral Automatism, the Brain, and the Soul in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences*, 15 (2006), 131-52 (p. 132).
[49] Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 219.
[50] Daniel Hack Tuke, *A Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*, ed. by D. H. Tuke (London: J&A Churchill, 1892), I, p. 605.
[51] Gordon Epperson, *The Mind of Edmund Gurney* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), p. 72-3.

modernity and progress', as they aid the capture of Dracula.[52] The scenes of hypnotism are reminiscent of a séance and again emphasise Mina's representation as an emotionally labouring medium. Once she has been hypnotised, Van Helsing questions her as to where she is; her mind communes with Dracula and she gives a response 'dreamily, but with intention; it was as though she were interpreting something' (271). Explicitly aligning Mina's two forms of mediumship, Jonathan remarks, 'I have heard her use the same tone when reading her shorthand notes' (272). Through her hypnotic state, in which she can hear waves, they deduce Dracula is moving back east on a boat. It becomes clear through subsequent attempts at hypnotising Mina that Dracula's determination to escape them has led to him cutting off his telepathic connection to Mina; nonetheless, thanks to the pieces of knowledge she has previously gathered Van Helsing declares of Mina that, prophet-like, 'her eyes have seen where we were blinded' (306). The permeability between different selves which is established by both telepathy, and telepathy aided by hypnotism, is used as another kind of communication technology which is effectively manipulated by Mina.

Moreover, the connection further underlines that emotional labour is a key component of her professional duties. To connect with others as part of one's work is a form of emotional labour which is seen at the level of the paranormal in Mina's connection with Dracula. In these hypnotic states, she feels as he feels, experiencing a stillness that is 'like death' (272), and hearing everything Dracula does. Emotional work, requiring the creation of an affinity between oneself and another, is enacted here; but there is a fear of a kind of extreme sympathy between the two that might extend to a slippage between their identities. Van Helsing notably worries these

[52] Luckhurst, p. 213.

hypnotisms will lead to a 'change in her' involving Mina becoming more like Dracula, a change which he monitors by examining 'her teeth very carefully' (291). There is analogous danger is over-identification with another individual in emotional work, in which one's own emotions become alienated not only through manipulating how one's emotions are presented to others, but through ignoring one's emotions in favour of focusing on those of another. This extreme emotional alienation which involves detachment from one's own emotions, and further a giving over of oneself, resembles the feared potential outcome of Mina's affinity with Dracula. But in spite of the horrific supernatural transformation that Mina begins to experience as she undergoes her trances, she is adamant that this is a part of her duties to save the collective.

Positioning Mina as office girl, conducting her mechanical and emotional duties, underlines her importance to the collective as well as her distinctly professionalised, modernised feminine identity – but there is a shift in how this identity is portrayed towards the end of the text. It is ultimately knowledge and information collected by and received through Mina that lead to the defeat of Dracula. The final note of the novel is written by Mina's husband, Jonathan Harker, and he emphasises Mina's particular contribution to the creation of the group identity. She is described as 'brave and gallant' and loved by this band of Dracula's foes, and as such Stoker portrays Mina as the centre of a network of individuals and technologies (327). Twinned with her typewriter and other technologies and compiler of the collective narrative of *Dracula*, she is a subject who has been technologised, a centre-point for various streams of information. The note reflects too upon the preceding text, and Jonathan declares 'there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting' (326). Jonathan suggests that this

means no-one will accept the veracity of their story, believing that reproduction through technology detracts from the authority of a text (326). This contradicts Mina's experience with the phonograph, notably: when listening to Seward's phonograph diary recalling the death of Lucy she described it as being 'cruelly true', affecting her emotionally (196). These contradictory views of narratives experienced via technologies could be attributed to the heightened sympathy and sensitivity that is typical of Mina's character; this could also be Jonathan reflecting on the fantastical nature of the story that precedes his note which no longer seems believable in his newly safe, domestic world.

Mina's becoming a mother is emphasised in Jonathan's note, too, and as such there is a definite shift towards the domestic; but understanding Mina's duties of emotional labour does somewhat reframe her marriage and thus renders more ambiguous this apparent conservative turn. As noted, emotional labour can alienate the individual worker, with emotions coming to be viewed as something that can be used as a kind of currency. Mina's marriage to Jonathan can thus be understood in a new manner then, motivated not simply by romantic love but also by the opportunities that marriage to Jonathan brings; that is, allowing her to continue her ability to fulfil her sense of vocation albeit under a different guise. Clearly, when she discusses earlier on in the text learning typing and shorthand and acting as she believes 'lady journalists' do, she understands her marriage as containing within it the potential of still having professionalised duties (55). While there is a shift in focus at this point of the text towards the domestic, this prior emphasis on professionalism remains in the background; the group at the end of the novel are not straightforwardly familial, either. Rather, the conclusion of the text re-emphasises the collective which has defeated Dracula, even in the child of Mina and Jonathan

whose ‘bundle of names link all of our little band of men together’ (326). On the one hand, this comment about the names of the men of the group obscures Mina’s importance; on the other, her labour crucially underlies this statement. While certainly there is a shift in focus towards the safe, domestic world at this point in the novel, indicating a certain conservative impulse, Mina’s reproduction here does not entirely subsume her reproduction of the words of the text; rather, the two are twinned.

Technology affects and shapes the identity of the office girl using it: the skill in learning how to use technology affirms that she is a respectable worker – even if in a domestic environment – with distinct capabilities. Associated with modernity, technology also imbues the office girl with a modernised femininity. As Conan Doyle’s short story makes explicit, technologies inscribe themselves upon the individual through physical marks – but also embed themselves through less visible means, such as the adaptation of muscle memory in order to deftly work a machine. Technologies, too, take on individuating aspects through defects and adaptations made by an individual user. In *Dracula*, technologies and the typist’s relationship to them are central to the narrative and its resolution – and the typist becomes too the guiding force through which other voices are brought together. The office girl type as found in *Dracula* emblematises the unique position of the office girl, bringing together emotional and technological labour.

Chapter 3: Office Intimacies: *The Judge* and the sexuality of the typist

As the role of the office girl became feminised, so too it became sexualised. In my previous chapter I noted how Mina was sexualised through her contact with the invasive paranormal force of Dracula; but the office girl's sexuality was more generally the subject of both prurient attention and anxiety. The woman working in the office was often depicted as young and attractive in both popular periodicals and novels, and her entry into the workplace, where she would be working alongside male colleagues, made her available for – and vulnerable to – sexual advances. 'Employers Often Marry Their Typewriters' declared one typewriter manufacturer in an advertisement aimed at young women; a wife advice manual from the twentieth century commented on the possibility of husbands now working with female subordinates and advised wives above all else, 'Avoid Being Jealous'.[1] *The Typist's Gazette* complained of hearing a man at a party gossip 'the female typist has broken up more of the homes of city men than any woman living'.[2] An advice manual for secretaries noted one of the key aspects of being a typist was resisting one's boss without offending him and putting one's job at risk: 'she must learn not to see that his glance is too fervid, not to feel that hand that rests on hers or the arm that slips around the back of the chair.'[3] In these examples, we can see how the typist's sexual identity leads to her being alternately cast as sexual predator, or as prey.

These examples also demonstrate the potentially troubling nature of the intimacy of the office space. Women's entry into the public sphere, particularly

[1] Qtd. in Christopher Keep, 'Blinded By the Type: Gender and Information Technology at the Turn of the Century', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts,* 23:1 (2008), 149-73 (p. 157); Qtd. in Peter N. Stearns, *Jealousy: The Evolution of an Emotion in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), p. 82.
[2] 'Our Views', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.4, August 6 1896, p. 51.
[3] Qtd. in Julie Berebitsky, *Sex and the Office: a History of Gender, Power, and Desire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 103.

middle-class women's entry into a job not previously regarded as suitable for them, was a subject of concern due to their being able to meet men without supervision. While many novels about the office girl entail plots which are initially focused on work and the exciting possibilities work brings, these narratives are often disrupted by romance plots: these include marriage plots, and also seduction plots leading, as Lawrence Rainey has pointed out, to these texts playing with the Victorian narrative trope of the fallen woman.[4] The sexual identity of the office girl has been the subject of recent critical attention from Rainey and others.[5] However, I will work to revise such arguments by considering the sexuality of the typist in new contexts: I will argue that romance plots in these narratives should be considered alongside contemporary debates about marriage; and that an analysis must be made of the impact that the emotional labour of working in the office subsequently has on intimate relationships.

The switch in focus in office girl narratives from work to romance is enabled, in part, by the space of the office as it lends itself to the potential for romance because it is both a public workplace and somewhat private, closed off from public eyes.[6] The office girl's presence is also meant to domesticate the office and indeed, her work necessarily entails, explicitly or otherwise, affective labour: that is, the management of her own emotions and those of others in the workplace. This too contributes to the slippage between career and romance plots. The demand

[4] Lawrence Rainey, 'From Fallen Woman to Fallen Typist', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 52.3 (2009), 273-297.
[5] See Christopher Keep, 'The Cultural Work of the Typewriter Girl', *Victorian Studies*, 40.3 (Spring 1997), 401-25; Katherine Mullin, *Working Girls: Gender, Fiction and Sexuality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Rainey, 'From Fallen Woman to Fallen Typist'.
[6] Peter Bailey has explored the pub as a site that mediates 'across the frontiers of the putative public/private divide', with the barmaid forming part of this 'middle' ground of sexuality. The office similarly straddles the public/private divide, but it notably different in its being mostly closed-off from public view. See Peter Bailey, 'Parasexuality and Glamour: The Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype', *Gender & History*, 2.2 (Summer 1990), 148-172 (p. 148).

for emotional labour brings about an intimacy that entangles the public and private sphere, the world of work and the world of emotion.

Sex, romance and marriage are not necessarily co-existent in love plots of office girl novels. Typically, sexual and romantic love are twinned: these two types of love might not necessarily be synonymous, but are frequently paired in office girl narratives in opposition to other motivations for marriage. As I will be largely focusing on marriage plots or relationships which hold the potential promise of marriage, I will primarily be considering heterosexual relationships; when looking at desire more broadly, there are instances of attraction and affection between women found in the texts I analyse which I will touch upon. But such romantic feelings, whether directed towards men or women, are regarded as separate from marriage in these texts. In office girl narratives marriage is not always or exclusively predicated on romantic love or sexual desire. Talia Schaffer has argued with relation to Victorian novels that there can be alternative incentives for unions in novels, which she suggests can be described as familiar marriages.[7] This type of marriage would typically be prompted by such ideals as family loyalty, social aspirations, or vocational ambitions.[8] While Schaffer's focus is upon Victorian fiction, I work to extend and apply such ideas to office girl novels in which a similar contrast between romantically-motivated marriage and familiar marriage can be found. In office girl novels analysed in this chapter, familiar marriages are often attractive because they fulfil social ambitions, alternative vocational ideals, or are simply seen as a potential escape from the mundane everyday routine of the office.

[7] Talia Schaffer, *Romance's Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 2.
[8] Ibid., p. 13.

In these novels, there is a common trope of marriage or the potential promise of marriage disrupting the prior career plot. Careers are typically brought to a close through the alternative set of duties and financial security that marriage brings; typically there was a 'marriage bar' in the office which would ensure a woman worker must quit her job once married. Diversions from a career plot to a marriage plot have been described as a repression of feminine ambition, and the introduction of the marriage plot is typically regarded as a reversion to a more conservative, traditional narrative.[9] While this can certainly be true of some novels, I contend that in these office girl narratives the switch between plots is more complicated and fraught than this argument concerning repression of ambitions allows. Both plots – career and marriage – demonstrate similar ambitions from the office girl for freedom, or money, or adventure. The split between these plots expresses how such ambitions are frequently frustrated in the restrictive workplace. The switch of focus in the novels examined from work to marriage is not always an easy transition, suggesting the authors are commenting upon the difficulty of being forced to choose between career and marriage. Moreover, the emotions that motivate the question of choice in marriage are all the more complex when emotion and emotion management are incorporated into work. The recognition of the ability to make use of and control emotion can lead, in these novels, to the idea of intimacy becoming confused and warped.

---

[9] See, for example, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985). DuPlessis describes the romance plot as a narrative strategy which 'muffles the main female character, represses quest, valorizes heterosexual as opposed to homosexual ties, incorporates individuals within couples as a sign of their personal and narrative success', and which also depends on and reinforces the idea of sexual difference (p. 5). Similar analyses of romance narratives recur in criticism of *The Judge*. See, for instance, Ann V. Norton, *Paradoxical Feminism: The Novels of Rebecca West* (Lanham: International Scholars Publications, 2000), p. xvii; Philip Ray, '*The Judge* Reexamined: Rebecca West's Underrated Gothic Romance', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 31.3 (1988), 297-307 (p. 297).

Considering marriage debates from the late-nineteenth century, I will demonstrate that romantic relationships were a fraught and contested subject. I will refer too to how these debates feed into early-twentieth-century feminist thought on relationships, including those more radical views championed by Rebecca West – whose novel *The Judge* (1922) will be the primary literary focus of this chapter – and her colleagues at *The Freewoman*. An exploration of the image of the typist through pictures found in periodicals and advertisements will demonstrate how the typist was insistently glamourised and sexualised. This stereotype does not straightforwardly carry over into the novels: while the office girl is usually sexualised, glamour is less accessible to her in these more realistic works due to her poor wage. Nonetheless, the stereotyped image found in visual sources does contribute to the ways in which the office girl is perceived in these novels, and often she is the subject of unwanted attention from colleagues and other men she encounters in the city. Romance and marriage are not entered into lightly by the office girl, either: the conflict in choosing a relationship over one's career is rendered deliberately fraught in these novels. In Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* (1919) different characters, Katharine and Mary, embody the divergent conclusions of plots of career and marriage. Rebecca West's *The Judge* has a striking, and even somewhat awkward, bipartite structure which evokes the tensions between work and marriage as one is swiftly given up for the other. *The Judge* offers too an analysis of how affective labour in the office can have ramifications in intimate romantic relationships; Arnold Bennett's *Lilian* (1922) provides similar analysis of affective labour, but in a somewhat more optimistic light. Both of these novels suggest the complications of intimate relationships when emotions have become a kind of currency; but *The Judge* couples this with attempts to deal with the idea of choosing

between career and marriage, while also questioning if such a freedom of choice is even available.

CONTEXT: DEBATES AROUND MARRIAGE

Texts about the office girl explore the motivations for potentially choosing marriage, and deal too with the notion that such a choice might not be a straightforward one; as such, they contribute to the debates about marriage and romantic relationships that were occurring in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This section will sketch out a brief history of some of the key points of the debate to provide a context in which to situate the novels I analyse. In the late nineteenth century, there was a growing sense that marriage needed reform. A *Daily Telegraph* article from 1888, titled 'Is Marriage a Failure?' received 27,000 replies from readers, many of which indicated a desire for a reconstruction of the institution of marriage.[10] Typically, this was regarded as a legal issue, a problem primarily concerning women's disadvantage with regards to filing for divorce.[11] But certain writers, such as Mona Caird – from whose writings the title of the *Daily Telegraph* article was borrowed – aimed to address inequalities in heterosexual relationships more generally, analysing marriage as a historical institution that needed rethinking. This, in turn, led to anti-feminist tracts that disputed such arguments, regarding them as unfair attacks on marriage.[12] In the twentieth century this argument continued within feminist circles as the debate

[10] Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-1914* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 124.
[11] The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 enabled men to file for divorce on grounds of adultery; women had to prove both adultery and another offence, such as incest, cruelty, or bigamy. Sybil Wolfram, 'Divorce in England 1700-1857', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 5.2 (1985): 155-86 (p. 157).
[12] See, for instance, Roy Devereux, *The Ascent of Woman* (London: John Lane, 1896); Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Revolt Against Matrimony', *The Forum*, 10, January 1891, p. 585-95; Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Wild Women No. 1: As Politicians', *Nineteenth Century,* 30, July 1891, p. 79-88; Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Wild Women No. 2: As Social Insurgents', *Nineteenth Century*, 30*,* October 1891, p. 596-605.

began to encompass and deal more explicitly with the idea of female sexuality. But what is especially pertinent throughout these differing texts is the sense that marriage had the potential for some women to be regarded as a choice, and that the structure of such relationships could change to encompass ideas of equality. The idea of marriage as choice led also to interrogations of the meanings and implications of such a choice, and to contemplation of the possibility of choosing to retain both career and marriage.

Mona Caird, a feminist novelist and journalist, authored a series of essays from 1888 onwards on the need for marriage reform and for such relationships to be based on both affection and equality. Caird historicises marriage for her argument, suggesting in the introduction to her collection of essays *The Morality of Marriage* that the system of marriage is based on the historical 'custom of woman-purchase'.[13] Caird therefore argues that the current form of marriage is a construct that has been historically established; it has not progressed, and still resembles too closely a commercial exchange. As part of this, Caird challenges ideas concerning the natural position of woman: an article titled 'A Defence of the Wild Woman' was written as a rebuttal to Eliza Lynn Linton's anti-feminist essays on 'The Wild Women', which denigrated the New Woman as 'unnatural'.[14] Caird repudiates Linton's idealisation of female self-sacrifice, which she refers to as 'one-sided sacrifice'; Caird also contests the notion of women having an innate nature, and the arguments based on such a nature that determine woman's true place to be within the family home. These consistent challenges to arguments that assert what is 'natural' serve to set up Caird's wider point about the necessity of changing marriage; this, she contends, is

[13] Mona Caird, *The Morality of Marriage* (London: George Redway, 1897), p. 1-2. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
[14] Linton, 'The Wild Women No 1: As Politicians', p. 79.

to be done not simply through legal reform which is a 'derivative matter', though 'a very important one' (5), but through redressing attitudes to heterosexual relationships in general. Caird emphasises that the ideal relationship is one which is characterised by mutual affection, freedom, and choice (125). She suggests that stressing choice in marriage, as well as equality of the sexes legally and socially, would also lead to women being considered equal in the workplace. This, in turn, would benefit society as 'women would be able to choose the work for which they were best suited' (168). These ideas of choice, as well as marriage entailing romance as the ideal, are explored in the novels of the office girl. Yet, the idea of marriage as a type of livelihood doesn't entirely disappear; so too work and romantic relationships become entangled in the office, the motivations for pursuing each becoming difficult to discern from one another.

Caird's articles sparked an ongoing debate concerning love, marriage and the New Woman; some commentators had sympathy for the notion of reforming marriage, but were concerned about the extent to which Caird was attacking the existence of the institution itself. Roy Devereux (Margaret Rose Roy Pember-Devereux) is one such writer who displayed ambivalence towards radical ideas regarding love and marriage. In her 1896 book *The Ascent of Woman* she finds fault with those who would do away with marriage, and 'sweep the ceremony away altogether into the dust-heap of dead conventions', although she does go on to suggest that 'the facilities for divorce ought, however, in my opinion, to be considerably extended'.[15] She mocks New Women, who she perceives to be overly eager to change marriage radically: Devereux adheres to certain tropes as she disparages such women's lack of femininity and argues that New Women repel –

[15] Devereux, *The Ascent of Woman*, p. 35, 39. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

deliberately or otherwise – the opposite sex with their 'ink-stained fingers, [and] paint-stained toilet' (22). She ridicules too the New Woman's clamouring for work, suggesting that they are unable to recognise that work is essentially a 'curse' (21). Yet in spite of Devereux's moments of mockery, she seems supportive, even sympathetic to the cause of reforming marriage.

More virulent attacks on anti-marriage sentiment abounded, asserting paradoxically that the New Woman who opposed marriage was at once unfeminine and unsexed, and overtly sexual. Anti-feminist journalist Hugh Stutfield takes an antagonistic approach to the New Woman in his article 'Tommyrotics', and identifies what he describes as a disturbing trend in literature, in which New Woman fiction continually lamented the 'horrors of matrimony from the feminine point of view'.[16] He notes that the figure of the 'Husband-Fiend' was so frequently 'trotted out' that it was a wonder 'how the demon manages still to command a premium in the marriage market' (835-6). Such 'emancipated woman' novelists love to show 'independence by dealing freely with the relations of the sexes', and he argues that they tend either to be 'erotomaniacs' of, if not, they are 'sexless, and are at pains to explain this to the reader' (836). Both such attitudes seem to lead to this anti-marriage sentiment, Stutfield suggests.

While Stutfield identifies a trend in literature by certain New Woman writers, Eliza Lynn Linton concerned herself with what she saw as the worrying social reality of women disparaging marriage, suggesting it would inevitably harm families. A journalist notorious for her anti-feminist slant, she describes New Women as 'noisy Maenads' who she fears will turn young women against marriage.[17] Linton

[16] Hugh Stutfield, 'Tommyrotics', *Blackwood*s, June 1895, 833-45 (p. 835). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
[17] Linton, 'The Wild Women No 1: As Politicians', p. 79.

historicises marriage as Mona Caird does to suggest its primary function was, in 'primitive' times, the continuation of the race; but unlike Caird, she argues that contemporary monogamous marriages that contain sympathy between partners and prioritisation of family represent marriage at its pinnacle.[18] She is able to identify problems with marriage, noting that men have more outside compensations when a marriage fails to ensure their happiness – their work, and perhaps even lovers.[19] Yet she nonetheless asserts that the repudiation of marriage and even working towards divorce reform represent aberrant individualism that would mean 'the disintegration of society, the ruin of the family.'[20] In spite of Linton's personal independence – she was separated from her own husband, and was Britain's first female salaried journalist – and her recognition of the woman's disadvantage if a marriage dissolves, Linton maintained reactionary views with regards to marriage reform.[21] Invoking ideas of sympathy rather than romance and affection, and asserting the importance of the maintenance of the family structure, Linton virulently denies the need for marriage reform and firmly disparages the New Women advocating for such reform.

Debates around relationships continued on into the twentieth century with a new willingness amongst certain feminists to address not only issues of marriage, but to also expand discussions of sex and sexuality. While sexuality was always part of feminist debate – Josephine Butler's campaigns against the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1860s centered around such issues, of course – discussions of sexual identity which also included considerations of feminine sexuality became more open in the twentieth century, especially outside of the movements primarily concerned

[18] Linton, 'The Revolt Against Matrimony', p. 585, 589.
[19] Ibid., p. 588.
[20] Ibid., p. 594.
[21] See Nancy Fix Anderson, 'Eliza Lynn Linton, Dickens, and the Woman Question', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22.4 (Winter 1989), 134-141 (p. 134); Nancy Fix Anderson, *Women Against Women in Victorian England: A Life of Eliza Lynn Linton* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 101-2.

with fighting for the vote. Within the WSPU, Christabel Pankhurst's articles on the 'Great Scourge' gained particular notoriety after appearing in *The Suffragette* in 1913. These suggest that around 75 to 80 percent of men in England suffered from a sexually transmitted disease; she advocates, therefore, 'Votes for Women, Chastity for Men'.[22] This provocative call for purity was, even if an articulation of real worries concerning venereal disease, atypical, and written when Christabel was living away from the movement in France. It is worth noting that this rhetoric does serve as a continuation of some of the protests against marriage of the nineteenth century; yet other protests took on a more radical and sexually free manner.

The collective of women and men who wrote for *The Freewoman* during the journal's short run, from 1911 to 1912, represent more radical attitudes towards relationships and engage in a more frank discussion of female sexuality. This is not to suggest the views put forward in the periodical are homogenous of course; there are many debates within its pages concerning such issues as birth control and chastity.[23] Editor Dora Marsden argues in particular for a new perspective on heterosexual relationships: she declares that the 'New Morality' of a 'freewoman' favours 'limited monogamy' and 'free unions'; that is, monogamous relationships should be able to be entered and left freely.[24] The journal thus contests the very tradition of marriage by asserting the continual need for choice, including both choosing one's partner and having the ability to choose to end relationships in addition.

---

[22] Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 5.
[23] Lucy Bland, 'Heterosexuality, Feminism and *The Freewoman* Journal in Early Twentieth-Century England', *Women's History Review*, 4.1 (1995), 5-23 (p. 14). See, for instance, Kathlyn Oliver, 'Asceticism and Passion', *The Freewoman,* 13, February 15 1912, p. 252.
[24] Bland, p. 13.

Rebecca West was a regular contributor to *The Freewoman*, amongst other political journals, and in its pages she advocated for the importance of free sexual and romantic relationships. Her writings on relationships inform her later fictional work, although her espoused ideologies in her non-fiction writings do not straightforwardly carry on to her fictional texts, as we shall see. She disparages women who have 'nothing to say to the world' as they existed only in their 'intimate relationships'; these women are parasites, she contends, who should learn to work for their living.[25] But West believes too that relationships are important. In an article about young writers, she notes that having a partner could help a woman delve into 'important work at once', rather than be concerned with money-making ('So Simple', 71). Being partnered would not just be an economic aid. Young women could be held back if they suffer from 'timidity towards adventure' – relationships, West suggests in other articles, are one such adventure that a woman must experience in order to write about life ('So Simple', 71). West reports that while the spinster's freedom from obligation would give her time to be an artist, the spinster is typically 'incapable of art' ('Spinsters and Art', 47). West thus associates sexuality and artistry, and rejects the idea of chastity. Indeed, she felt that one must 'treat sex lightly', and 'think no more hardly of two lovers who part soon than we do of spring for leaving the earth at the coming of June' ('The Fool and the Wise Man', 84). West proposes an ideal that seems akin to Marsden's idea of limited monogamy; but in West's formulation, this is not only a relationship ideal. Such relationships are also a necessary experience, and part of the growth of the young female artist, who must learn about life – including love and sexuality – if she is to write about it. For West,

[25] Rebecca West, 'The Fate of the Drudge' in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp.170-4 (p. 170); West, 'The Future of the Middle Classes' in *The Young Rebecca*, pp. 111-5 (p. 113). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

a woman should aspire to have both a career or political cause and a relationship, rather than be forced to choose between the two.

THE IMAGE OF THE OFFICE GIRL

Novels about the office girl engage with these contested conceptions of the organisation of romantic relationships. But they also interact with, and at times contribute to, the stereotypical sexualised image of the office girl that quickly developed as such roles became a common form of employment for women. Such images inevitably impacted how relationships between the typist and those around her were portrayed; sometimes her vulnerability to seduction is highlighted, but so too is her command of her sexuality. Images of the typist in advertising and journals propagated this idea, with media glamourising the job by depicting happy, pretty and fashionable young women at work – an image which contrasts with some of the depictions of these young women in novels during this period, who were sexualised but often not glamorous as they could rarely afford stylish clothes. Rachel Bowlby has argued with relation to advertisements from the period more generally that they are 'aimed at selling the "image" of a product along with, or as part of, the thing itself'.[26] Extending and applying such an understanding to typewriter advertisements, I suggest that they sell the typewriter but also the idea that the female typist was a fashionable and appealing figure, suggesting a young woman can obtain this lifestyle if she becomes a typist. Office girl imagery thus differs notably from that of the New Woman. Writers such as Eliza Lynn Linton and Hugh Stutfield tended to portray the New Woman as physically repugnant, and imagery in journals had similar

[26] Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 18.

tendencies in their depictions of the New Woman: she is typically either rendered masculine or grossly, overtly sexual.[27]

The office girl, however, is represented as attractive and fashionable; she is, too, an object for attention in the office, as some of these images portray her being admired by male colleagues. An advertisement for the Bar-lock typewriter (see Appendix, Figure 1) depicts a young secretary working as her boss gazes on. The typist's dress is given some detail with a high collar and puffed sleeves and her hair is carefully arranged to emphasise that this is a stylish, feminine young woman; highlights draw attention to her figure. Her back is turned to her boss while he looks over at her, presumably dictating, suggesting he is the position of power here – she is the object of both his and our gaze. Yet the advertisement might not be exclusively intended for a male gaze as typewriter girls often owned their own machines. As Sharon Marcus argues with relation to Victorian fashion plates, 'commodity culture incited an erotic appetite for femininity in women', and Marcus suggests that these images demonstrate how women objectified other women in a forum that allowed for enjoyment of 'femininity as an object of visual pleasure.'[28] She refers to this as a homoerotic gaze, a term which indicates a degree of desire within the viewer.[29] This homoerotic gaze is deployed in advertisements portraying the office girl, perpetuating a sense of this woman worker as a distinctly desirable and fashionable type.

The suggestive dynamic of office girl and boss becomes a visual trope such that it can be seen in advertisements for products other than typewriters. A typist and

[27] For examples and further discussion of the image of the New Woman see Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1990).
[28] Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 112-3.
[29] Ibid., 113.

her employer are portrayed in a tobacco advertisement for Ogden's Midnight Flake subtitled 'Why Jones Stayed at the Office' (Figure 2). In this instance, an angry wife – an older, thin woman with sharp masculine features – finds her husband in his office late at night (as indicated by the clock in the background) with his typist. The startled secretary is brought into deliberate contrast with the wife: the office girl is younger with more delicate features, fair hair, and wears more softly-coloured clothes. The intimacy of the office is seen also in the masthead of *The Typist's Gazette*. This journal's initial masthead is a fairly typical illustration of the typist: she appears to be young and pretty, her dress is decorative and carefully illustrated, and her elegant hands hover over her work (Figure 3). Six months into the print run of the fairly short-lived journal, the masthead changes to incorporate both male and female office workers (Figure 4). Perhaps this is in part an attempt to make the journal appeal to the male typist: after all, there were still male typists, including those whose letters appear within the journal itself. But in the picture, the nature of the narrow title space that dictates the composition brings the two close together; both are young and attractive, and whereas the female typist was previously portrayed as concentrating on her typewriter, in this masthead the two gaze across at one another with a certain intimacy. Notably, this illustration is revised once again just a couple of months later: perhaps the look is recognised as too intimate, or deemed unrealistic for two workers, but both the male and female typist now look studiously at their machines (Figure 5). These illustrations thus suggest not only the typist as stereotypically being regarded as attractive, but also display the potential intimacy of the office and the relationships that could occur within it.

In novels, the typist's mobility within the public sphere of the city and work leads to an availability for her to be looked at and admired; this in turn leads to a

susceptibility, or even a vulnerability, to affairs. Mary Cholmondeley's *Red Pottage* (1899) provides one such example: in this novel, the typist Rachel's affair is non-physical, and as such without the potential ramifications of the fallen woman plot. Indeed, it occurs within the 'past' of the novel, and is thus remembered by Rachel as a heartbreak – but the potential dangers of such an affair are clear, as this brief episode from Rachel's past is brought into parallel with the shameful affair between Lady Newhaven and Hugh Scarlett that dominates the plot of the novel. Rachel, as many typewriter girls in novels were, is an orphan with 'no real education' and a lack of preparation for the world of work.[30] She manages, however, to 'earn a meagre living by type-writing' (32). Being without family she lives in a boarding house and 'on the dreary stairs of the great rabbit-warren in which she had a room' she meets 'a man with whom she had been acquainted in the short year of her social life before the collapse of her fortunes'; he had been looking for someone else, but pretends he was searching for her (33). 'That one chance meeting was the first of many,' prior to the discovery that 'though he loved her he did not wish to marry her' (33). Rachel is not, at least physically, seduced; but the idea of the potential dangers of being visible in the city is clear. The notion of being admired by men is briefly mentioned in the context of the office, in addition: as she goes to her job, a woman confronts Rachel: '"He always employed me till you came," she shrieked, shaking her fist at her, "and now he gives it all to you because you're younger and better-looking"' (34). The employer hires women based on looks, evidently, suggesting that the typist's function is not only to be a worker but to be attractive to her boss. There is a sexual intimacy brought into the office, even if it might be an unwanted intimacy.

[30] Mary Cholmondeley, *Red Pottage* (London: Virago, 1985), p. 31. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

The focus on describing the physicality of the secretary in novels is often akin to the visual illustrations explored above, including a similar emphasis on the way she is seen by a male colleague or boss. Highlighting the office dynamics between typist and colleagues creates expectation of potential emotional and sexual entanglements. Typically the admiration or prurience of the gaze is made explicit. In *The Judge* the narrative voice is initially focused on the protagonist, Ellen Melville, but very early on in the text the narrative briefly takes on the perspective of Ellen's boss, Mr Mactavish James. As he enters the room, he looks 'dotingly across to Ellen' with a gaze that takes 'delight in her'.[31] His look is clearly prolonged, as he 'contemplated this bright thing as an earth creature might creep to the mouth of its lair and blink at the sun' (15). Mr James's son Phillip reacts similarly to Ellen's presence, and again the narrative seems to take on his perspective: the 'sight of her through an open door, sitting at her typewriter in her blue linen overall, dispersed one's thoughts' (18). This trope that West develops of viewing Ellen through the eyes of other men is altered when her future partner Richard meets her: while he admires her body he does so with a 'dispassionateness' which comes from having lived in a climate 'where nakedness offers itself unashamed to the sunlight' (33). All the more significantly, he recognises how 'her body would imprison her in soft places', that is, her femininity assures her fate: that she shall be 'allowed no adventures other than love, no achievements other than births' (33). Richard, for all his pessimism regarding women's fate that the young, optimistic Ellen does not share, initially proves himself worthy due to his perceptive, rather than lustful, gaze.

Arnold Bennett's *Lilian*, published the same year as *The Judge*, deals also with the typewriter girl being subject to the objectifying gaze of male colleagues.

[31] Rebecca West, *The Judge* (London: Virago, 1980), p. 14. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

Additionally, there is a self-consciousness of her own attractions on Lilian's part. Early on in the novel, in a quiet moment in the typewriting agency which stays open throughout the night, the boss Felix Grig approaches Lilian and declares, 'You're beautiful, and, as I say, you have an instinct to please.'[32] Lilian is delighted: 'He had, then, been thinking about her all those months, differentiating her from the others, summing her up!' (26). Bennett's heroine, unlike West's, is both self-conscious and proud of her looks – and hopeful about what they might help her achieve – and thus the description of Lilian is channelled through a self-reflective description in which she imagines seeing herself from Felix's perspective. 'She knew a good deal about herself', the narrator notes, and

> she reflected, amid her blushes, upon the image of her face and hair—the eyes that matched the hair, the perfectly formed ears, the softness of the chin and the firmness of the nose, the unchallengeable complexion, the dazzling teeth… (27)

As the description carries on over the page as Lilian ruminates on her body, her walk, and her faults, there seems to be a hint of mockery towards this young woman. Lilian demonstrates a self-aware sexualisation, and self-objectification, as she views herself as she hopes Felix views her.

The self-conscious desire to be attractive is not simply a wish to be pretty, but is also a point of competition within the office amongst the female colleagues – perhaps because it contributes to one's success in the office. Lilian observes of one of her colleagues, Gertie, that 'though possessed of a good figure and face, she did nothing with these great gifts' (76). Her 'clothes were "good," and bought in Upper Street, Islington' but she 'had no coquetry, and not the slightest inclination for *chic*' (76). Of another colleague, Millicent, it is observed that 'She had a long, straight,

[32] Arnold Bennett, *Lilian* (London: Cassell and Company, 1922), p. 25. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

absolutely regular nose, and was born to accomplish the domestic infelicity of some male clerk' (83). There is a sense established that the attractiveness of the office girl had the potential to be a kind of currency and a way of raising one's position in the office; there seems to be a self-conscious desire to adhere to the office girl 'type' seen in the images explored above.

CAREER PLOT VS. MARRIAGE PLOT

The office girl is a working woman who is insistently sexualised, and frequently depicted as an object of desire for those around her; often, this leads to a plot about career being disrupted by a plot concerning romance or marriage. While in some texts this is a simple transition, the move between the two narratives is not always smooth. The novels examined in this section make clear through structural or narrative means the divisive and fraught nature of switching the central focus of the plot between career and marriage. The divisions in each of these novels are not straightforward or neat, however: character motivations switch and change, with the women in Woolf's *Night and Day* hesitant to make their choice for either career or marriage, vacillating between the two. Each half of West's *The Judge* demonstrates conflict regarding the desire for work or romance. Both writers show that choice between the two plots for their characters is not straightforward; and, through this, they question the very idea of absolute freedom to choose between work and career.

The split between career and marriage plot in Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* is embodied by the stories of the two main characters, Katharine Hilbery and Mary Datchet: Katharine ends the novel planning to be married, whereas Mary continues on with her secretarial work. Katharine's own form of work is conducted privately for her mother – in this instance, the split between the two plots is partially due to the difference between the two women's jobs as Mary finds more pride in her

work. Yet the split between the marriage and the career plot is not always clear-cut: Katharine is continually ambivalent about marriage throughout the novel, and Mary spends much of the novel in love with Katharine's eventual fiancé Ralph.

Mary's work as a secretary ensures she is associated with independence and industriousness throughout the novel. The initial description of Mary embodies this notion, as 'her gestures seemed to have a certain purpose' and she appears as if her 'senses had undergone some discipline, and were held ready for a call on them'.[33] Mary is atypical of the typewriter girl stereotype in that her work is voluntary and yet she still is able to live by herself independently. However her political efforts are explicitly described as a kind of work: as she commutes she takes her 'share of wet and crowd with clerks and typists and commercial men' (62). Her typewriter serves as a symbol of attitude to her work, as it 'clicked busily all day long' (63). Katharine, living with her upper-class family, envies Mary's independence; she declares Mary 'very clever' as she manages to 'live alone in this room' (46). Yet, while Mary's devotion to her work ensures she feels she 'did not want to marry at all', this sentiment is subsequently confused by her love for Ralph (66). Mary's conflict compounds the sense found in office girl novels more generally that ambitions outstrip the workplace, and self-fulfilment is sought not only within work but also elsewhere.

Affection and intimacy in *Night and Day* are not confined to heterosexual relationships, which further complicates any straightforward reading of these characters' ambitions and desires. The two heroines become closer as the novel progresses, as is underlined by moments of physical affection between the pair: when Katharine visits Mary, Mary feels a 'new tenderness' towards her friend and

[33] Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 36. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

she finds herself 'putting her hand on Katharine's knee, affectionately, for an instance' (145). Their fondness for one another is complicated by their both falling in love with Ralph. But even their discussion concerning Ralph is interlaced with their affection for one another: in one of the other marked instances of intimate touch between the two, Mary plays with the hem of Katharine's skirt as they talk (232). When silence falls over the conversation, it is one which is 'so full of romance'; it seems deliberate that Woolf doesn't indicate who within the room this romantic feeling is experienced by, or directed towards (234). Seemingly platonic as these moments are, as Julia Briggs points out in her introduction to the novel they stand out because in contrast, the heterosexual couples in the novel 'seem barely conscious of each other's bodies' (xxx). Woolf might not be exploring an explicitly lesbian identity, as such: instead, Katharine and Mary's intimacy is akin to that which Sharon Marcus has observed in Victorian novels, in which the female friend being a catalyst for the marriage plot demonstrates the importance of relationships and affection between women, which would not be discarded for heterosexual relationships, but exist alongside them.[34] Woolf is writing in a different era, of course, during which relationships between women began to be more explicitly discussed and sexologists such as Havelock Ellis had written about lesbianism.[35] But in spite of this difference in period, it has been argued that Woolf is borrowing from Victorian tradition more generally throughout *Night and Day*. [36] Extending this idea to the relationship between Katharine and Mary, I suggest that they can be seen to

[34] Marcus, p. 3, 66.
[35] Ibid., p. 6.
[36] See Elizabeth Outka, 'The Transitory Space of *Night and Day*' in *A Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Jessica Berman (Chichester: Wiley & Sons, 2016), pp. 55-66. Outka surveys a number of critics who have tried to designate the novel as either 'Victorian' or 'modern', including Katherine Mansfield's criticism of the novel as a Victorian 'throwback'. Outka demonstrates how Woolf mingles the Victorian and the modern in this novel, both through invocation of styles and traditions and in the novel's contemplation of the transition from the Victorian period to modernity.

cohere with this earlier model of female intimacy. Woolf is not necessarily envisioning a lesbian identity that is repressed, nor is she depicting desire between women as explicitly she went on to do later in her career. Nevertheless the relationship between Katharine and Mary begins to explore an intimacy between women that is suggestive of affection, and even hints towards potential desire; this adds to the more general complexities the novel explores regarding romantic relationships and marriage, and how these might be arranged.

The marriage plot within this novel is a fraught one, and Katharine finds her desires conflicted as she considers the differing ways in which women might be able to arrange both their relationships and their lives more broadly. Katharine is intrigued by the impersonal element of the work of Mary and others: visiting Kingsway, a street near both Mary and Ralph's workplaces, the crowd seems different to that of her home, Chelsea. It is characterised as 'pouring ceaselessly with a purpose', and it has a 'complete indifference to the individuals, whom it swallowed up and rolled onwards' (374). Katharine's fascination is temporary, though, and the description of the crowd and its movements seems to border on violence. Such a world is not for her, but nevertheless, her scepticism towards marriage does at points seem similar to Mary's. Listening to her mother and Lady Otway discuss their husbands makes Katharine contemplate if marriage – at this point she is still engaged to her first fiancé William Rodney – is suitable for her, though she begins to think that perhaps 'to be engaged to marry some one with whom you are not in love is an inevitable step' (180). At this point in the novel, neither marriage nor work seem to suit Katharine.

While Katharine's narrative does conclude with an engagement to be married, this bleak sentiment towards marriage does not entirely dissipate. Initially

the end of her engagement to William and subsequent confession of love to Ralph seem to gesture towards the happy ending of a love match. Yet at the end of the novel, Ralph and Katharine walk through the city together at night and see Mary's room, and in it 'a light burning behind a thin, yellow blind' (430). Katharine wonders at Mary's work and the happiness it gives her. Concluding not to interrupt Mary by visiting her, their journey continues on, and the final paragraph of the novel finds Katharine contemplating as Ralph looks at her, 'What woman did he see? … who was her companion?' (432). As Rachel Blau DuPlessis has pointed out, 'love and quest [plots] are joined at the narrative resolution' through the pairing of two heroines whose narratives reach differing conclusions.[37] Yet I argue that what is particularly significant regarding these conclusions is the melancholy and somewhat fraught tone of the end of the novel, which subverts any straightforward sense of contented resolution, or desires being fully attained, in either case. The two women's conclusions – one inside, at her work; one outside, with her future husband – are markedly separated in narrative and spatial terms, but akin in the characters' conflicted attitudes towards them. As Suzanne Raitt points out the ending is distinctively sombre, and Woolf herself admitted in a diary entry: 'L. finds the philosophy very melancholy … Yet, if one is to deal with people on a large scale & say what one thinks, how can one avoid melancholy?'[38] The ending is thus not formulated, as in the more optimistic contemporary marriage debates, as a feminist ideal of choice; rather, it is a split conclusion, with a conflict that would typically be internal to an individual externally embodied in the fates of two characters.

[37] DuPlessis, 54.
[38] Qtd. in Suzanne Raitt, 'Virginia Woolf's Early Novels: Finding a Voice' in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 42.

The split between two different plots is a feature of Rebecca West's *The Judge* that has often been criticised but it can be seen as a deliberate attempt to portray the central character's competing desires for both love and work.[39] The novel's move from Book I to II marks a definite change in tone and focus as the novel turns from a more light-hearted career plot concerning the young Ellen Melville to the far darker story of Ellen's relationship with Richard, and the narrative of the life of her future mother-in-law, Marion Yaverland. Philip Ray has argued that this change in focus, and some of the elements that have been regarded as lapses in the handling of subject and style, in fact indicate West's utilisation of Gothic Romance tropes within the novel.[40] Ray argues this sudden switch is itself a feature of the Gothic, as it indicates a move from an orderly universe to a nightmare one.[41] Yet, it also represents a split between career plot and romance plot, and the rapid transition between the two emphasises the tension between the two desires of Ellen Melville for career and for romance. Early on in the novel, when Ellen's boss tells her she needs a good man she snorts with derision (14). Her only real contemplation of marriage comes as a naive political statement: 'She believed in absolute racial equality, and sometimes intended to marry a Hindu as a propagandist measure' (30). Yet, Ellen suddenly changes her mind when she meets and falls in love with Richard Yaverland. Nevertheless, Ellen's shift of focus from work to marriage is a fraught experience, as she continues to trouble over such issues as unequal marriage laws. Moreover, this is not a simple shift in ambition that indicates an abandonment of prior aspirations as the motivations for both love and work are akin, associated with

[39] In one such instance, a contemporary reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* noted that Book I was 'witty, acute and agreeable… We were left unprepared for the *milieu* of horror and lust into which the story now moves.' Qtd. in Ray, p. 297.
[40] Ibid., p. 298.
[41] Ibid., p. 298.

desire for vocation, excitement and travel. As noted, in Talia Schaffer's work on Victorian marriage romance is not the sole, ideal motivation for union: vocational drive or social ambition, both of which can also be regarded as motivations for work, are also explored as incentives for marriage in novels from this era.[42] This complex entanglement of motivations is seen too in novels of the typewriter girl, in part because intimacy is an inherent feature of her role. This intimacy occurs, in part, through her sexualisation and depiction as an object of desire in the office. Yet intimacy is also evoked through the necessity of emotional labour in the typewriter girl's work. Emotional labour, which entails emotional involvement in work, further intertwines romance and career – and the motivations for each.

EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Emotional labour is the work of managing the emotions of both oneself and others, as explored in my last chapter.[43] Emotion work in the office, I argue, can lead to recognition of the manifold ways in which emotions can be managed and deployed; it alters one's notion of the potential useful outcomes of emotion management. Emotional labour, experienced within the office, can also lead to an expectation of exploitative relationships which carries over into the private sphere. As such, emotional labour can alter our understanding of the turn of the century marriage debate and bring into consideration alternative motivations for relationships. Relationships in and out of the office are inevitably affected by the shift in perspective that emotional labour brings: intimacy can be enacted without the necessity of romantic feeling.

---

[42] Schaffer, p. 6.
[43] This definition is derived from Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), p. 5-6.

Affective labour is clearly present in novels about the office girl: in Arnold Bennett's *Lilian* the intimacy of the workplace and the ways in which this contributes to the office girl's emotional labour are made clear. Working late one night, Lilian encounters her boss Felix alone: he brings her brandy, telling her with a suggestive smile the drink is 'Brandy. Poison.' (23). In this moment Lilian recognises the ambiguity of their relationship: 'Hitherto they had never for a moment been other than employer and employed. Now they were something else' (23). That this transition from a purely professional relationship to something more occurs so rapidly and is induced easily by Felix suggests that the potential for this new dynamic underlay Lilian's job previously due to the inherent intimacy of the office. Lilian concludes with surprising alacrity that she should be in a relationship with this man. She realises 'he *is* in love with me', and

> did not think about the difference in their ages, nor about marriage; nor did she even consider whether or not she was in love with him. Chiefly, she was grateful. And what she saw in front of her was a sublime vocation. (123-4)

Lilian is ambivalent about potential romance or love: what she sees instead is a new potential 'sublime vocation' by being in a relationship with Felix. This word invokes notions of professionalism and duty but using this word in the context of being Felix's partner suggests Lilian would see such a role as a kind of work that she can take on. There is a sense, too, that her motivation for becoming Felix's partner is the opportunity to live with an upper-class man, reinstating the class status Lilian grew up with but found herself pushed out of when left an orphan, as is made clear by his taking her away to the south of France – Lilian is brought back to the world of tourism and leisure. Lilian thus can dedicate herself to a new kind of work, that of being a partner, and manage her lack of love for this man in a seemingly emotional, intimate situation.

Lilian is described as particularly adept at emotional work: she seems to make herself want to be the romantic partner of Felix even though this has not previously been her desire; she can affect and manage the feelings of others too. Felix recognises this and suggests it is this emotional work which marks her out among the other typists in the office: 'you have an instinct to please. That's the important thing' (25). The world of work and the world of emotion become all the more explicitly entangled when Felix suggests 'your business is marriage, and a good marriage!' (25). Felix dies shortly after they are married; the narrator reflects upon Lilian's feelings for Felix, and declares her loving him was 'doubtful', though she had 'profoundly admired him' and had been 'passionately grateful to him for his love for her' (242). The acknowledgement of Lilian's aptitude for emotional work and the declaration of the relationship as a vocation coupled with this gratitude seems to hint at something beyond simple opportunism. It suggests, instead, a realisation on Lilian's part that emotional work and management can lead to a relationship which is nonetheless meaningful – but which is rooted in alternative motivations that are more akin to the motivations for a career than those for a romantic relationship.

The Judge entails a similar narrative of transference of emotional labour from work to romance; yet, there appears to be a deeper anxiety about the alienation of emotion this entails in West's novel. The idea of emotion management and alienated emotion also provides a new way to understand the connections between the seemingly split sections of the novel. The intimacy of the office is seen in the first section of *The Judge*: as well as this intimacy being indicated by the voyeuristic gaze of the male colleagues toward their typist, Ellen Melville, it is established that Ellen is expected to conduct caring duties. The narrator declares that 'Ellen laid her

personality at the disposal of the firm' (18) – her self is to be given over, and notably this seems a gendered expectation: no male worker seems to act similarly. The boss's son, Philip, is coercive in his desire for intimate moments with Ellen, requesting she arrange his lunch – bringing a domestic element to her duties – and, in a scene which mirrors that of *Lilian*, inducing Ellen to drink wine with him in spite of her protests. After seeing Ellen in the streets with his client, Richard Yaverland, Philip becomes incensed and remonstrates with her:

> He had begun to speak, as he always did when they were alone, in a thick whisper, as if they were doing something unlawful together. He had drawn near to her, as he always did, and was hunching his shoulders and making wriggling recessive movements such as a man might make who stood in darkness among moving pollutions. But his glee had gone. (135)

Now that Ellen has completed the emotional labour and more domestic duties required of her, a sinisterly intimate tone has entered the office. In turn, Ellen's emotional labour has been established as a giving over of a more typically private self. Work in the public sphere and private feeling have become entangled; Philip feels able to manipulate and control both. Ellen's response is to repress her 'petty pairsonal troubles' (136). In this instance, alienation of feeling is demonstrated to be a key component for emotion management that bleeds into Ellen's personal life.

There seems to be a sudden switch in Ellen's ambitions from work to marriage in the novel. Yet her motivations for pursuing Richard go beyond romance, as her first meeting with him indicates. He comes to the office as a client and during the meeting, which Ellen must transcribe, he talks of his travels to Brazil. Mentioning the house he owns there, the 'Villa Miraflores', Ellen 'gasped at the name and wrote it in longhand; to compress such deliciousness into shorthand would have been sacrilege' (29). Her interest in Richard becomes mixed up in her own ambition to travel and work as he does; she begins to describe him as 'the client

from Rio' in her mind (51). As such it seems as in Bennett's *Lilian*, attraction is based at least in part on other aspirations Ellen has that Richard represents, such as her ambition to work and travel. But, unlike Bennett's Lilian, Ellen ultimately finds the emotional labour of this relationship to be alienating, as her work in the office was, and to lead to another troubling intimacy.

Ostensibly, the intimacy experienced in the office between colleagues and the intimacy between Ellen and Richard is very different. Richard seems to be recommended, too, by his views on sexuality which are akin to those of a young Rebecca West. At a meeting for women's suffrage, Richard becomes repelled by the way in which the women talk of abstaining from sex, for 'the spirit that makes people talk coarsely about sex is the same spirit that makes men act coarsely to women' (66). Instead, he contemplates that society should privilege 'sensuality' and view 'even the most casual love-making' as 'beautiful' (66). Similarly, Rebecca West in her journalistic writings repudiated the puritanical beliefs of Christabel Pankhurst ('On Mentioning the Unmentionable', p. 204). West believed that people must 'treat sex lightly' – not, that is, frivolously, but to allow for sex within relationships that might then end ('The Fool and the Wise Man', p. 84). West transfers this personal attitude to the character of Richard.

Yet, within the novel romantic relationships are not straightforwardly celebrated in the manner of West's journalism but are instead rendered more complex and at times depicted in a disturbing manner. Although Richard seems to mirror West's views, his attempts to be intimate with Ellen echo the unwanted intimacy and pressuring of Ellen's colleague Philip. At one point in the novel Richard's pressuring manner explicitly reminds Ellen of the encounter with Philip described above, and Ellen contemplates, 'that man had hated her and this one loved

her, but the difference in their aspects was not so great as she would have hoped' (367). This pressure that Richard places on Ellen which resembles Philip's manner is seen in Richard's confession of love to Ellen, too. He embraces Ellen, and she demands 'Why need you touch me? I can love you without touching you. Please…' (156). Ellen feels that the kisses he takes from her

> sent agony downwards from her mouth to the furthest cell of her body, changing her bones so that ever after they would be more brittle, her flesh so that it would be more subject to bruises! (157)

At moments she assures herself that to be embraced by Richard is 'beautiful', but repeatedly scenes in which they are intimate are shot through with violence, as here (160). Nevertheless, she stays with him, suggesting Ellen's feelings towards Richard are carefully managed, even alienated, in their continuation in spite of his violence.

Troublingly, Richard recognises the gender issues that propagate this dynamic. When first meeting Ellen as he admires her figure he recognises 'her body would imprison her in soft places: she would be allowed no adventures other than love, no achievements other than births' (33). This, he realises, is a tragedy, as her expression makes it clear she yearns for other adventures (33). As Ann Norton argues in connection to the fatalism that marks Richard's observation, *The Judge* 'presents characters who imagine they are defying the black and white gender roles exaggerated in sentimental or Gothic novels', but at the same time demonstrates 'how powerfully such sexual images do control and form their lives.'[44] Extending this idea concerning gender dynamics to the notion of emotional labour, we can see how exploitative affective work expected of women is transferred to the private sphere. Richard's comment is suggestive, too, of the compulsions that keep the couple together in spite of their conflict concerning physical affection. This disturbs

[44] Norton, *Paradoxical Feminism*, p. 44.

the idea of choice in relationships which was articulated in other work by both West and by other contemporary feminists. Choice is not entirely absent, but it is certainly restricted, and the idea of choosing a partner is troubled by the alienation experienced by Ellen.

This notion of restricted choice offers another connection between the two books of the novel. When Ellen and Richard visit the latter's mother Marion, the narrator explores the mother's rejection by Richard's father, a rich man who did not marry her in spite of her becoming pregnant with his child. This in turn led to her miserable and abusive marriage to an older man, Peacey, which she felt obligated to enter into by pressure from others concerning her being a single, pregnant woman. Peacey's subsequent rape of Marion is a 'black sacrament' which feels like 'death', and her hatred of the son that is the product of this rape feels like she is 'expiating her involuntary sin' (288, 316). Marion's lack of agency thus extends to her feelings towards her son Roger: she despairs frequently of her hatred of this boy but seems unable to change her attitude towards him which has been dictated by the nature of his conception. The dark, religious language of black sacraments and involuntary sin gives a sense of forces beyond Marion directing her fate. At the end of the novel Ellen imagines that she too is about to become pregnant, and in this moment there seems to be the suggestion of another cycle of broken relationships and alienated feeling. While Marion has only experienced emotional labour in the private sphere, Ellen's experience of this in her office work has brought emotional work into her romantic relationships too. Both Marion and Ellen find themselves in a world of restricted choice; both experience the necessity for emotional labour, which ultimately leads to this sense of alienation.

The second book's further exploration of restricted choice, emotional labour and alienation occurs within a far more Gothic, melodramatic atmosphere than that of the first book, as the language around Roger's conception indicates. As noted previously, Philip Ray has described the change in focus and style between the two books of *The Judge* as indicative of West's move towards the Gothic in the second half of the text, as Ellen is transported into a chaotic, nightmarish world.[45] The change of genre underlines in particular a certain sinister and fatalistic understanding of relationships between men, women and their children and, I argue, can be linked to the idea of emotional labour. At the start of the book Ellen's entry into Essex and the home of Marion Yaverland marks this switch to a new, Gothic manner: as Ray contends, the Yaverland house is described in terms that make it akin to a Gothic castle.[46] The room in which Ellen stays in Marion's house was that of Marion's grandfather: Marion explains that when he fell ill and was confined to his bed he was so overcome with jealous paranoia, fearing his wife would have an affair, that he ordered a larger window be installed so he might watch her outside from his bed. Ellen imagines such a man to not be 'extinguishable by death', and feels he is 'still a tenant' of this room (238). Even the ghostly presence of the house is powered by sinister romantic relationships. Extending Ray's arguments concerning the Gothic style of the house I note that beyond this Essex itself is represented as having a 'beauty of bleakness' that seems like a 'tragedy' to Ellen (228). The horizon seems to indicate to her a sense of tragic fatalism, in particular, as the 'long preparation of earth's events and their endurance' seem clear and imbue in its locals 'a sense of the bearing of the past on the present' which is 'so powerful' (228-9). This landscape examined together with Ray's points regarding the Yaverland house indicates that

[45] Ray, p. 298.
[46] Ibid., p. 300-1.

the past, it seems, is inescapable in West's text, and this sentiment informs the ending of the novel.

I argue that the problems of emotional labour and restricted choice become a key component of this world of Gothic melodrama, and the chain of stories of alienated feeling between women, their partners and their children. This world of the second half of the text is not separate from that of the office narrative of the first half, therefore. Rather, working in the office has for Ellen also involved the act of labouring – including emotionally – for others, and this has led to the continuation of women subordinating their desires for those of the men they form relationships with; it has, in many ways, set her up for the relationship dynamics explored in second half of the text. Marion's restricted choice in her relationships with men has led to a destructive relationship with her sons, and there is a sense that this will happen to Ellen, too. This destructive relationship between mothers and sons is made clear when Marion tells Richard, 'Every mother is a judge who sentences the children for the sins of their father' (346). Ray points out that Marion's suicide at the end of the novel is a judgement on Richard for his unloving father, and on Roger for his abusive father – a judgement that leads also to Richard in a fit of anger killing Roger and, presumably, Richard's likely arrest and execution for this crime.[47] But while Ray argues it is this act of suicide that will lead to Ellen's continuation of a similar narrative of warped familial relationships in her own life, I would argue that it is also the wider, modern world of emotional labour to which Ellen is already accustomed that has set her fate in motion. That Ellen's life will be similar to Marion's is hinted towards by Richard's sense that he may be, like his father, a 'vile man' (372). At the end of the novel, Ellen realises she has 'thrown in her lot' with the Yaverlands, and

[47] Ibid., p. 303.

she wonders 'whether it was a son or daughter' she will have, suggesting the inevitability of her fate (430). She too, the ending of the novel seems to suggest, will judge her own child for Richard's sins. Ultimately, in spite of the distinct generic modes of these two halves of *The Judge*, the fatalistic understanding of relationships between men, women and their children is not confined to the Gothic second section. Rather, the sinister nature of the emotional labour of the office in which Ellen has become used to labouring for others, and to alienating her feelings in order to do so, has contributed to Ellen's fate.

In spite of hope for new structures of romantic relationships seen in Ellen's character and Rebecca West's journalism, the emotional labour of work has led to such relationships involving alienated feeling. Ellen begins to associate intimacy with a giving over of self, and detachment of emotions, both of which are then transferred to her romantic relationship. At the beginning of the novel Ellen imagines she will be able to choose between work and relationships and various other options; but this ideal of choice ultimately seems unavailable. While West is optimistic about choosing both a partner and a career in her journalism, in *The Judge* she is far more pessimistic, using the fatalism of a Gothic melodrama as a commentary upon romantic relationships. It would be unfair to entirely attribute this sentiment to West's personal life, but the fact that this particular novel was written during the final years of her relationship with H. G. Wells and the first years of her being a single mother could potentially contribute to West's portrayal of relationships in *The Judge*.[48] Many years later, West wrote in the *TLS* of the 'elegant sufficiency of women novelists' who would enable readers to consider if 'feminist pioneers' were disappointed in their hope that

[48] Norton, *Paradoxical Feminism*, p. 95.

> if women were admitted to universities, and the professions and commerce and industry, and exercised their vote and were eligible for both the Houses of Parliament, they would not only be able to earn their own livings and develop their minds and live candidly, but might also be luckier in love than their mothers and grandmothers, and would take it better if they were unlucky.[49]

She suggests a key problem here, though: 'the men who had imposed the inhibitions' were 'the same men' women tried to love, 'with the same cold streak in them'.[50] West's pessimism regarding the coupling of women's rights and the hope for new, more equal heterosexual relationships here is much clearer, and the tone more bitter. *The Judge* might not be quite as explicit as West is in this article, but it does suggest a fear that the advancement of women's rights across the world of work and love might be more difficult than hoped for. *The Judge* expresses anxieties concerning the practice of emotional work and management becoming learned and romantic feeling alienated; the previously hoped for freedom to choose between a variety of aspirations seems an unavailable ideal.

Novels concerning the office girl often see a career plot disrupted by a marriage plot. But the choice of either marriage or career is hardly simple: indeed, office girls are typically portrayed as conflicted between the two. Moreover, the choice between the two is not simply a choice between work and love. These novels all take place in an era in which, according to contemporary feminist debate regarding relationships, romantic love and mutual affection were the preferable foundations for marriage. Yet, alternate motivations are certainly present within these novels as romantic love is coupled with or replaced by ambitions that extend beyond the mundane, everyday world of office work; such ambitions are connected with money, travel, or a more potentially rewarding kind of vocation. The office

[49] Rebecca West, 'And they all lived unhappily ever after', *TLS*, July 26 1974, p. 779.
[50] Ibid., p. 779.

girl's emotional labour in her work impacts her relationships, creating new kinds of intimacies – including those that are unwanted, but which are tolerated or prolonged by the alienation of feeling that emotional labour creates. Such emotion management is indicative not simply of a conscious manipulation on the part of these office girls: the authors present these characters far too sympathetically for such a judgement. Instead, it suggests desire that reaches beyond what is available; relationships aid the escape from the mundanity of the office, and the office girl attempts to create situations which might be preferable.

Chapter 4: Attention and distraction in the office narratives of Henry James and Dorothy Richardson

The desire to escape office work can take the form of a diversion to a marriage plot, as we have seen. But office girl narratives in which protagonists become frustrated with the everyday, mundane nature of their work often see these characters searching for more temporary forms of escape. Such escape can occur through indulging in distraction from the daily experience of the minutiae of tedious work: unwilling to concentrate, or simply fulfilling her role with automatic action, the office girl's mind wanders or focuses instead on a diverting fantasy. I contend that analysing these scenes of boredom, manifested in distracted attention and daydream, provides a different way of understanding this particular version of the New Woman's rebellion. I argue that the feminised boredom of the office girl is expressive of political and societal problems connected to a lack of opportunities for women. Distraction and daydream are thus subversive, allowing an escape from work while one is still physically present to earn one's wages; freedom of mind permits an outlet for the business girl's creativity. Pairing this with theories of attention from the period, we can see how distraction and dispersed attention can be understood as subversive.

In our contemporary moment, we worry over attention and its collapse into distraction. Popular science books, cognitive science studies, and a stream of articles warn us that technologies are over-stimulating our brains and rendering us unable to sustain attention.[1] The computer that we work with in the office connects us also to

[1] See, for instance, Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011); N. Katherine Hayles, 'Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes', *Profession* (2007), 187-99; Eyal Ophir, Clifford Nass, Anthony D. Wagner, 'Cognitive control in media multitaskers', *PNAS*, 106.37 (2009) 15583-15587; Don Tapscott, 'How Digital Technology Has Changed the

the internet, continually providing a ready source of distraction. Laments about the loss of our capacity to concentrate fixate on the diversity of media that are made available through technology. Yet such anxieties about loss of attention are hardly unique to the twenty-first century. In the late nineteenth century, similar sentiments abounded regarding the supposed loss of our ability to attend to our work, or whatever else one must be compelled to attend to. The nature of attention, as in our own time, was connected to specific conditions of the period: to technology, to industrialisation, and to the organisation of work post-industrialisation. Technologies such as those used in the office of the telegraph or typewriter could be operated automatically: *The Typist's Gazette* recommended memorising the keyboard and as such 'lessening mental strain, and so producing an approximation to automatism'.[2] Such automatic attention is far from the ideals of diligent concentration.

While attention might seem ahistorical, a state which is experienced and thought of in the same way across different time periods, it needs to be understood as being embedded in a particular historical moment. Anxieties concerning loss of attention in the late-nineteenth century led to attempts to theorise and understand attention. As Jonathan Crary has argued, in this period 'attentive norms and practices' were evaluated as part of the organisation of labour.[3] Analysis of productivity and efficiency in work became formalised through scientific management of labour, as seen in the theories of Frederick Winslow Taylor.[4]

Brain', *Bloomberg Business Week* (10 November 2008), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2008-11-10/how-digital-technology-has-changed-the-brainbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice> [accessed 12 June 2017]; Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (Thirplow: Icon, 2008).

[2] 'Automatic Action in Typewriting', *The Typist's Gazette*, 2.36, March 18 1897, p. 148.

[3] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 1.

[4] Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (London: Harper & Bros., 1911).

Medical literature on attention, as well as manuals which focused upon how to train one's mind to better attend to one's work, proliferated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as psychological experimentation demonstrated the limitations to attention's capacity.[5] Understandings of attention developed and changed in this period, then: such changes were both reflected upon and further developed in literature which worked to represent how attention functioned and was altered by the conditions of modernity.

The representation of the woman in the office in literature often leads to an exploration of such ideas of attention and distraction. The stereotype of women's ability to complete multiple tasks simultaneously underlies ideas of female attentiveness. This ability is particularly appropriate for an office worker and frequently such characters are portrayed as possessing a flexible mindset. Yet this mindset also involves the potential risk of slipping into an absent-minded, distracted state, or seeking out other, less suitable objects for attention. While office work is a particularly suitable job in which to explore ideas of attention and distraction as it was a role that was subject to disciplinary practices of scientific management, with ideals of efficiency emphasised, work with technologies also produced attentive problems. The typewriter or the telegraph do not themselves provide another focus for procrastination, as our computers do now, of course. Instead, I would suggest, the repetitive labour of tapping on the typewriter or the sounder – that is, the telegraph machine, controlled in a manner similar to touch-typing – led to working automatically, and a dispersal of attention that seeks out another stimulus.

[5] See William James, *The Principles of Psychology: Authorized Edition*, (New York: Dover, 1950) I; E. E. Constance Jones, 'An Aspect of Attention', *The Monist*, 8.3, April 1898, 356-77; O. Kuelpe, 'The Problem of Attention', *The Monist,* 13.1, October 1902, 38-71; W. B. Pillsbury, *Attention* (London: Swann Sonnenschein, 1908); E.B. Titchener, *Lectures on the elementary psychology of feeling and attention* (London: Macmillan, 1908).

Distraction, boredom and the everyday have often been gendered female: as noted in my introduction, Henri Lefebvre famously declared, 'Everyday life weighs heaviest on women'.[6] Yet while Lefebvre goes on to contend that women are incapable of recognising the everyday, I suggest the frustration of the everyday in office girl narratives is a manifestation of the lack of progress for women in society, which entails an absence of opportunities for women. As Allison Pease and Patrice Petro have argued, for women boredom can be expressive of frustration and a desire to rebel against one's current situation.[7] The repetition of the office girl's work, and her frustration with it, lead to this particular experience of boredom. Extending such arguments I suggest that this boredom is manifested in office girl literature through a desire for an escape; distraction, in the form of fantasising or daydreaming of other plans, becomes a way of depicting such frustrations. As Natalie Phillips has noted with regard to eighteenth century understandings of attention, distraction was not always straightforwardly denigrated, and could be seen as a spur to creativity.[8] In a similar vein, Patricia Meyer Spacks has argued that thanks to the rise of individualism and subsequent interest in individual psychology, boredom in literature of the nineteenth century typically is not a fault of the self, as it previously tended to be considered; instead it is regarded as indicating an individual's perceptive ability.[9] Extending and applying this notion to the state of distraction, I argue that such a state can indicate intelligence in a character who is frustrated by,

---

[6] Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. by Sacha Rabinovitch (London: Allen Lane, 1971), p. 73.
[7] Allison Pease, *Modernism, Feminism, and the Culture of Boredom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Patrice Petro, 'After Shock/Between Boredom and History' in *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 265-84.
[8] Natalie M. Phillips, *Distraction: Problems of Attention in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), p. 5.
[9] Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Boredom: The Literary History of a State of Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 23.

and wanting to distract themselves from, their contemporary situation. For the office girl, distraction is a more pleasurable and often creative activity that takes place alongside work.[10]

Late nineteenth century concerns about loss of attention provide a way of further understanding representations of the woman in the office. Considering some twentieth and twenty-first century theories of changes to attention, I will demonstrate how such concerns about loss of attention can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. Some recent critical works have maintained, as I will, that we must historicise our understanding of attention.[11] I will extend such ideas by applying them to the office girl character in particular; in order to consider in further depth the notion of limitations to the capacity for attention, I will turn to medical texts, noting the anxiety about the possible signs of degeneration that lack of attention supposedly shows. However, analysing William James's psychological work on habit and automatic behaviour we can see an approach to understanding the limits of attention that is less pessimistic. Indeed, William James offers an understanding of the positive possibilities of automatic attention and distraction.

I will suggest that distraction demonstrates the office worker's frustration with the limitations of her work, both in terms of personal fulfilment and career progression. *The Odd Women* (1893), I argue, provides an early instance of such distraction in the social realist mode, through a diversion to an escapist romance plot. Examining Henry James's 'In the Cage' (1898) and Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* with a particular focus on *The Tunnel* (1919), I will suggest that these

[10] Lise Shapiro Sanders, writing about the shopgirl, is similarly interested in absorption and distraction as modes of creativity, but suggests such states are enacted primarily in the consumption of romance novels. See Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2006).

[11] Crary; Michael Hagner, 'Toward a History of Attention in Culture and Science', *MLN*, 118.3 (April 2003), 670-87; Phillips; Spacks.

particular texts differ from *The Odd Women*, in which distraction powers the plot through a literal removal from everyday routine. Instead, texts by James and Richardson focus on the minutiae of everyday distraction through depictions of the interiority of a character. James's 'In the Cage' shows a daydreaming telegraph girl creating a narrative about her customers to distract her from her work, a narrative that forms most of the story. Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* portrays the everyday work life of its heroine, Miriam, and incorporates distraction, fantasising and a wandering mind into the very prose of the novel itself. The focus on distraction within these texts, shown through fantasy and daydream, redresses ideas of attention as a virtue because distraction is used to positive ends: it demonstrates the rich inner life, and thus the creativity and intelligence, of these office workers. Distraction indicates that mundane office work frustrates the office girl's capabilities and ambitions, and it provides an escape from, and even a subversion of, the work that they are compelled to concentrate on. Finally, the representation of distraction also leads to formal innovation, as the authors work to depict the experience of the drift of the mind.

DEFINING ATTENTION

Attention indicates the selection of something to concentrate on or give consideration to.[12] It implies intention, even if competing objects for attention challenge that intention. In the *Oxford English Dictionary* attention is defined as something which is paid or given, suggesting both the notion of intent, as well as hinting towards the idea that attention is finite and can be exhausted once all paid

[12] Wayne Wu, *Attention* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 11.

out.[13] Often, it is envisaged as acting in a metaphorically linear manner: attention flows from the subject to the object. But, as Natalie Phillips has pointed out in her work on eighteenth-century distraction, this conceptualisation, which was linked to a unifocal model of attention, gradually gave way as a multifocal model of attention became more widely accepted by medical practitioners towards the nineteenth century.[14] This multifocal model suggested that attention was 'inherently multiple', involving a range of brain processes.[15]

This multiplicity complicates the idea of intent directing attention: these brain processes could not all be simply willed into creating perfect concentration. The multifocal model, as Natalie Phillips has described, created the idea of a 'dynamic mind in constant motion', in which levels of attention will naturally change across the day.[16] The unifocal model, by contrast, had assumed greater levels of control over one's attention. If attention is perceived to be controllable, then in instances in which one is meant to concentrate – in work or in study, for instance – inattention indicates wilful disobedience. Concentration and the productivity that comes with concentration are regarded as leading to the individual becoming a good, industrious worker. As work and industriousness were associated with virtue, so too concentration is a virtue in this unifocal model of attention.[17] Multifocal attention, which suggests that attention is more complex and less easy to control, went some way to disentangling this association between attention and virtue. Yet, I note that several nineteenth-century psychologists still strained to link attention and virtue, as

[13] "attention, n.", *OED Online* (March 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/12802?redirectedFrom=attention> [accessed June 12, 2017].
[14] Phillips, p. 4-5.
[15] Ibid., p. 4-5.
[16] Ibid., p. 7.
[17] For an exploration of the relationship between work and virtue, see Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 2001).

can be seen in our own contemporary twenty-first century moment in spite of further cognitive research into the multifaceted nature of attention.[18]

Distraction, then, suggests that one is morally compelled to concentrate upon a particular occupation, but is not doing so. It implies disobedience. But while attentive concentration could be regarded as the opposite of distraction, the multifocal model of attention leads to an alternate understanding, in which there are shifts and vacillations between a range of levels of attentiveness. As Jonathan Crary has suggested, it is more useful to envisage attention and distraction as existing on a continuum, with attention as a 'dynamic process, intensifying and diminishing, rising and falling, ebbing and flowing.'[19] Extending such an idea to office girl texts, I note that in such literature attention is portrayed on a spectrum, with distraction not being absence of attention but a dispersed, misdirected attention. The word distraction itself is defined in relation to attention, as it has its origins in the Latin *distrahere*, to pull asunder – that is, to pull asunder moments of concentration.[20] Distraction can also be understood as a form of attention which, instead of being applied to the object one should be attending to, has been directed towards another object. Attention can also be dispersed between multiple different objects, as it is when one is multitasking; this dispersed attention is another form of distraction, as the mind jumps between different objects, distracted from one to attend to the other. One can distract oneself somewhat deliberately, allowing one's attention to wander and be captured by something other than that which one is meant to attend to.

---

[18] See Raja Parasuraman, 'The Attentive Brain: Issues and Prospects' in *The Attentive Brain*, ed. by Raja Parasuraman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), pp. 3-16 (p. 3-5); Michael I. Posner, 'Progress in Attention Research' in *Cognitive Neuroscience of Attention*, ed. by Michael I. Posner (London: Guildford Press, 2004), pp. 1-8 (p. 3); Phillips, p. 6.
[19] Crary, p. 47.
[20] "distraction, n.", *OED Online* (March 2017), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/55730?redirectedFrom=distraction> [accessed June 12, 2017].

Changes in how attention functions are often associated with modernity; for the office girl, automatically working at a typewriter or telegraph alters how her concentration functions. The concern about attention in modernity can be seen in the works of both twentieth and twenty-first century theorists: although there are of course significant differences in the technologies being worried over, a similar anxiety prevails. Attention is a fraught subject in our own period and worries concerning the internet, video games and other media changing our ability to concentrate proliferate. Katherine Hayles, in an article that draws upon both neuroscientific and psychological research and her own pedagogical practice, has asserted that 'networked and programmable media' alter not only how we conduct business and our social lives, but also affect how we think.[21] This is a 'generational shift in cognitive styles' which, she argues, is most typically seen in the young as they have grown up with media which have shaped their attentive abilities. Hayles suggests that there are two kinds of attention: 'deep attention' is prolonged concentration on a single object, such as a novel, 'ignoring outside stimuli while so engaged, preferring a single information stream' (187). The newer, media-informed form of attention she dubs 'hyper-attention', describing it as 'switching focus rapidly among different tasks', 'seeking a high level of stimulation, and having a low tolerance for boredom' (187). In this instance, she gives an example of a student doing homework while also listening to music, using a computer, or watching TV. Hyper-attention is not, then, attending to nothing at all; this multitasking is better understood as switching between tasks. This idea, I would suggest, underlies our understanding of what distraction is: a dispersed attention, which entails some attentiveness, but to multiple objects. Significantly, Hayles does not view this form

[21] Hayles, p. 187. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

of attention as a negative development; she argues against simply debating which form of attention is better with the riposte, 'Better for what?' (194). Hyper-attention can, she suggests, be useful in jobs that require attending to many different objects at once, from air traffic controller to trader. As such Hayles argues that teaching practices in universities should work to cultivate and develop both cognitive modes, including adapting to the rise in hyper-attention. Dispersed attention can be regarded as potentially positive and indicate a certain kind of intelligence or creativity, rather than simply being demonised as an inability to will oneself to concentrate on a particular object for a long period of time. While the office girl does not have the readily available media Hayles speaks of and distracts herself with her own thoughts, a similar kind of attention is seen in office girl narratives.

This dispersed attention is associated with excess stimuli, then, and as such in office girl narratives it is at times also induced by the experience of the overwhelming urban environment. The notion of the modern city distracting the individual is seen in a text that provides a pertinent antecedent to Hayles's work, Georg Simmel's 1903 essay 'The Metropolis and Modern Life'. In this essay, he explores the everyday experience of the city. Simmel asserts that metropolitan life is defined by 'the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli.'[22] In a manner similar to Hayles, Simmel contends that such stimuli alter our selves; he suggests this alteration changes the very behaviour of the individual. Simmel describes how stimuli 'force the nerves to make such violent responses, tear them about so brutally that they exhaust their last reserves of strength and, remaining in the same milieu, do not have time for new reserves to form' (14). Although people

[22] Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Modern Life' in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), pp. 11-19 (p. 11). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

enjoy difference – indeed, Simmel describes humans as creatures 'whose existence is dependent on differences' (11) as they stimulate the mind – this over-stimulation is characterised as destructive. Simmel invokes the idea of nerves having a limited capacity here by referring to the exhaustion of the 'last reserves of strength' (14). This, he suggests, creates a blasé attitude: that is, a lack of response to this stimuli in the metropolitan individual that functions as a kind of defence mechanism.

Distracted states are brought about in both the workplace and the city in office girl narratives. There are key differences in the states Simmel and Hayles describe, beyond the two different environments the two focus upon: the blasé attitude Simmel observes differs from Hayles's account of hyper-attention. Simmel's conclusions about disrupted attention are more negative than Hayles's, too; in part, this difference seems to be rooted in Hayles's focus being upon the workplace or educational environment: Simmel is more concerned with what he perceives to be the deep-rooted changes in the individual's personality and experience of everyday life that come from this shift in attention. But the two kinds of distraction, and the environments which induce such distraction, are brought together in office girl narratives.

The essays of Hayles and Simmel do correlate in their description of a disrupted, dispersed attention that is connected to how the subject's energy is directed and altered by technologies and the surrounding environment of the subject. Distraction, in both, is worthy of study as it is a state that is able to reveal something significant about the historical moment one is living in. The office girl's drift of mind is one such instance of the importance of distraction, as it is indicative of a reaction to the environment she finds herself in. For the office girl in the city, as for those individuals described in Simmel's essay, over-stimulation leads to distraction.

But in these office girl narratives, this distraction is not an aversion to the stimuli of the city: it instead denotes a freedom of mind that is paired with the freedom of these characters as versions of the *flâneuse*. The workplace, perhaps surprisingly as it is markedly devoid of exciting stimuli, leads to a comparable state that similarly indicates the autonomy of the office girl's mind, in this instance enabling her to escape her work. While these forms of distraction – one created by the overwhelming city environment, one induced by the boredom of the workplace – are different in important ways, then, both are indicative of brief moments of liberty that can be experienced by the office girl.

As well as providing an outlet for creativity, distraction has the potential to be radically revelatory for the individual, in a political sense. In the case of the office girl, it reveals a deep frustration with one's contemporary situation and the limited opportunities available, such as the lack of options for work. It suggests, in this vein, that progress in the position of women is not occurring quickly or fully enough for the office girl. Cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer saw the potential of distraction; he writes of a somewhat different form of distraction, as he analyses the cinemas of Berlin in the 1920s, considering their audience's experience and reception of film. He dubs these picture houses 'palaces of distraction', and asserts that they manage to raise 'distraction to the level of culture'; this was particularly significant, he suggested, as these cinemas were 'aimed at the *masses*'.[23] While, as he notes, many chided Berliners 'for being *addicted to distraction*' (325, original emphasis), Kracauer suggests that distraction has the possibility to reveal:

> Here, in pure externality, the audience encounters itself; its own reality is revealed in the fragmented sequence of splendid sense impressions. Were this

[23] Siegfried Kracauer, 'Cult of Distraction' in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. by Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 323-30 (p. 323-4), original emphasis. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

> reality to remain hidden from the viewers, they could neither attack nor change it; its disclosure in distraction is therefore of *moral* significance. (326, original emphasis)

Distraction has the ability to expose reality: it undoes, he suggests, the bourgeois ideal of the unified, attentive and controlled self. While Kracauer is discussing distraction through culture, rather than distraction experienced in work, a similar notion of distraction being revelatory can be seen in office girl narratives in the workplace. Kracauer was to later change his mind regarding distraction induced by media: in a 1930 sociological study of white-collar workers in Berlin, he argued that mass culture was too powerful a distraction, especially as it became the primary relief from the attentive dutifulness needed at work.[24] Yet, it is nevertheless notable that Kracauer's earlier, more positive understanding of the potentials of distraction is in fact experienced in the workplace in office girl narratives. For the office girl, this distraction is perhaps all the more politically important in that it is a refusal of the compulsion to work. Distraction can therefore be understood as a significant, rebellious state that has the potential to reveal aspects of one's environment – in the case of office work, that it is dull and unfulfilling – and reveal elements of the self: often, in the texts I examine, creativity, intelligence, or a level of ambition that outstrips what can be provided by office work.

MEDICAL THEORIES OF ATTENTION

Changing understandings of attention in the late-nineteenth century can be connected to alterations in the organisation of labour, but so too did psychology impact how attention was thought of. As Michael Hagner argues, experimental psychology in this era focused increasingly on the 'risks, gaps and instabilities of attention', and it

[24] Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, trans. by Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1998).

charted the involuntary nature of attention and reported that attention necessarily drifted: it was not possible to continually concentrate.[25] These limitations on attention were dwelt upon and debated, as well as the diverse types of attention defined: categorisations such as concentrated attention, passive or active attention, distraction, and automatic attention recur in these texts. In spite of a general acknowledgement that there was, indeed, a limitation on attention, there was a degree of moralising about the ideals of attention to be found in some of the works by these scientists. While there were those psychologists who avoided creating such ideals, many maintained an association between virtue and concentration. One's attention, such scientists argued, should be subject to discipline and training; an anxiety remained concerning the difficulty of mastering attention.

In exploring the complexities of attention the distracted woman is a recurring figure, often used in particular to consider automatic attention. W. B. Pillsbury describes a woman knitting while listening to something or someone, and asserts that she 'will suddenly stop as she becomes interested in what is being said'.[26] Knitting is done with a kind of automatic attention, but here the distracted woman is used by Pillsbury to describe what he sees as the limits of automatic attention. Yet William James in *Principles of Psychology* uses the same analogy to assert the opposite point of view: acting automatically, the woman knitting can carry on with this task as she talks or reads.[27] Distraction, James argues, can take place alongside such 'mechanical occupations' that are 'being automatically carried on' (404).

James thus perceives the positive possibilities of automatic actions. His work on habit puts forth the idea of the plasticity of the brain – that is, that the brain can

[25] Hagner, p. 679, 681.
[26] Pillsbury, p. 21.
[27] James, *The Principles of Psychology,* p. 119. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

develop and change even in adulthood – which allows for new habits to evolve. Habit can, he notes, simplify the movements required to achieve a result; this makes said results more accurate and diminishes fatigue (112). So too '*habit diminishes the conscious attention with which our acts are performed*' (114, original emphasis). Habit can be highly useful, therefore:

> *we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can* … The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work. (122, original emphasis)

Making some of daily routine an automatic habit doesn't dull or deaden our senses. Acting automatically, as Liesl Olson has suggested in her reading of James, enables skill and speed in our actions.[28] Extending this to office girl narratives and moments of daydream I argue that being able to act automatically in some areas, as with the woman knitting, allows some extra freedom; it gives more space to think, and be creative. Recent work by Rita Felski on the everyday also argues for seeing habit as a potentially affirmative force. She acknowledges the tension inherent in habit: it can be dull, of course, but it also serves to orient us in the world. Thus, habit isn't only restrictive routine, but also a source of strength and comfort, a fundamental element of being-in-the-world.[29] It is a way to organise the world and as such it is too a 'key factor in the gradual formation of identity as a social and intersubjective process'.[30] Felski mentions, briefly, that often habit is carried out in a 'semiautomatic, distracted, or involuntary manner.'[31] Repetition and routine can be the unexciting features of daily life; yet, they are both necessary – one can't concentrate all the time – and permit us to navigate everyday life with greater ease. Extending and applying

[28] Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 92.
[29] Rita Felski, 'The Invention of Everyday Life', *New Formations*, 39 (1999), 15-31 (p. 28).
[30] Ibid., p. 20.
[31] Ibid., p. 26.

such ideas to office girl narratives it can be seen that habit enables both the passing of the day and the freedom of mind that distraction permits while conducting automatic work.

For William James attention is a spectrum which naturally ebbs and flows throughout the day. Attention can be sensorial, attending to objects detected by the senses, or intellectual, concentrating on ideas or represented objects; it can be immediate, or derived; and it can be either passive, a sort of reflex, or active and voluntary (417). At its height it consists of 'focalisation, concentration' but at its minimum it is the 'confused, dazed, scatterbrained state' dubbed distraction. Distraction is known to everyone, he declares, and we 'fall several times a day' into this state. He goes on,

> The eyes are fixed on vacancy, the sounds of the world melt into confused unity, the attention is dispersed so that the whole body is felt, as it were, at once, and the foreground of consciousness is filled, if by anything, by a sort of solemn sense of surrender to the empty passing of time. (404)

Distraction affects our ability to perceive, or to want to perceive, with eyes unseeing and hearing unable to differentiate. Attention is scattered; this suggests not an entire absence of attention, but a vague attendance to different objects, and a lack of linear relationship between subject and object. It can imply, too, that one should be attending to something:

> In the dim background of our mind we know meanwhile what we ought to be doing: getting up, dressing ourselves, answering the person who has spoken to us, trying to make the next step in our reasoning. (404)

James describes this state as typical of everyday life; he admits, too, that we do not always know what permits us to gather together energy in order to concentrate, as we 'wink our eyes, we shake our heads … and the wheels of life go round again' (404). The poetic prose deployed by James serves to depict the sensations of distraction, without wholly denigrating distraction or moralising about it. Attention, then, is not

a steady, constant state: rather it varies between differing degrees of intensity throughout the day.

In spite of repeated findings that there were inherent physical and psychological limits to one's ability to attend, medical texts of the period still regularly returned to the notion of controlling one's attention. The ideal of concentration tends to be discussed in terms which distinctly turn away from feminine analogies of the woman at work or knitting. Oswald Kuelpe, a German psychologist, argues that the '*energy of attention is limited and approximately constant in its limitation.*'[32] Yet, he concludes his article on 'The Problem of Attention' with a rhetorically dramatic treatise on the power of will that relies upon masculine metaphors of battle. He argues the mind is 'not the sport of incalculable accident'.[33] Rather, drawing upon our strength, 'we can transcend the limits of our organism and help to mould the universe, propounding and realising ideal ends'.[34] Educated properly, we might hone our attention and be 'trained to constancy and steadiness'.[35] 'Thus equipped,' Kuelpe continues, 'we shall issue as conquerors from our battle with the changes and chances, the burdens and temptations of life.'[36] W.B. Pillsbury found that attention had precise limitations in his experiments: he declares that he found the 'number of separate objects that can be attended to is four or five for vision, five to eight for audition.'[37] But in spite of these natural limits he argues that loss of attention was a kind of degeneration: he contends that 'degenerations of mind are nearly all accompanied by weakened or deranged attention.'[38] While he does not cite Nordau directly, the word 'degeneration' invokes Nordau's book of the

[32] Kuelpe, p. 57. Original emphasis.
[33] Ibid., p. 68.
[34] Ibid., p. 68.
[35] Ibid., p. 67.
[36] Ibid., p. 67.
[37] Pillsbury, p. 83.
[38] Ibid., p. 306.

same name, and is thus suggestive of degeneration and loss of attention at a societal, and not just an individual, level, as well as an association between degeneration and the conditions of modernity.[39] The association between degeneration and femininity is connected in Nordau too, who argued that degeneration involved a loss of virility.[40]

This idea of self-training in order to improve attention was not itself unusual – one text from the late nineteenth century demonstrating such views recommended children be asked to do repeated 'mechanical exercises' to see improvements in concentration.[41] But it is more unexpected that a psychologist who has made an argument for the limits to one's capacity for attention would raise such issues of self-improvement and will as a way of improving attention. The idea of discipline and training oneself prevails, alongside the assertion of a relationship between attention and virtue, in spite of experimental findings suggesting otherwise. As such, the compulsion to associate attention and virtue means attention is also perceived to be connected with discipline and regulation: distraction, on the other hand, is still framed as subversive and rebellious, an escape from what one should be doing.

ESCAPISM IN *THE ODD WOMEN*

Lapses of attention in women workers, brought about by a frustration with their own position, inform the plot of George Gissing's *The Odd Women*. The novel is deeply concerned with the meanings and purposes of work, as the Madden sisters struggle to find work and survive. Moments of distraction or dispersed attention within the narrative demonstrate a lapse of interest with one's everyday life; these moments

[39] Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, trans. from the second edition of the German work (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
[40] Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 95.
[41] Charles Leland, *Quickness of Perception* (New York: J.P. Downs, 1891), p. 13.

often seem escapist, showing a desire within the characters for something more beyond their circumscribed situations.

The narrative of Monica Madden diverts several times, indicating her lack of concentration upon a single ambition. Initially trained in the typing school, she leaves the school for marriage: this is a lapse of attention, a distraction from her prior goal, of sorts; but it is hardly a surprising one for the reader considering Monica's already-established character. Early on in the novel, it is noted she had 'no aptitude for anything but being a pretty, cheerful, engaging girl', mainly suited to enter one of the 'higher walks of life'.[42] Her primary means of doing so would be marriage: for this reason she accepts a marriage offer from a rich man who she doesn't love. Monica continues to display dispersed, scattered attention, unable to then focus on her marriage: her incompatibility with her husband Widdowson is clear, and her subsequent affair demonstrates this, as well as her desire to have a relationship with romance. The scattered attention of Monica, unable to concentrate on a particular route in life, could appear to suggest that she fulfils the stereotype of the idle young woman; but this want of definitive ambition has been created by a lack of education or training for work and the dearth of options she has as a woman. Dispersed, scattered attention becomes a method for demonstrating Monica's frustrating, limiting position.

Rhoda Nunn, unlike Monica, seems an example of single-minded concentration for much of the novel. Indeed, when Monica meets Rhoda, it is remarked as being 'the first time in her life that she [Monica] had spoken with a woman daring enough to think and act for herself' (30). When Rhoda encounters Miss Barfoot's cousin Everard, they debate about free unions – which Everard,

[42] George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 15-6. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

hoping to intrigue Rhoda, declares to be superior to marriage as a free union 'presupposes equality of position' – but Rhoda cheerfully calls herself one of the 'odd women' who do not marry; she is resolutely and ideologically a part of this class, determined to focus on her work (162-3). Rhoda's concentration on her central purpose carries on through her initial acquaintance with Everard, in spite of his attempts to distract. Yet, as they meet more frequently, Rhoda's interest is piqued. Taking a holiday to the seaside on her own, Everard follows her. He broaches the idea of their joining in a free union; but ultimately, they decide they should legally marry.

Rhoda's change in desires – from work to romance – over the course of this section of the novel could be read as Gissing arguing for an underlying desire for marriage in women. Yet this engagement is brief, ending before Rhoda has returned from her seaside vacation due to false rumours that it is Everard that Monica is having an affair with. Rhoda is upset, but her reaction is also, perhaps unexpectedly, one of relief: in a 'frenzy of detestation, she cursed the man who had so disturbed and sullied the swift, pure stream of her life' (312), and she returns to her work. This romance is a distraction, and a moment of escapism, occurring at the same time as a geographical removal from London and Rhoda's workplace. It does not indicate a return to the idea that woman's primary role is to be a wife: it does seem to denote, though, an underlying sense of frustration from Rhoda concerning her current life. This story of Rhoda parallels Monica Madden's distracted, scattered narrative, and shows that distraction from one's central ambition is symptomatic of frustrations with the limitations imposed upon that ambition. While Rhoda's moment of escapism from her everyday life is romantic, it doesn't solely indicate romantic or sexual desire, but rather a wider, more expansive desire for something more than the

limitations imposed upon her life – such as the restrictive choice between work and marriage – allow. As argued in Chapter Three, the office girl's desires expand beyond the options available to her, but in contrast to the novels explored previously Rhoda's narrative involves an all the more fleeting escape that is a brief instance of distraction. In later texts, we see distraction focused upon more as a cognitive mode. Henry James and Dorothy Richardson explore depicting the distracted mind, and escaping everyday life through fantasy and dream.

TECHNOLOGY, PROCRASTINATION AND DISTRACTION IN HENRY JAMES'S 'IN THE CAGE'

Henry James's 'In the Cage' plays with ideas of automatic work, distraction and the freedom of mind that these states produce. In this story, an unnamed telegraph girl observes the comings and goings of the rich customers from the telegraph 'cage' in a Mayfair store called Cocker's. Her work, tapping on the telegraph machine, is of a type that can be conducted automatically; James shows how this affects states of attention. The automaticity of her work allows the girl to disperse her attention: she becomes concerned with the cryptic, coded messages of two particular customers, Captain Everard and Lady Bradeen, and begins to imagine the story behind their messages. The girl is also attempting to defer a move to Chalk Farm, which is being encouraged by her grocer fiancé Mr Mudge so that she might be in closer proximity to him and his business. Near the beginning of the story, the narrator notes:

> Definite, at any rate, it was that by the time May was well started the kind of company she kept at Cocker's had begun to strike her as a reason—a reason she might almost put forward for a policy of procrastination.[43]

[43] Henry James, 'In the Cage' in *Selected Tales* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), p. 317. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

This policy of procrastination is a putting off of a seemingly inevitable fate: her marriage to a man she does not love, but who can provide security. The precarity of the girl's position is highlighted throughout 'In the Cage'; the cage itself, at least initially, enacts the boundary between the central character and the upper classes whose messages she takes and taps out on the sounder. Her own position in the world, as well as her reasons for marrying Mudge, are explained early on in the story when James notes that she, her sister and mother had nearly succumbed to 'absolute want' (315), seemingly following — though this is never fully explicated — the death of her father. It is not only the automatic nature of her work that makes her a fit subject for ideas around attention, then. The seeming inevitability of her fate, coupled with the boredom of her everyday tasks, lead the girl to distract herself by creating stories about her customers.

The fantasies become a kind of escapism; the dispersal of her attention allows her to dream beyond the limitations imposed upon her life as an engaged telegraph girl. Yet, as seen in my first chapter, other narratives of office girls conclude with the women becoming creative writers.[44] James does not go as far, and the girl's escape is confined to daydream and fantasy. The story instead offers a way of exploring alternative, but also more restricted and temporary, forms of escape from everyday life.

The emphasis James places on the telegraph girl's role shows how the story is preoccupied with ideas of communication and knowledge. The telegraph girl is a mediator of communication between others but there is an anxiety present in the story about the transfer of knowledge via an unknown conduit: as the girl seems to uncover an affair between Lady Bradeen and Captain Everard, she realises that she is

[44] See, for instance, Grant Allen [as Olive Pratt Rayner], *The Type-writer Girl* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1897); Ivy Low, *The Questing Beast* (London: Martin Secker, 1914).

in a potential position of power. She envisions herself acting the 'bad girl' and threatening Everard by declaring 'buy me!', in a 'scene better than many in her ha'penny novels' — but, she thinks to herself, she wouldn't want money, so the whole matter remains rather 'vague' in her mind, especially as she isn't in fact, she assures herself, a 'bad girl' (339).

James himself was made more aware of the mediating presence of the young communication worker when he started dictating his works to a typist from 1897 onwards. He complained of this in a letter to his brother William in 1898: 'The young typists are mainly barbarians, and the civilized here are not typists.'[45] It seems the typist's presence was more invasive than James would have liked. Some critics have also suggested parallels between 'In the Cage' and the Cleveland Street scandal of 1889, in which several telegraph boys — those who delivered telegrams to private homes — were discovered to also be sex workers, with a number of aristocrats as their customers.[46] Their connection to the delivery of private messages provoked anxieties about secrecy and blackmail; after all, the girl brags to her friend Mrs Jordan that she knows the 'little games and secrets and vices' of her rich customers (330). They become, as Kate Thomas has described in her book on the Post Office, 'intimate strangers'; the conduit of the girl is necessarily involved in the intimacy between Lady Bradeen and Everard.[47] There is an allusion, too, to the girl potentially prostituting herself to Everard: she notes when contemplating the possibility of an

[45] Qtd. in Pamela Thurschwell, 'Henry James and Theodora Bosanquet: On the typewriter, *In the Cage*, at the Ouija Board', *Textual Practice*, 13.1 (1999), 5-23 (p. 6).
[46] See, for instance, Eric Savoy, '"In the Cage" and the Queer Effects of Gay History', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 28.3 (Spring 1995), 284-307 (p. 287); Hugh Stevens, 'Queer Henry *In the Cage*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, ed. by Jonathan Freedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 120-38 (p. 129); Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 97.
[47] Kate Thomas, *Postal Pleasures: Sex, Scandal, and Victorian Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 1, 218.

affair with Everard that 'people of her sort didn't, in such cases, matter – didn't count as infidelity, counted only as something else' (347). Everard also begins to slip her extra money when paying for telegrams, but the girl assumes this is simply a test of her character and returns it to him (365). There is a fear, then, about the potentially invasive, even potentially dangerous possibilities that are brought about by new modes of communication and the workers that are involved in them.

Yet, the story is laden with ambiguity, which I argue is key to the office girl's ability to daydream about her characters, and means 'In the Cage' is not purely concerned with acquiring knowledge and the threat of blackmail: indeed, it is never quite clear what exactly the girl knows about Everard and Lady Bradeen, and where the girl's knowledge ends and her wild imaginings about these customers begin. When the girl becomes preoccupied with the couple, she seems to be able to anticipate what they are writing in their coded telegrams: at one point she corrects a key word about a meeting point in a telegram for Lady Bradeen, leading Lady Bradeen to blush and say, 'Oh, you know–?', and the girl to simply respond, 'Yes, I know!' – the dashes leaving out that which is apparently known (343). The two customers seem to be having an affair, but later on in the story Everard's debts are alluded to, suggesting that there is something more to the story which is never fully explicated. The proliferation of names with which Lady Bradeen and Captain Everard sign off their telegrams exacerbates this ambiguity: Lady Bradeen is also known as 'Cissy' and 'Mary'; and Everard is all the more impressively known as: 'Philip', 'Phil', 'the Count', 'Captain', 'William', 'the Pink 'Un', and at one point even, with some cruel irony, the girl's fiancé's name, 'Mudge' (319). This abundance of names is different from the girl's namelessness: the latter is suggestive of a lack of proper identity as she is forced by circumstance to make life decisions

such as working in a telegraph office, or marrying Mudge. By contrast, Everard's many names are indicative of the privilege of his not having to be pinned down to a singular identity; this, alongside the many stories surrounding him, contributes to his unknowable, ambiguous characterisation.

Interpretation plays a key role in this ambiguity, and in the girl's distraction from her work. The word 'margin' is repeated several times throughout the story; I would suggest it doesn't necessarily carry the negative connotations of being marginalised, but is instead a textual metaphor, one that is connected to notions of space, openness and freedom.[48] Indeed, as the story progresses, the girl's vulnerability and precarious position are emphasised less, and instead her existing in a social margin suggests her ability to be in a liminal space between classes, interacting with the upper classes, which allows her to have her much-valued 'play of mind' (317). The notion of the girl existing in a liminal space socially is underlined also by the suggestion that her family were previously well off and experienced a fall. Her distaste for Mudge's accent with its 'too present h's' (315) – which hints at an attempt to overcompensate for the cockney accent's traditional dropping of h's – indicates the girl does not quite belong, or feels that she does not belong, to the lower classes. The girl wishes Mudge to think her simply silly rather than be suspicious of her motivations for staying at her Mayfair job, because 'that gave her the margin' she requires (334). There is a 'want of margin in the cage', which, when Everard is present, 'wholly ceased to be appreciable' (337).

[48] Jennifer Wicke has also pointed out the significance of the word 'margin' in the story, but reads it as indicative of the liminal social space of the girl's work. I extend and nuance this idea, as noted, to suggest this 'margin' then allows space for the girl's daydream. Wicke argues the cage ultimately squeezes out the margin, and the girl is obliged to write out what has already been written by her customers. Jennifer Wicke, 'Henry James's Second Wave', *The Henry James Review*, 10.2 (Spring 1989), 146-51.

The word 'margin' brings to mind too the textual form that the story focuses upon, the telegram. The idea that the telegram as a form lent itself to ambiguity or misinterpretation can be seen in the popularity of stories that played on this theme: in the first issue of journal *The Telegraphist* in 1883, in an article called 'Love-Making by Telegraph' the anonymous writer questions, 'Will you believe it possible for Cupid to do his work effectually BY WIRE, and without his two most powerful allies—Vision and Touch?'[49] This is intimacy without physical proximity. The form of the telegram leads to miscommunication: the writer tells a story of two telegraph clerks, Miss Dash and Mr Lanky, falling in love after corresponding via telegram when they aren't preoccupied with customers. The man proposes, but when they finally meet the male clerk finds his female counterpart looks nothing like what he had interpreted from her brief description. Happily, this (admittedly, potentially deliberate) miscommunication nonetheless ends in marriage. The telegram, whittled down to the minimal number of words, is a form that is 'distilled': the condensed nature of this form of communication can make it ambiguous.

'Distilled' is the word the girl chooses to describe her conversations with Everard, which are similarly condensed, ambiguous, and provide the potential for misinterpretation (337). Everard's telegrams are particularly 'distilled' too, a fact that is emphasised when juxtaposing his communications with some of the telegrams of other rich customers: the girl is shocked that these customers contravene the conventions of the telegram by turning it into a form for 'extravagant chatter' full of meaningless phrases, 'compliments and wonderments' (324). Everard's telegrams, by contrast, are succinct and mysterious, to the extent that eventually his 'words were mere numbers' (320). This textual condensation leaves plenty of space in the

[49] 'Love-Making by Telegraph', *The Telegraphist*, 1, December 1 1883, p. 4.

margins for the girl to read into and to elaborate upon in her mind, allowing her to distract herself from her typical, everyday tasks.

The margins permitted to the girl allow her to distract herself from her work, and to defer her marriage to Mudge by preoccupying herself through creating stories to explicate ambiguities. During the course of the story the girl becomes a model to explore different conceptions of attention. The technological aspect of her job can be conducted in the mode of automatic habit; through this mode of attention, her mind is free to observe and elaborate. Her job is characterised as dully repetitive, taking messages from outside the cage in a mechanical, habitual manner that means her 'forearm ached with rubbing' (314). The association between attention and virtue, as well as between distraction and subversion, is explored as she distracts herself from her duties. She complicates, too, linear conceptions of attention through her dispersal of attention between different tasks. It is noted of the girl that she is aware 'that her imaginative life was the life in which she spent most of her time' (316), and this reassures her that she is different from others, and not understood by her close companions. It is established near the beginning of the story that

> she had a whimsical mind and wonderful nerves; she was subject, in short, to sudden flickers of antipathy and sympathy, red gleams in the grey, fitful needs to notice and to "care", odd caprices of curiosity. (316)

Her 'retentive brain' (323), which helps her remember elements of the story of Everard and Lady Bradeen, alongside this description of her nerves, mind and sympathetic abilities, make her seem skilled and are suggestive of this story-creating being a type of work.

While her wild imagination could make her the subject of mockery – and the narrator at some points takes on this perspective – the sympathy for the character of the girl overwhelms such mockery and instead her story-creating becomes admirable

and authorial. The automaticity of her waged work coupled with her 'play of mind' (317) recalls William James's theories on the benefits of automatic work permitting freedom of higher powers of thought. While Henry often read his brother's work, it is not quite clear if he read *Principles of Psychology* – ironically Henry seemed unable to concentrate upon this text, confessing to William in a letter that 'I blush to say that I haven't the freedom of mind or cerebral freshness … to tackle – more than dipping in just here and there – your mighty and magnificent book'.[50] Nonetheless 'In the Cage' invokes similar ideas about automaticity, habit and freedom of mind. The imaginative story-telling ability of the girl is, then, a different, more pleasurable form of work for the girl. It is akin to Michel de Certeau's description of *la perruque*, in which the worker conducts her own work under the guise of working for her employer. Indeed, Certeau's example is that of the distracted woman worker, as he suggests one instance of *la perruque* would be that of the secretary writing a love letter on company time.[51] Such a tactic evades disciplinary structures and deploys one's resources for one's own freely chosen activities.[52] Where the girl of 'In the Cage' has previously covertly read novels in the office, which are described as 'very greasy, in fine print and all about fine folks' (316), the story of Everard and Lady Bradeen with which she then distracts herself is one, she thinks to herself, that 'beat every novel in the shop' (340). She seems like the ideal, efficient worker but she diverts her energy to her own pleasurable, imaginative work.

At the end of the story, the girl is asked by Everard to recover a telegram; after she does so, the girl learns – through a conversation with her friend Mrs Jordan

[50] Henry James to William James, Feb 6 1891, in *Henry James Letters, Vol. 3 1883-1895*, ed. by Leon Edel (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980) III, p. 330.
[51] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 25.
[52] Ibid., p. 25-6.

which is threaded through with ambiguity – that Lady Bradeen and Everard are to be married, and that her recovery of the telegram has played a part in this unwanted resolution. She concludes she will marry Mudge, and plans to move to Chalk Farm the following week. Her perverse desire to avoid the end of this narrative, which has been outlined from the beginning, is seemingly muted. Distraction can be pleasurable, as we have seen with the girl's enjoyment of her storytelling. Yet, there are limitations to this pleasurable work. While Stephen Arata discusses how in the works of William Morris and Robert Louis Stevenson reading idly or daydreaming is a positive, alternative form of diffused attention that produces pleasure, Henry James's story necessarily differs as its subject is a working, lower-class woman.[53] The girl has felt that her creative imaginings concerning her customers

> made up for the long stiffness of sitting there in the stocks, made up for the cunning hostility of Mr. Buckton and the importunate sympathy of the counter-clerk, made up for the daily, deadly, flourishy letter from Mr. Mudge (317).

Her creative distraction is a strategy that enables her to cope with her job – yet her material reality remains the same. She resigns herself to the fact that reality, for someone in her position, must be 'ugliness and obscurity', and could never be 'the escape, the rise' (379). The pleasure of procrastination is that it defers closure and finality, giving one a sense that possibilities and potentialities remain open – but the girl's tale necessarily comes to a close. The telegraph girl is at once a symbol for progress – intelligence, creativity, relative independence, constructing her own world, albeit in her imagination – but also of stasis, as her fate remains unchanged and her fantastical, dream-like story, which seems a form of escapism, must no longer distract her, and comes to its inevitable end.

---

[53] Stephen Arata, 'On Not Paying Attention', *Victorian Studies*, 46.2 (Winter 2004), 193-205 (p. 195).

The attention and distraction of the woman in the office is explored too in Dorothy Richardson's multi-volume novel *Pilgrimage*: in Richardson's work, distraction is not simply a character trait, or a theme explored, but instead informs the very form of the prose of the text. Richardson wrote and released *Pilgrimage* in thirteen novel-length 'chapters'; the first was published in 1915, and subsequent volumes were composed and published over the course of Richardson's lifetime. The novel focuses upon the life story of Miriam Henderson, whose narrative strongly resembles Richardson's own biography. The length and open-ended nature of the text continually defers any kind of closure or formal ending. The prose itself drifts and flows, too, moving between first and third person and following Miriam's state of mind; critics referred to this as enacting the stream-of-consciousness technique. Richardson herself rejected this term, noting it was popular amongst literary critics 'who could persuade themselves of the possibility of comparing consciousness to a stream.'[54] She jokingly suggests in response to the application of 'stream of consciousness' to her novels that 'shroud of consciousness' would be more appropriate – this reference to something which obscures from view indicating, as Lynette Felber argues, the lack of unilateral direction within Richardson's text.[55] This is the fulfilment of Richardson's stated desire that she wanted to 'produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism' (I.9); she is, then, wanting to depict a specifically feminine consciousness. I note the lack of singular direction

[54] Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage I: Pointed Roofs, Backwater, Honeycomb* (London: Virago, 1979), p. 11. As Richardson often uses ellipses in her prose, any ellipsis used by myself to demonstrate an omission in the text will be in square brackets: […]. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

[55] Lynette Felber, 'A Manifesto for Feminine Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', in *Rereading Modernism: New Directions in Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Lisa Rado (New York: Garland, 1994), pp. 23-40 (p. 25).

within the novel, pointed out by Felber and others, and nuance prior ideas about its meaning in order to note how it is akin to the way in which distraction functions: as distraction is dispersed attention, it indicates a lack of unified, linear attention.[56] This correspondence between the prose of *Pilgrimage* and the distracted state of mind is made especially clear in the novel-chapters in which Miriam is working in a dentist's office in London. Miriam's distraction, replicated by Richardson's prose, serves to indicate frustration with the options available to women for work, as well as Miriam's own distinctly feminine consciousness, and capacity for creativity.

Work, and in particular women's work, is a key problem for Miriam as she struggles to find a fulfilling, rewarding form of employment, and she moves between a number of different jobs. Miriam's profession changes several times in the early novel-chapters. Disenchanted by her own experience of work, Miriam protests against the very idea of vocation. Meeting a lawyer who describes his work as his vocation, Miriam disputes the significance he gives to ideas of occupation and duty – especially as applied to the law (I.454). This is a deliberately gendered conversation: Richardson is fond of staging debates between Miriam and a range of men within the text as a way of thinking through differences between masculinity and femininity. Indeed, Richardson believed in there being an innate difference between genders; her very desire in writing *Pilgrimage*, as noted, was to invent a feminine realism as an alternative to the contemporary masculine mode of realism. Miriam's rejection of the idea of vocation is connected to the masculine nature of the idea: vocation is much more difficult to obtain for a woman in this era given the limited career options available. As Allison Pease notes in relation to work and *Pilgrimage*, work is not depicted within the text as productive or enhancing of selfhood; rather, it is boring

[56] See Felber, p. 25; see also, for example, Joanne Winning, *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p. 170.

and alienating.[57] Pease connects this to the absence of readily available public meaning for a woman such as Miriam outside of the 'already prescribed forms of domesticity, which she rejects'; this lack of a clear path for ambition contributes to the text's plotless, obfuscatory narrative.[58] Yet I critique Pease's argument somewhat, noting that there is a tension in the formulation of work in *Pilgrimage* that her points do not necessarily account for: work does bring relative independence; and, moreover, the tedium of work leads to production of the distracted state of mind that gives birth to some of the formal innovations of *Pilgrimage*.

This state of distraction is explored when Miriam moves to London to work in a dentist's office in *The Tunnel*. Richardson declared of her own move, 'At last, London, clerical work, "freedom."'[59] Living in the city is frequently described as freeing in *Pilgrimage*; this urban setting also gives rise to the distracted state of mind that is enacted in the prose of the novel. Yet so too does the much less freeing experience of working within the office, and the mundanity that comes with the job. Miriam's actions in the office are often described minutely, and a movement is made from exterior action to interior thought. It is these scenes that give rise to some of *Pilgrimage*'s most experimental passages.

Attention and distraction, and the movement between the two, inform the structure of one of the first chapters focusing on Miriam's office work. As she glances through some letters she is working on for her boss, she notes a returned appointment card that has been sent by her without a date and time. This absent-minded mistake gives rise to another bout of distraction, or daydream:

---

[57] Pease, p. 93.
[58] Pease, p. 93, 96.
[59] Dorothy Richardson, *Journey to Paradise: Short Stories and Autobiographical Sketches*, ed. by Trudi Tate (London: Virago Modern Classics, 1989), pp. 112-3.

> She looked blindly out of the window; hand-painted, they are hand-painted, forget-me-nots and gold tendrils softly painted, not shining, on an unusual shape, a merry Christmas. Melly Klismas. In this countree heapee lain, chiney man lun home again, under a red and green paper umbrella in the pouring rain, that was not a hand-painted one.[60]

In this passage, when Miriam is reminded of a previous experience of distraction she commences another. Although she physically looks away from her work, it is not to observe something else – she 'looked blindly' – but rather to turn inward. What follows is a series of free associations between memories: moving between hand-painted umbrellas, Christmas, a childish greeting of Christmas that gives way to a childish song, and then returning back to the idea of hand-painted umbrellas, the drift of mind is portrayed but the significance of these memories is not explicitly explained to the reader. The significance comes, instead, from the formal depiction of the drift of mind shown through the associative thread that brings together these memories; Richardson illustrates the state of distraction through her prose.

While in this instance Miriam is explicitly distracting herself and turning away from work, at other moments she disperses her attention between work and drifting thought. In a manner similar to that of the girl of 'In the Cage', some of Miriam's work can be conducted automatically. Part of her job in the dentist's office is cleaning the dental instruments: this is the 'tedium of the long series of small, precise, attention-demanding movements', which is exacerbated by the recognition that there would soon be a 'fresh set of implements already qualifying for another cleansing' (II.40). The description of such a task as 'attention-demanding' ensures the reader focuses on the idea of attention, before this statement is contradicted as Miriam's mind begins to drift:

---

[60] Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage II: The Tunnel, Interim* (London: Virago, 1992), p. 37. Further references to this edition are give after quotations in the text.

> … Were there any sort of people who could do this kind of thing patiently, without minding? … the evolution of dentistry was wonderful […] there must be, everywhere, women doing this work for people who were not nice. They *could* not do it for work's sake […] was it right to spend life cleaning instruments? … the blank moment again, of gazing about in vain for an alternative … all work has drudgery. That is not the answer. … Blessed be Drudgery, but that was housekeeping, not someone else's drudgery…. As she put the things back in the drawers […] (II.40)

Miriam is still at work at her tasks, as the final sentence makes clear, but her mind is able to wander. Her thoughts are associated with her duties, but take on a more philosophical bent as she begins to consider other women like her doing this work, the purpose of work and phrases that she has heard that are associated with work. This seems an effortful dispersed attention in that she is deliberately trying to distract herself, to find something else to think about, as the phrase 'gazing about in vain for an alternative' makes clear. Work is explicitly frustrating, composed of 'drudgery' and tedious, endless tasks. Yet, her distraction affords her some freedom, allowing her to think about the notion of work and its meanings beyond tedious tasks. Later on in the novel, sitting down at her desk and taking up firstly 'the most pressing of her clerical duties', she finds 'her mind ranging amongst thoughts whose beginnings she could not remember. She felt equal to anything. Every prospect was open to her' (II.139). As Miriam thinks later, 'contemplation is freedom'.[61]

While the work itself is tedious, freedom of mind can be found in the attentive states it brings about. In other moments, Miriam can also find freedom in briefly 'dashing off notes to friends' with 'expressive phrases that came without thought' (II.139) in between her work duties. This, along with the more general drift of mind, resembles Certeau's concept of *la perruque* in a similar manner to the 'play of mind' of the girl of 'In the Cage'. Bryony Randall, in her study of modernism and

[61] Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage III: Deadlock, Revolving Lights, The Trap* (London: Virago, 1979), p. 282.

daily time, has also pointed out this affinity between Certeau's concept and Miriam's experience of the temporality of everyday work life. Randall argues that there is a 'slippage between attention and distraction' in the novel which results in lapses into absence of mind and daydream.[62] These lapses are rendered as 'one of those liminal and feminised states' that challenge 'any attempted regulation of psychic energies'.[63] Yet I extend Randall's arguments by linking this also to the specifically gendered situation of Miriam's work: as in the previous passage, her consideration of work is explicitly contemplating 'women doing this work' (II.40), and thus the frustration that brings about a feminised rebellion through distraction is rooted in the limitations of the position of women in society, and the limited kinds of work available to them. The attentive states explored are thus deeply embedded both within the political situation of women and their work, and Richardson's exploration of a specifically feminine consciousness.

It is not only frustration in work that gives rise to this dispersed state of attention, and this form of prose; it is also often found when Miriam's mind wanders as she walks around the city. While this form of prose is not exclusive to scenes at either the workplace or in the city, these environments are the two key recurring stimulations for this state of mind. Some of Richardson's first renderings of London occur in *Honeycomb*; here, the city is full of sensory stimulation, objects to look at and noises to hear. Richardson gives an impressionistic feeling to the city through her elliptical style of prose. Attention here is dispersed, jumping between the various stimuli found in the busy urban environment:

> The West End street … grey buildings rising on either side, angles sharp against the sky … softened angles of buildings against other buildings […]

[62] Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 84.
[63] Ibid., p. 84.

> Life streamed up against the close dense stone. With every footstep she could fly. (I.416)

There are differences here from the prose that renders her state of mind in the office: the mind is continually distracted by present, material stimuli, rather than, as in the office, being directed away from her immediate surroundings.

Yet, Richardson is using the form of distraction to communicate both states, suggesting a kinship between the cognitive processing of both the city and of work. In another instance in *The Tunnel*, the absence of mind found in work is present in wandering round the city, also: the narrator notes at the beginning of a chapter, 'when she came to herself she was in the Strand' (II.75), suggesting Miriam's deep state of distraction from her surroundings previous to this. The dispersed attention created by the walking in the city carries on when she enters an A.B.C., and her mind wanders as she gazes in the fire and images and thoughts appear before her:

> Mr Orly's song, the strange, rich, difficult day and now her untouched self here, free, unseen, and strong, the strong world of London all round her, strong free untouched people, in a dark lit wilderness, happy and miserable in their own way, going about the streets looking at nothing, thinking about no special person or thing, as long as they were there, being in London. (II.76)

Her mind reflects upon her day, her present surroundings, and the experience of being in London. The emphasis is on the freedom of the city, for herself and for others; they don't need to think of anything – though Miriam clearly does as she thinks about this state of freedom. The style is less elliptical, but resembles the associative style of thinking found in the office, shifting between the past of the day already spent, present surroundings, and a more general diagnosis of the state of being in the city. Paradoxically, then, a constricting, frustrating place – the office – gives rise to a similar distraction and deferral of mind that is experienced in the freedom of the city. Both inspire a state of distraction that is rendered in experimental, innovative ways that allow Richardson to work towards her goal of

depicting the feminine consciousness. What seems to connect the two environments is the lack of straightforward, linear progress: Miriam's walks in the city often seem directionless, or if they initially have an aim such as getting home, Miriam becomes distracted from this aim by loss of attention to surroundings or through a decision to stop off on the way, as in the above passage at the A.B.C. This lack of straightforward progress is frustrating in the workplace in terms of lack of career progression, leading to a desire to distract oneself; but it leads to a creative, wandering state of mind that for Richardson is distinctly feminine. It resembles the overall scheme of *Pilgrimage*: wandering, deferring prose, in a series of novels without a distinct aim, teleology, or even an end.

This distracted state of mind is connected to Miriam's desire for authorship and wider conceptions of feminine creativity within *Pilgrimage*. Early on in the series, there are moments when Miriam recognises her desire to write, although she is not yet writing. In conversation Miriam is told by Hypo Wilson 'you've got your freedom; you ought to write'; her work may even be conducive to writing, he suggests (II.129). She confesses, too, that a palmist once told her 'Whatever you do, write. If you haven't written yet, write, if you don't succeed go on writing' (II.129). But she lacks confidence; she has 'material, "stuff", as he [Wilson] called it' yet feels not yet ready to write it out (II.166). Miriam's prospective writing ambitions are also troubled by her disdain for the novel form. She struggles with the insistence on a linear, progressive narrative:

> People thought it was silly, almost wrong to look at the end of a book. But if it spoilt the book, there was something wrong about the book. If it was finished and the interest gone when you know who married who, what was the good of reading at all? It was a sort of trick, a sell. (I.384)

She dislikes the primary motivation for reading being plot and narrative intrigue; in moments such as these, Miriam's thoughts align with Richardson's own project, a

text in which the plot is not of primary importance. This rejection of traditional novel form is connected to the desire to express female consciousness, and reject masculine forms of writing. Miriam, so closely modelled on Richardson, similarly despairs of a world in which fiction might be 'nothing but men sitting in studies doing something cleverly, being very important, "men of letters"' (II.130). Miriam like Richardson wants to create something new; and she is, emphatically, characterised as a New Woman type, adopting the typical accoutrements of this character, smoking and cycling around London. The desire for authorship on Miriam's part, coupled with the ambition to portray feminine consciousness in novel form which is seen both in the character of Miriam and in Richardson's aims for her text, is fulfilled in the distracted form of *Pilgrimage*. As Gillian Hanscombe has argued, in order to change and feminise narrative technique, the very structure of the sentence has to be altered.[64] Extending such arguments to suggest that Richardson is attempting to portray a feminised state of mind, I note that if masculine writing is associated with narrative progression and clever plots, the drifting prose that is created when Miriam's attention is dispersed or distracted works against this. This state of mind can denote frustration and the desire to escape from everyday life and work through daydream but it also indicates creativity, and the potential powers of authorship.

Within these texts, attention and distraction are depicted as states that the characters vacillate between in their daily lives. Attention, and the compulsion to attend to one's work duties, can lapse into dispersed attention between objects, or distraction. Work can be conducted automatically, leaving the mind free to drift.

---

[64] Gillian E. Hanscombe, 'Dorothy Richardson versus the Novel' in *Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction*, ed. by Ellen G. Friedman and Miriam Fuchs (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 91.

These states are often feminised: there is, especially within Richardson's work, a notion of feminine consciousness. This feminine consciousness is depicted as adept at attending to multiple things at once, and prone to a less linear, more associative mode of thinking. But the association between the woman in the office and distraction isn't simply an assertion of a gendered difference: in both 'In the Cage' and *Pilgrimage*, distraction is a necessity. It provides moments of escapism from the frustrations of work: these women are shown to have little choice in terms of their work, and lack prospects for finding satisfying, fulfilling labour, or career progression. Their ability to distract themselves and daydream is a form of quiet rebellion from the mandates of concentration that come with their work. Distraction is an internalised version of the escapist plot seen in *The Odd Women*: it thus at once portrays the characters' frustration with their work, as well as their capability for creativity through fantasy. For 'In the Cage', distraction and daydream lead to the formation of a narrative created by the girl, before a return to reality. In *Pilgrimage*, distraction allows Miriam to escape her surroundings. The formal portrayal of this state led to some of Richardson's most experimental, successful depictions of a creative, feminine consciousness. Distraction and daydream may not lead to revolutions within the lives of the characters depicted, but these states can be subversive; the act of distraction, and the prose used to depict these states, enable creativity, and formal innovation.

Chapter 5: The stereotyped typist in the fiction of James Joyce

By the 1920s, the office girl was a well-known and well-worn character, evoking particular associations with women's work, independence and sexuality. By examining typist characters in fiction by James Joyce, in this chapter I will explore what happens to this now-familiar character when she is no longer the protagonist of a text, and when treated by an author with an ambivalent attitude to feminism.[1] There is a shift in her representation in Joyce, as the typists of these texts are not the politicised, hopeful office girls found in George Gissing, Grant Allen or Ivy Low.[2] Rather, the female office worker becomes an all the more narrow 'type' as she possesses one key feature: she is emphatically sexualised. Authors considered in previous chapters – such as Gissing and Allen – may have shared a similar ambivalence to feminism, but their typists were major characters; that Joyce's characters are not protagonists contributes to our sense that his typists are less rounded characters, and are being explicitly rendered a type or even stereotype. While Joyce's works are stylistically distinct from many of the more realist texts examined previously, with differing methods of characterisation, he is deliberately borrowing a character type from realist fiction with the office girl. Because of this borrowing, I argue that Joyce is purposefully playing with the idea of character types

[1] Jeri Johnson provides an overview of some feminist perspectives at the beginning of her chapter 'Joyce and Feminism' in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 196-212. See also Vicki Mahaffey, *States of Desire: Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, and the Irish Experiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 149.

[2] The typist was a feminised role by this period: while many women were to leave their jobs due to the return of male soldiers after the First World War the number of female typists remained substantial, and by 1921 nearly half of all typists in England were women. See Gregory Anderson, 'The white-blouse revolution' in *The white-blouse revolution: Female office workers since 1870*, ed. by Gregory Anderson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 1-27 (p. 2). While rates were not quite so high in Ireland, and precise figures are hard to find for this period, in the early twentieth century typing had come to be regarded as a normal job for women. See F. S. L. Lyons, *A New History of Ireland: Ireland Under the Union, 1870-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), VI.II, p. 351.

and stereotypes through his use of the typist character. He is, as a recent collection exploring how Joyce's works are influenced by various aspects of the nineteenth century has noted, 'in dialogue' with texts that previously established this character type.[3] At points, this use of stereotyping nonetheless betrays Joyce's own ambivalence towards feminine sexuality; but it also leads to an analysis of how types or stereotypes can affect both our judgement of the identities of others, and our experiences of our own identity if we belong to a stereotyped group.

Joyce's self-conscious deployment of a stereotype is used in particular to think through how individuals judge the sexuality of others, and how we perform our own sexual identity. The notion of performing gender and female sexuality has previously been applied to analyses of Molly Bloom, in particular.[4] However, extending such ideas to Joyce's typists, who are distinctly stereotyped, minor characters in his works, entails a new understanding of such performances when they are used to adhere to a very particular type. The office girl, in Joyce's works and in previous portrayals of this stereotype as seen in advertisements examined in Chapter Three, is understood as being sexually available in an especially everyday sense, accessible to her colleagues through her work in the office, and to the wider public in her movement around the city. This notion of performing an established sexual identity is made all the more emphatic by the typist's profession as a copyist. In the

---

[3] John Nash, 'Introduction: Joyce in the Nineteenth Century' in *James Joyce in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by John Nash (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 1-14 (p. 7).

[4] The notion of performing gender and, in the instance of Kimberly Devlin, female sexuality, has been applied to analyses of Molly Bloom previously: see Joseph Allen Boone, *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 167; Jeri Johnson, 'Joyce and Feminism', p. 206; Kimberly J. Devlin, 'Pretending in "Penelope": Masquerade, Mimicry, and Molly Bloom' in *Molly Blooms: A Polylogue on "Penelope" and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Richard Pearce (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), pp. 80-102 (p. 81-2, 86). Nonetheless, I think it is worth expanding this investigation to encompass more minor characters and to consider the effect a character being minor and distinctly stereotyped might have on our understanding of this performative aspect.

short story 'The Boarding House' (1914) the young typist acts the flirtatious young woman with the men of her mother's boarding house, leading to the seduction and coercion into marriage of one of these men. Within this story we can observe the methods Joyce uses to alter any straightforward judgements of characters and as such the beginnings of an interest in the unsettling of stereotypes. But in *Ulysses* (1922) these ideas of playing to type are developed with further complexity. In Martha Clifford, we have another rendition of the office girl stereotype, as is emphasised by brief glimpses of other typists present in the text who are so similar certain critics have contemplated whether or not they are the same character.[5] In *Ulysses* stereotyping is connected to issues regarding our inability to fully attend to a vast multitude of characters. Indeed, Martha is so minor a character – all the more so than the typist of 'The Boarding House' – she is physically absent from the text. This, coupled with the brief glimpses of a potentially more complex character communicated through her letter to Bloom, actually serves to complicate her function as a stereotype. It leads to a sense that if one had the attentive capacity, or if Joyce had the space within his already capacious novel, she and many other minor characters could be more complex, rounded characters.

Through this the reader understands the multiplicity of the urban environment with its plethora of major and minor characters and thus, as is made emphatic by the use of the sexualised office girl character, the diversity of sexualities present in the city. Dublin is admittedly not quite the hugely populous modern city: its population in 1904 was 400,000, far smaller than that of London.[6] As Frederic Jameson has observed, Joyce's Dublin is 'not exactly the full-blown capitalist

[5] Michael H. Begnal, 'The Unveiling of Martha Clifford', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 13.4 (Summer 1976), 400-406 (p. 401).
[6] L.M. Cullen, 'Dublin' in *James Joyce in Context*, ed. by John McCourt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 173-83 (p. 174).

metropolis', and instead is portrayed as somewhat 'regressive' and 'distantly akin to the village.'[7] One character in 'The Boarding House' believes that 'Dublin is such a small city' that 'everyone knows everyone else's business'.[8] Nevertheless, Joyce still gives the impression of Dublin being teeming with an array of individuals, especially in *Ulysses*. While there is an element of provincialism that can be observed in the gossip and the ensuing potential shame concerning extra-marital affairs seen in both of the texts I analyse in this chapter, there is nevertheless a sense that one cannot fully know everyone in the city. This is conveyed by Bloom never meeting Martha; so too it is suggested by the way in which *Ulysses* veers from moments of connection to disconnection between characters. As such, the diverse sexualities present in the city can be understood to be more complex than stereotyped judgements of a person might lead us to assume, but the overwhelming nature of the city means these sexual identities might only be briefly glimpsed or understood.

Interest in and desire to explore modern sexualities was prominent in the works of some key modernists. As Victoria Rosner has explored, contemporaries of Joyce including certain members of the Bloomsbury group disdained conventional relationship structures such as marriage and instead saw the possibility of liberation through free love and affectionate friendships.[9] Yet Joyce's explorations of sexuality via the office girl are hardly straightforwardly celebratory, and are instead more complicated and ambivalent. This ambivalence is often rooted in Joyce's playing with stereotypes.

---

[7] Frederic Jameson, 'Ulysses in History' in *James Joyce and Modern Literature*, ed. by W. J. McCormack and Alistair Stead (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 126-41 (p. 135).
[8] James Joyce, 'The Boarding House' in *Dubliners* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000), p. 61. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
[9] Victoria Rosner, *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 128.

That the typists of Joyce are reduced to a symbol that is intended to be representative of modern, sexualised young women has been observed previously by other critics. Morag Shiach and Katherine Mullin both note the typist stereotype in Joyce's works as being a vehicle for expressions of anxiety about feminine sexuality.[10] Mullin in particular discusses how in Joyce's works typists are sexualised avatars of emasculation, and describes how he combines this characterisation with contemporary fears of sexual blackmail.[11] She ultimately argues that while fears of such sexuality are demonstrated in 'A Boarding House' and other stories in *Dubliners*, in *Ulysses* Martha Clifford is a pastiche who is no longer challenging. The typist's challenge, in Mullin's understanding, is her overt, defiantly sexual manner and, in a way which resembles wider fears of the invasive, interfering communication worker, the information which she possesses that could lead to blackmail.[12] However, I work to refine and extend such arguments about Joyce's use of the typist stereotype in several ways. Firstly, Mullin associates 'challenge' primarily with sexualisation and sexuality being threatening; I extend this argument by noting that a key component of Joyce's typists being flattened out and less threatening is a category Mullin does not dwell upon, which is how he depoliticises typists, ridding them of an important element of previous versions of this character type. Secondly, I extend the idea of Joyce's using stereotypes noted in Mullin and Shiach's work, exploring the meaning that is communicated by such a usage by emphasising the significance of their status as minor characters, and

[10] See Katherine Mullin, *Working Girls: Fiction, Sexuality and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 92; Morag Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture, 1890-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 77; Morag Shiach, 'Modernity, labour and the typewriter' in *Modernist Sexualities*, ed. by Hugh Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 114-29 (p. 125).
[11] Mullin, p. 77.
[12] Ibid., p. 92.

examining what this combination of stereotyping and their status as minor characters does. In particular, I suggest that Joyce is trying to make an observation regarding the difficulty of knowing others in urban modernity; and is making specific use of the typist in order to suggest this difficulty of knowing and understanding the sexual identities of others, and the diversity of sexual identities of those in the city, in particular. As such, I do not want to simply argue that Joyce is using stereotypes to express fears of feminine sexuality, but to analyse the everyday nature of stereotyping and its effects as a part of the experience of the office girl, and the experience of living in a modern city.

Making use of a character type in literature typically entails a lack of depth in characterisation and relies upon readers making assumptions of the character based on their type. The reader cannot access the typist characters' interiority in Joyce's texts: they are, to use E.M. Forster's term, flat rather than rounded.[13] For Forster, a flat character is constructed around a single idea or quality – such as a job – making them quickly recognisable to the reader; they rarely surprise in their actions, as their actions are dictated by the single idea that defines them.[14] Stereotyping is ostensibly similar in that it involves designation of characteristics based on being part of a group – yet it also entails a more explicitly negative valence. Stereotyping indicates an undifferentiated judgement of people belonging to a group, and one that is typically disparaging.[15] While Forster argues that flat characters are necessary in a complex text – aiding the progress of a narrative, perhaps, or providing amusement –

[13] E. M. Forster, 'People (continued)' in *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 71-84 (p. 73).
[14] Ibid., p. 81.
[15] 'Stereotype' in Tim O'Sullivan, John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery and John Fiske, *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 300.

stereotyping is less functional and more directly negative.[16] As Susan Bayly has suggested in her analysis of the stereotyping of foreign governesses in the nineteenth century, stereotyping frequently has a depersonalising and dehumanising function.[17] There is a lack of recognition of, or willingness to understand, the individual. Stereotypes also typically exhibit anxiety or fear of a group; as Sander Gilman has argued, stereotyping is a projection of anxiety onto the Other.[18] Such anxieties are persistent and long-standing, while also being flexible.[19] Extending this to the office girl, it can be seen that consistent fears – for example, of feminine sexuality – can be applied to new 'types' as they develop, as with the figure of typist. In using the stereotype of the typist there is the sense, especially in 'The Boarding House', that Joyce is potentially replicating judgment of, and anxieties regarding, feminine sexuality. Yet, I argue that the self-conscious deployment of stereotype also serves to force a confrontation of the undifferentiated judgments made of certain types and, in particular, makes us consider how we judge the sexuality of others.

The representation of these typists who are doubly marginalised as both stereotyped and minor characters is significant in that it can also proffer a theory of how modern, urban sexual connection and disconnection is experienced. Alex Woloch has discussed how in the nineteenth century novel the inclusion of minor characters can serve to communicate the experience of the modern city.[20] Minor characters highlight what he calls the 'radically asymmetrical nature of interconnection', that is, the ways in which characters can be connected to one

[16] Forster, 'People (continued)', p. 75.
[17] Susan N. Bayly, 'The English Miss, German Fraulein and French Mademoiselle: foreign governesses and national stereotyping in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe', *History of Education*, 43.2 (2014), 160-186 (p. 185).
[18] Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 20, 25.
[19] Bayly, p.167; Gilman, p. 20, 26.
[20] Alex Woloch, *The One vs. The Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 233.

another but still remain relatively unknown.[21] Such texts are particularly good at communicating the urban experience, especially in depicting the vast populations of cities: they indicate how characters are 'packed into the same physical space', creating 'strong structures of integration – pulling people into close relation with one another – while also relying on fragmentation.'[22] Woloch is, as noted, discussing nineteenth-century novels, though he suggests towards the end of his book that there is some continuity into twentieth-century texts regarding the treatment and meanings of minor characters.[23] Extending and applying such ideas to Joyce's typists, I argue that they similarly highlight the nature of relationships in the urban environment, though of course they are hardly the only minor characters of their texts. Nonetheless as sexualised figures who are not protagonists, these characters are particularly useful in offering an analysis of the nature of brief sexual encounters in the city. Further, examining Joyce's typists allows for an understanding of the everyday experience for the office girl of the city environment, particularly with regards to being stereotyped. When stereotyping is coupled with fleeting moments in which we are able to gain a glimpse of character that goes beyond a stereotype, as with Martha Clifford in *Ulysses*, we can see the ways in which Joyce is avoiding simply replicating a particular understanding of a type. Instead, such glimpses deepen our understanding of the meanings of using stereotyped, minor characters. Through the typists of *Ulysses*, Joyce reveals the diverse sexualities present in the city, while also

[21] Ibid., p. 222.
[22] Ibid., p. 233.
[23] Ibid., p. 321. The typists of Joyce are differentiated from the minor characters of novels by the authors Woloch discusses, such as Dickens and Austen: for instance, Woloch discusses how minor characters in such texts are often either functional or disruptive, serving either to further or upset the plot of the novel. The typists of Joyce typically don't affect plot in the same manner, as might be expected in texts that are less invested in narrative progression in general.

underlining our limited ability to connect with and fully understand all of these sexualities due to the nature of the busy city.

Characterisation in modernism deliberately broke with characterisation in realism, reacting against its conventions, which further complicates our understanding of flat or minor characters in modernist texts. Modernist texts typically expressed an understanding of contemporary art as deliberately breaking from past traditions. Deprecating Victorian realist methods of characterisation, Virginia Woolf argued that characters from these texts had an 'astonishing vividness' but attributes this to 'their crudity', arguing that in these works 'character is rubbed into us indelibly because its features are so few and so prominent'.[24] In this formulation, the typist would be understood as always being a fairly limited type with a few key features. Joyce's office girls are exaggerated versions of this limited type, defined by one primary feature of sexualisation. Criticisms of Victorian realist literary methods led to a contention that in creating characters, what was important was not a plethora of material detail or consistency of character. Rather, a character should be communicated through impressions – to use Woolf's terms, to convey 'myriad impressions', to 'record the atoms as they fall upon the mind' in order to communicate consciousness.[25]

Turning to Joyce, we see a similar philosophy of character. Derek Attridge has noted that Joyce challenges assumptions concerning character, particularly with regards to the notion that it is self-contained and consistent.[26] This alters how characterisation functions and, as with Woolf, the idea of creating 'impressions' is

[24] Virginia Woolf, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf,* ed. by Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), III, pp. 384-8 (p. 386).
[25] Virginia Woolf, 'Modern Novels' in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, pp. 30-6 (p. 33).
[26] Derek Attridge, *Joyce Effects: On Language, Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 52.

important – indeed, this word recurs in Joyce criticism which aims to describe his methods of characterisation. Maud Ellman has argued that we understand Bloom and the world he inhabits not through 'essences' but via 'unstable, shifting impressions'.[27] Similarly, Vicki Mahaffey discusses Joyce's use of 'chaotic ideas and sense impressions', which complicate straightforward judgements or understandings of characters.[28] Extending such ideas to aid an understanding of typist characters, I contend that if impressions rather than large amounts of exploration or detail are of importance in conveying character in Joyce's works, the idea of major and minor character is destabilised; and so too is the typical understanding of a 'rounded' character disturbed by the idea that the self, in real life and in texts, is not necessarily whole and consistent.

Yet, in spite of this idea of rupture from Victorian literature and the modernist championing of innovative literary experimentation that came with it, there is of course some continuity between realist and modernist characters that make them worth comparing. As Rachel Bowlby has pointed out, the inclination to discuss Victorian realism and modernism as different – a convention started by modernists themselves – often leaves Victorian realism as a kind of 'lumbering nineteenth-century precursor'.[29] But modernist and realist writers nonetheless express similar desires for their work to portray 'life' or 'reality', even if the methodology for doing so may differ.[30] Alex Woloch has suggested the key twin aims of realist novels are to display both psychological depth and social

[27] Maud Ellmann, *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Sigmund Freud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 152.
[28] Mahaffey, *States of Desire*, p. 208.
[29] Rachel Bowlby, 'Woolf's Untold Stories' in *Everyday Stories: The Literary Agenda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 146-165 (p. 146).
[30] Ibid., p. 146.

expansiveness.[31] But modernist texts hardly do away with these ideas entirely: the intention to reveal psychological depth is akin to the modernist attempt to convey 'impressions' upon the mind; and the notion of social expansiveness, while not necessarily applicable to all modernist texts, can be seen in Joyce's *Ulysses*.

The differentiation between major and minor character is certainly disturbed in modernist works, suggesting an evident self-consciousness regarding how and why characters emerge in texts as being major or minor. Such self-consciousness is not exclusively the remit of modernist authors, of course. The differentiation between major and minor characters raises questions concerning the difficulty of knowing and fully understanding others – as in *Great Expectations*, Pip wonders how people can be 'so bound up with my fortunes … and yet so unknown to me.'[32] For Pip, this is at least partially an issue of the overwhelming city. The idea that the city can enable a feeling of disconnection is a feature of Joyce's texts too, but this difficulty of knowing others is exacerbated by the idea noted above that individuals may not be wholly coherent or consistent. Other people might not be, as Rachel Bowlby has discussed in relation to Virginia Woolf's minor characters, 'fixed or definite and definable'.[33] Bowlby suggests that thinking of people as types who are 'relatively fixed and specifiable' is a 'necessary fiction', which we need in order to navigate an otherwise overwhelmingly complicated world of other people.[34] Applying such ideas to Joyce's typists, I contend that through such characters the impossibility of fully knowing and recognising others in all of their complexity frequently leads to the interpretation of people as distinct types and the creation of coherent – and at times, simplified or clichéd – narratives about them. This process

[31] Woloch, p. 19.
[32] Qtd. in Woloch, p. 222.
[33] Bowlby, p. 152.
[34] Ibid., p. 152.

is necessarily found in fiction that tries to imitate life, too – though fiction can highlight the problems with doing so. Thus, in both Victorian realist and modernist texts there is a self-consciousness regarding the problematics of certain characters being minor and the use of character types, a self-consciousness that is used to raise issues of the difficulties of knowing and interpreting others.

Joyce's modernist short story and novel are markedly different from many of the texts analysed in previous chapters in terms of literary style and characterisation. His texts do challenge expectations of how a rounded, complex character is to be depicted through avoidance of conventional novelistic structure, including ideas of narrative and character development. The short stories of *Dubliners* are typically set over a brief period of time, and tend to be devoid of dramatic or conclusive epiphany. And while *Ulysses* pointedly imitates the structure of *The Odyssey*, a story of progress as Odysseus makes his epic journey home, it is emphatically differentiated by its focus on a single day and it largely abandons straightforward ideas of narrative progress. Nonetheless, Joyce's texts hardly do away with the notion of rounded characters in spite of the reduced interest in character progression, and thus the tension between rounded character and stereotype is nonetheless present. Moreover, there are ways in which Joyce's techniques actually foreground, and thus deliberately turn our attention to, the stark differences between stereotype and rounded character, and minor and major character.

Such distinctions between these different types of character – major and minor, rounded and stereotyped – are frequently emphasised by Joyce, but are also at points undermined. In *Ulysses*, stream of consciousness is a key method through which characters are developed and explored as we delve into their interiority. Largely this method is made use of with the text's more prominent characters:

Leopold Bloom, Stephen Daedalus and Molly Bloom have sustained periods in which the prose of the text is dedicated to their streams of consciousness. Such a method initially establishes the expected imbalance of our exposure to major and minor characters, differentiating between them through our differing levels of access to the minutiae of their interiority. Yet as Jennifer Levine points out, later chapters of *Ulysses* provide 'more sustained access to minor characters by speaking in their own language': Gerty MacDowell and the narrator of 'Cyclops' are two key examples.[35] This destabilising of the previously established hierarchy between major and minor characters serves to underline how the limits of novel space and also of the reader's attention conventionally necessitates this hierarchy. It suggests, too, the potential that differentiation between major and minor characters can be questioned, and can even be arbitrary. Applying this specifically to Joyce's typists, I argue that this shifting of focus necessarily leads to a more self-conscious use of stereotypes that is suggestive of a desire to problematise the ways in which these characters are flattened.

Similar methods of characterisation can be seen in *Dubliners*, in which there are moments in which different characters' interiority is revealed through deployment of free indirect discourse. Garry Leonard has connected such moments to the lack of what he calls an authoritative narrative voice, a method which emphasises the absence of a single, stable perspective in these short stories.[36] Such complex, shifting narrative positioning can alter the reader's notion of who might be a major or minor character. Moreover, extending and applying such ideas of Joyce's characterisation to the stereotyped office girl, if stereotyping involves definitive judgement of an individual based on their belonging to a specific group, the lack of

[35] Jennifer Levine, '*Ulysses*' in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 122-48 (p.133).
[36] Garry Leonard, '*Dubliners*' in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, pp. 87-102 (p. 96).

authoritative narrator and the switches in perspective can serve to undermine or at least make us question such judgement.

Before turning to fuller analysis of Joyce's typists, in this chapter I will situate these texts in their contemporary historical moment, taking into account in particular shifts in women's daily experience. Notable in this period is the political shift that comes with the gaining of the vote for some women in the UK and Ireland in 1918; as this core feminist issue was at least somewhat resolved, there was a dwindling of feminist organisation.[37] Following the World War I, many women were encouraged or coerced to leave their jobs; yet, the typist is an exception.[38] Thus while taking into account the decline in centralised feminist campaigns in this period, I will still suggest that the typist would have remained a markedly independent and potentially subversive figure and thus her total depoliticisation in Joyce's texts cannot simply be ascribed to historical context – especially as these texts are set prior to World War I. The typists of Joyce are more concerned with love affairs: of course, novels about typists were more generally concerned with sexuality and romance, as explored in Chapter Three. But Joyce is markedly different in that while texts previously examined were invested in depicting career and marriage plots, Joyce's portrayals of typists are more concerned with pre-marital or extra-marital flirtations and sex. While 'The Boarding House' might conclude with an expectation of marriage, the story ends before any proposal is made and the focus of the story is on an affair which seem to not be initially anticipated by those involved to lead to a formal commitment. I will thus discuss how the love affairs of the typists often take the form of flirtation, working on ideas found in Georg Simmel's essay on

[37] Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars: 1918-1939* (London: Pandora Press, 1989), p. 132, 137.
[38] Anderson, p. 2; Beddoe, p. 3.

flirtation. Allowing brief moments of intimacy that are playfully proffered and then abandoned, Simmel focuses on the performative aspect of flirtation, offering a way of thinking through how the typist characters perform their stereotype. Turning to James Joyce, we see what happens to the typist character who is no longer a protagonist: minor or stereotyped, she offers ways of analysing our perceptions and judgements concerning the sexual identities of others.

THE FEMINIST CONTEXT: DEPOLITICISING THE TYPIST

The typist is markedly depoliticised in Joyce's texts and, as Joyce is deliberately deploying a character type, this omission of a feature typically associated with this type seems significant. This context, not typically considered in analysis of Joyce's typists, is a key component of the way in which his characters are rendered flat. The texts are set in a period in which feminist politics was a prominent and contentious topic, as both 'The Boarding House' and *Ulysses* are set prior to women gaining any form of suffrage. 'The Boarding House' was published in 1914, although composed nearly a decade earlier.[39] While published in 1922 Joyce's *Ulysses* is set in 1904; unlike Rebecca West's *The Judge*, also published in 1922 but set before the war, there is little interest in showing the typist as part of the women's movement. Joyce would no doubt have been conscious of women's politics, not least due to his friendship with the Sheehy-Skeffingtons, which was maintained when Joyce left Ireland.[40] The Sheehy-Skeffingtons were a couple active in campaigns for votes for women and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington helped form the Irish Women's Franchise League.[41] Nonetheless, female suffrage is not a concern for Joyce's typists; there

[39] Terence Brown 'Introduction' in Joyce, *Dubliners*, pp. vii-xlvv (p. vii).
[40] Michael Wainwright, 'Female Suffrage in Ireland: James Joyce's Realization of Unrealized Potential', *Criticism*, 51.4 (2009), 651-82 (659).
[41] Ibid., p. 664.

seems also a lack of concern for the feminist ideals that one would expect to lie behind the relative independence of a woman of the period taking part in waged labour.

Ulysses, as noted, was not published until 1922 and admittedly the post-First World War era is characterised as one in which there was a shift in women's daily experience. The domestic was prized and idealised and this change, many argue, was generated by the end of a devastating war.[42] Some women were granted the vote in 1918; while this was a victory, it also served to fragment the women's movement, making the direction of feminist causes more dispersed or uncertain.[43] In Ireland, there had always been divergent views regarding whether the nationalist cause deserved a more immediate focus, or whether feminism and nationalism shared the same agenda. For some organisations the ambitions of liberating 'their sex and their country' were twinned.[44] Ultimately, during and after the war – particularly following the Easter Rising of 1916 – the nationalist cause tended to take political centre stage.[45] After the war, the issue of women war workers was a contentious one: across the UK there was pressure for women war workers to return to the home and Deidre Beddoe has emphasised this idea of women's place being within the home as the 'single most arresting feature of the inter-war years'. [46] In Ireland the situation was somewhat different, in part simply because there had been fewer women war workers as conscription was only introduced in Ireland in 1918.[47] Nonetheless,

---

[42] See, for instance, Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Beddoe.
[43] Beddoe, p. 132.
[44] Jennifer Redmond and Elaine Farrell 'War Within and Without: Irish Women in the First World War Era', *Women's History Review* (2017), 329-41 (p. 334).
[45] Aaron Kelly, *Twentieth Century Irish Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 105-6.
[46] Beddoe, p. 3.
[47] Deborah Thom, 'Women, War Work and the State in Ireland, 1914-1918', *Women's History Review* (2017), 1-18 (3).

anxieties concerning such workers were present – indeed, some had emigrated to Britain, and taken war work there.[48] Within Ireland there was a feeling, as Jennifer Redmond and Elaine Farrell have argued, that women's paid work was to be regarded as a 'privilege or obligation but never a right'.[49] In spite of the smaller number of women war workers within the country, then, there was a similar pressure to move out of such jobs following the war, accompanied by a similar valorisation of motherhood.[50] Typing was an exception to the trend of women being pushed out of work, however, and there remained a significant number of women typists in spite of the more general turn to the idealisation of the domestic.[51] As such, the depoliticisation of Joyce's typists cannot be attributed to historical context, in spite of changes to feminist politics and women's lived experience, particularly during the period of composition of *Ulysses*. The typist, with her relative independence due to taking part in waged work, remained unusual, markedly independent, and even subversive.

FLIRTATION AS MODERNIST ROMANCE

The romantic lives of Joyce's office girls are pre-eminent in their narratives, and these relationships can be characterised as flirtations, playful and without any immediate sense of commitment. Flirtation, I would argue, is an especially modernist form of romance. Like many modernist works, it refuses a straightforward teleology, and within Joyce's texts it does not necessarily lead to any kind of decisive action: instead, the relationships are formed of moments of flirtation. As flirting is a mode of connection which abstains from definitive obligations, it is also

[48] Ibid., p. 3.
[49] Redmond and Farrell, p. 334.
[50] Ibid., p. 3387
[51] Lyons, p. 351.

a particularly appropriate type of relationship for flat, non-protagonist characters who are single: it does not necessitate the development or change in these characters' situations or personalities that a marriage plot might bring about. Richard Kaye has argued that in flirting, communication is ambiguous and open to interpretation; similarly, as a narrative technique it can keep plots open, deferring the conclusion of romance plots.[52] Because of this, Kaye has suggested that flirtation is a form of romance especially suited to the serial Victorian novel: it protracts desire and courtship, and allows us to be absorbed in daily life in all its detail, rather than only seeing the conclusion of a romance plot in marriage.[53] While flirting might be well suited to the serial novel in these novels it does still typically lead to some kind of conclusion, and as Eve Elana Herzog has argued, this move towards closure still suggests flirtation is somehow useful, contributing to a decision regarding the romantic relationship, whether it be marriage or rejection.[54] But flirtation itself does not necessarily generate closure, instead playing with what Herzog calls the 'erotics of inutility … motion without direction'.[55] Extending such arguments to modernist texts it can be seen in such texts that flirting is about play and performance, rather than conclusive, progress-oriented romance.

Georg Simmel's essay 'Flirtation', published a year after *Ulysses* in 1923, emphasises the performative element of flirting that can be clearly seen in Joyce's typist narratives. Simmel conceives of flirting as brief moments of intimacy that are proffered and then abandoned. He describes how flirtation can imply the idea of both having and not-having love simultaneously; so too flirtation is a state which seems to

[52] Richard A. Kaye, *The Flirt's Tragedy: Desire Without End in Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002), p. 32.
[53] Ibid., p 11.
[54] Eve Elana Herzog, 'The Pleasure of the Flirt: Flirtation and Narrative in the Nineteenth-Century British Novel' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2003), p. 67.
[55] Ibid., p. 67.

imply both consent and refusal.[56] It is suggestive, that is, of some form of consent to love, but consent is not fully given over and no distinct action is decided upon. It consists, Simmel argues, of interactions in which

> submission or presentation of the self is suspended by partial concealment or refusal of the self, in such a way that the whole is fantasized all the more vividly and the desire for the totality of reality is excited all the more consciously and intensively, as a result of the tension between this form and that of reality as incompletely disclosed (136).

The self is hinted at, and shown in part – but the flirt then conceals the self. This serves to excite the other who is left to imagine and fantasise what the flirt might be if fully disclosed. Flirting entails, this suggests, a performance of one's identity, in which a particular version of oneself is conveyed. Simmel uses the analogy of clothing to further explicate this idea of 'semi-concealment': clothing is a concealment, but can be worn in such a way as to draw attention to what is underneath (137). While such bodily exposure and concealment is also in itself part of flirting, Simmel is more interested in the intellectual self-concealment that comes with flirtation: it is a form of intellectual play concerning the disclosure and withdrawal of the self for Simmel, not simply the act of wearing provocative clothing (138).

Simmel argues that flirting typically places the woman in power, and in his essay the flirt is feminised. This feminisation of flirting is not without precedent: one definition of 'flirt' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is a 'woman of giddy, flighty character' or indeed of 'loose character.'[57] Simmel contends that flirtation gives the woman power because it entails indecision, and renders the interaction precarious

---

[56] Georg Simmel, 'Flirtation' in *Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love*, trans. by Guy Oakes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 137-52 (p. 133).
[57] "flirt, n.". *OED Online* (March 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/71674?rskey=Ekdc3P&result=1&isAdvanced=false> [accessed April 20, 2018].

(141). Yet, this power will end once a decision is made in either direction regarding the relationship (141). Simmel's writings are from an exclusively heterosexual perspective, and display a notably masculine point of view: there seems to be an underlying anxiety concerning the potentially artificial, performative aspect of flirting that is, for Simmel, gendered feminine. Simmel describes flirting in terms of power exchange between the feminine and the masculine, thus disallowing the more liberating or radical potentials of flirtations. The feminised flirt, for Simmel, is in control of the moments of connection and disconnection that are vacillated between.

In a similar vein, in conveying their sexuality through performative flirtation the typists of Joyce tend to replicate the sexualised stereotype of the typist. This notion of performativity as constitutive of identity is seen in Judith Butler's work on gender identity. For Butler, gender is an act, 'a performance that is *repeated*' which is 'at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established'.[58] Gender identity is thus 'tenuously constituted in time' and based on acts which are socially considered to belong to a particular gender.[59] Similarly, in Joyce's texts the typist performs what is socially expected of her – often performing the stereotype of the sexualised typist. There is a difference here, of course, in that I am suggesting that the typists in these novels have varying degrees of self-awareness of their performance; for Butler, the performance of gender is not something we opt into consciously, but is an injunction that has taken place through discursive routes – for instance, through having a notion of what a good mother might be.[60] Joyce's conception of the performance of identity with regards to the typist seems to suggest she is self-conscious of this performance, particularly within 'The Boarding House'.

[58] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 191. Original emphasis.
[59] Ibid., p.191.
[60] Ibid., p. 199.

As with Simmel, this leads to a somewhat problematic depiction of feminine sexuality being associated with manipulation and artifice. But in *Ulysses*, this performativity is more knowingly perceived to be connected to societal expectations, rather than a result of feminine duplicity.

Flirtations convey too the experience of urban modernity. Such a mode of interaction, as both Simmel and Kaye have argued, is especially suitable for the city in which there is an expansion in the number of individuals drawing one's attention because it avoids conclusive commitment.[61] Flirtation is suggestive of moments of brief connection between individuals wandering the city, recalling the concepts of the *flâneur* and *flâneuse*. The bonds between these two city walkers are, like Charles Baudelaire's descriptions of modernity, 'ephemeral … fugitive … contingent'.[62] The notion of fleeting connection is reminiscent too of the exchanged glances between a man and a woman in Baudelaire's 'To a Woman Passing By', in which the 'glance' the speaker receives from a woman walking the city streets makes him feel 'suddenly reborn'.[63] Their relationship is only ever a glance, leaving the speaker to question if he will ever see again 'you whom I would have loved'.[64] The city streets allow the opportunity for fleeting flirtations that offer a moment of brief connection, before giving way to disconnection.

INTERPRETING OTHERS IN 'THE BOARDING HOUSE'

In 'The Boarding House', we see a flirtatious former typist, Polly Mooney, self-consciously performing the stereotype of the sexualised typewriter girl for the

[61] Kaye, p. 11.
[62] Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life' in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* ed. and trans. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964), pp. 1-40 (p. 13).
[63] Charles Baudelaire, 'To a Woman Passing By' in *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. by Keith Waldrop (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), p. 123.
[64] Ibid., p. 123.

pleasure of the male boarders. Her particular affair with one of the men of the house is the primary plot for the story. Yet Polly is hardly a protagonist as we might expect and instead the narrative space of the story is shared between Polly, her mother, her lover Bob Doran, and various other boarding house guests, ensuring our encounters with each of these characters are brief. This brevity contributes to the deliberate difficulties Joyce creates in interpreting each of these characters. Interpretation and judgement of others is a key issue within the story more widely, as the various characters seek to apportion blame for the pre-marital affair and the marriage that the end of the story looks forward to. Indeed, the use of the office girl stereotype makes emphatic ideas concerning interpretation and judgement of others, as stereotyping invariably entails judgement; with Polly it contributes, too, to her own perception of her sexual identity. Interpretations of the characters of the story are additionally further complicated by moments of use of free indirect discourse as the narrative briefly inhabits the point of view of different characters, deepening our understanding of their perspective and creating sympathy for them. Yet, while we receive insights into Mrs Mooney and Bob Doran, Polly Mooney's consciousness is glimpsed at only very briefly, and not fully delved into: while other judgements of characters are complicated or undermined effectively then, there is some ambivalence as to whether we are meant to question the judgement that inheres in the evident stereotyping of Polly and her modern, feminine sexuality. Nevertheless, I argue that within this story we can see Joyce playing with a series of stereotypes and probing the problematics of interpreting and judging others, and thus beginning to make use of the typist stereotype in a way that suggests the issues and effects of stereotyping.

The story opens with its focus away from Polly Mooney, introducing instead her mother, a 'butcher's daughter' who has separated from her alcoholic, abusive husband. Mrs Mooney runs a boarding house; she is 'a determined woman', and a 'big imposing woman' (56). Outlining the professions of Mrs Mooney, her father and her husband within the first two paragraphs, Joyce indicates that this is a story concerned with ambition, work and women's position in society. That her disastrous marriage is highlighted also foregrounds that fraught romantic relationships will be a key focus in the story. These issues being introduced apart from Polly herself, in spite of the fact that the story is primarily focused on events concerning her, underlines that this is not a story with a clear protagonist. This division of narrative space between characters disperses both the reader's attention and their sympathies.

Polly Mooney is characterised as distinctly aware of the pre-established sexual identity of the typist, and seems to perform this identity for others. She is first introduced singing salacious music hall songs in the boarding house drawing room:

> *I'm a … naughty girl.*
> *You needn't sham.*
> *I know that I am* (57, original emphasis).

Her flirtatious performances are not confined to her singing for a crowd, as she is represented acting in a similar manner for much of the story. The song highlights the knowing, self-aware element to her performance as it concludes '*I know that I am*' (57). The particular sexual identity she is characterised as embodying plays with a tension between apparent girlish innocence and her more knowing, self-conscious sexuality. The use of the words 'naughty girl' coupled with various aspects of her subsequent physical description – she is a 'slim girl' with 'light soft hair' and a 'small full mouth' – are almost infantilising (57). Indeed, her 'habit of glancing upwards when she spoke with anyone' makes her appear a 'little perverse madonna',

an image which encapsulates her contradictory self-positioning as virginal and innocent, but also knowingly seductive (57). Polly's subsequent flirtation with Bob Doran is characterised in similar terms. Her flirtation is experienced by Bob Doran as a 'delirium', conducted through her 'casual caresses': she is instigator and the use of the word 'delirium' seems to suggest there is something almost bewitching or intoxicating about her, though notably we only receive descriptions of these flirtations as they are filtered through Doran's perspective (62). She caringly makes dinner for him when he arrives back late from work, and appears at his bedroom door to 'timidly' ask for him to relight her candle blown out by the draught – but this is coupled with a seductive sexuality, as she 'caresses' him and asks for goodnight kisses (62). Polly seems to represent a particular anxiety concerning young single women, who could be cast as both potential instigator and victim of sexual relationships. This is a common trope of the office girl: as an independent figure, walking city streets and in the confined office space with other men she was feared to be vulnerable; but simultaneously, her freedom also led to her portrayal as pursuing her desires, including her sexual desires.

While Polly is a former typist, the boarding house she now occupies has its distinct similarities to the office: her position as a typist gave opportunity for interaction with men, as does her living in the boarding house. Both of these urban spaces are liminal spaces, not quite private, not quite public: the office is a workplace, associating it with the public sphere, but it is also closed off from prying eyes, which led to fears concerning cross-gender interaction behind office doors. In both the office and the boarding house there is the potential for these spaces to become sexualised due to this possibility of interaction between men and women. Indeed, Polly's mother forced her to leave her job as a typist 'as a disreputable

sheriff's man used to come every other day to the office' (57). The boarding house of Joyce's short story is occupied by a mixture of a 'floating population made up of tourists from Liverpool and the Isle of Man and, occasionally, *artistes* from the music halls' as well as a 'resident population' of city clerks (56). The majority are young men who 'shared in common tastes and occupations and for this reason they were very chummy with one another' (57). The liminal spaces of the boarding house and the office that are the primary settings for this story open up the possibility of interaction between the sexes; Polly's characterisation suggests her ability to exploit these interactions.

While there is an element of artifice to Polly's performance of her sexuality, this could be read as an inherent part of flirtation. Yet the connection between performativity and a manipulative artifice becomes more explicit as Polly seems to recognise her mother noticing the relationship between herself and Bob Doran. Mrs Mooney, having assured herself the young men of the boarding house are not serious about Polly, begins to notice there was 'something going on between Polly and one of the young men'. She decides rather than send Polly back to typewriting as she had previously intended that she should keep Polly in the house and watch what happens (58). It seems Mrs Mooney has a scheme in mind; and notably her nickname amongst the boarders, '*The Madam*' (57, original emphasis), suggestively invokes a brothel madam. Katherine Mullin has associated this story with idea of the typist as copyist: here, Mullin suggests, Polly is taking the dictation of her mother, and it is unclear the extent to which Polly is complicit or a 'victim' of her mother's plans and thus what she herself wants from the affair.[65] Yet for the purposes of my argument, the more significant point to focus on is when we do gain a momentary access to

[65] Mullin, p. 77.

Polly's thought-processes and are exposed to her motivations and desires: Polly's involvement in the manipulation of Doran is a brief instance of this. There is 'no open complicity' between Mrs Mooney's scheming as she allows the affair to continue, and Polly's own intentions (59). But Polly seems to understand her mother's plan: she 'did not wish it to be thought that in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind her mother's tolerance' (59). While it is unclear if Polly's intent in flirting was always to manipulate Bob Doran into marriage Polly is aware of how it might appear to others if she was perceived to understand her mother's plan for her and Mr Doran: of course, this indicates that she *does* understand the plan and wants it to work, but must act otherwise, continuing to perform her part of playfully flirtatious and innocent young woman. Her falsity is such that she barely even acknowledges to herself what the result of these plans might be. Our access to Polly's reflection that she should not appear to have divined 'the intention behind her mother's tolerance' is our only brief glimpse into Polly's thought process (59). Nevertheless, it introduces both the idea of the difficulty of interpreting others – Doran is unable to see the machinations going on in Polly's mind, it seems – as well as the necessity in trying to do so, as Polly manages to effectively interpret her mother's plans and how they might aid her.

Judgement concerning who is to blame for this pre-marital affair is a key component of the story and leads to wider considerations of the difficulties of understanding and interpreting other people. Mrs Mooney allows the affair to go on in spite of gossip in the house; Bob Doran is the older man who is against marriage and yet takes up Polly's flirtations – and, notably, blames Polly for the affair (61). Yet free indirect discourse complicates the reader's initial judgements of both of these characters. As Hugh Kenner has pointed out, Mrs Mooney, like her daughter,

resembles another stereotype – that of the outraged mother. [66] She performs this type to her advantage, too, when confronting Bob Doran.[67] But notably Mrs Mooney's thought process prior to meeting with Doran is delved into, undermining any too straightforward understanding of her character:

> There must be reparation made in such cases. It is all very well for the man: he can go his ways as if nothing had happened, having had his moment of pleasure, but the girl has to bear the brunt … For her only one reparation could make up for the loss of her daughter's honour: marriage … She felt sure she would win. He was a serious young man, not rakish or loud-voiced like the others. If it had been Mr Sheridan or Mr Meade or Bantam Lyons her case would have been much harder… (59-60)

It is worth quoting this passage at length as it demonstrates how the prose moves between the already-established third-person narrator (with comments on 'she' and 'her') and thoughts that seem to inhabit Mrs Mooney's perspective (the comments on reparation, and the remarks upon the characters of the various boarders, some of whom the reader has not encountered thus far). Moving beyond the sense that she is manipulatively performing the outraged mother, the reader can feel some sympathy for her anger at the one-sided, gendered ramifications of an affair. But this is further unsettled by a swift move from Mrs Mooney to Bob Doran's thoughts. It is somewhat unclear how far the affair between Bob Doran and Polly has gone, but Doran is certain he must either 'marry her or run away' (61). 'Dublin is such a small city', he thinks, that 'everyone knows everyone else's business' (61). While he is an atheist he and Mrs Mooney are well aware of what would happen to his job with his Catholic employer if he were to not marry Polly (61). We learn of Doran's regret, attending a confessional in spite of his atheism, in which 'the priest had drawn out every ridiculous detail of the affair' (60). He has a vague sense that 'he was being had', and his helpless inability to shave as his hand is unsteady from his worry

[66] Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), p. 40.
[67] Ibid., p. 40.

contrasts with Mrs Mooney's decisive action and self-control (60). This powerlessness coupled with our insight into his troubled thoughts complicates prior understandings of his character, too; interpreting characters is emphatically rendered a complex process.

Joyce's use of free indirect discourse in the story thus disrupts stark judgements of the characters in 'The Boarding House' through giving a brief impression of their interiority. Ultimately, however, our access to Polly's thoughts is brief. In the final paragraphs of the story, the reader is aware the tremulous Bob Doran is speaking with the 'decisive' Mrs Mooney (60). For a 'little time' Polly cries in her bedroom, presumably – though we do not know for sure – worried about her fate (64). Drying her eyes she carefully observes herself in the mirror and arranges her hair before falling into a 'revery' as she 'patiently, almost cheerfully' thinks of her 'hopes and visions of the future' during which she forgets that she is waiting for anything to happen (64). Only when her mother calls her down, reporting that Mr Doran wishes to speak to her, does she remember that she had been waiting for the conversation to conclude (64). But while for Mullin, this ultimately a story that deploys sexualised stereotypes, along with the threat of blackmail and actual emotional blackmail, I contend that Joyce is working towards problematising stereotypes in the story as a whole and as such a key component of the story is the consideration of the difficulties of interpreting others.[68] Joyce is, as Vicki Mahaffey has argued more generally with regard to stories throughout *Dubliners*, exposing how habits of interpretation are formed and cause difficulties in understanding both ourselves and others.[69] Extending and applying this specifically to 'The Boarding

[68] Mullin, p. 77.
[69] Vicki Mahaffey, '*Dubliners*: Surprised by Chance' in *A Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Richard Brown (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 19-31 (p. 21, 31).

House' and the typist stereotype, as the unsettling of judgements of other characters in the story is explicit we are perhaps meant to implicitly understand that the judgement of a stereotype should be problematised, too. While Joyce is in many ways replicating the stereotype of the typist, this is nevertheless set within a story that works to query quick judgements of others and thus signals some interest in interrogating stereotypes. But with *Ulysses* we can see this interest delved into in an all the more complex, developed manner, as Joyce further analyses the stereotype of the sexual identity of the typist.

THE TYPIST AS MINOR CHARACTER IN *ULYSSES*

Martha Clifford, the typist of *Ulysses*, is all the more emphatically a minor character: she never physically appears in the text, and is instead present through a letter sent to Bloom, and through a hallucination Bloom has of her in 'Circe'. Martha's adherence to stereotype is underlined by the presence of other typist characters who closely resemble her. She also seems to perform her type in her flirtations with Bloom. Yet in *Ulysses* this stereotyping is more complex. It is connected to the limitations of our attentive capacity, which becomes stretched within a vast and wide-ranging text such as *Ulysses*, and within the urban modernity that the novel seeks to evoke. The overwhelming nature of a city, or a novel depicting a city environment with a vast population, means that some individuals can only be briefly glimpsed. The ways in which Martha does fleetingly subvert expectation – through her expression of her more overtly individual, specific sexual proclivities, most notably – highlights the ways in which stereotyping invokes judgements, and then undermines them. The text thus also hints at the diverse sexualities present in the city. Each minor character has

their desires; while they might mostly be only glimpsed at a distance, they offer the possibility of some connection over those desires, however brief.

Stereotyping of the typist as sexualised and depoliticised is deliberately foregrounded within *Ulysses*, thanks to its multiple typist characters who become a fairly homogenous, depersonalised group. In 'Wandering Rocks' Blazes Boylan's secretary Miss Dunne appears, reading a copy of *The Woman in White* instead of working. This novel has 'Too much mystery business in it' and she wonders, 'Is he in love with that one, Marion?'.[70] The idea of the typist secretively reading while in the office is a common one, indicating her lack of investment in her work. The question concerning Marion – a misspelling, perhaps deliberate, of Marian in *The Woman in White* – could apply to a speculation of whether Boylan is in love with Molly Bloom, whose given name is Marion. This signifies an interest in romance as well as the prurient curiosity of the typist. Miss Dunne types briefly before staring at a poster of music hall actress Marie Kendall, inwardly critiquing her looks – 'She's not nicelooking, is she?' – while contemplating the evening ahead and wondering if 'that fellow be at the band tonight', and what she might wear on her evening out (294). Miss Dunne's interests in beauty and romance are thus reiterated repeatedly in a short scene, cumulatively emphasising her adherence to type. Another typist is recalled by Bloom later on in the text, in 'Nausicaa': he remembers 'Typist going up Roger Greene's stairs two at a time to show her understandings' (484). Of course this image of the flirtatious and provocative typist is filtered through Bloom, and this is shortly after his voyeuristic encounter with Gerty MacDowell, so the degree to

[70] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: The Bodley Head, 1960), p. 294. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

which the typist was deliberately trying to expose herself is certainly debatable.[71] As Vicki Mahaffey has noted, Stephen Daedalus typically has an 'overly spiritualised' view of women, and Bloom 'an overly carnal one'.[72] This individual perspective of Bloom, which closely adheres to typical views of office girls, is suggestive of how stereotypes are easily replicated. While the text does reproduce expected stereotypes through the representations of these typists, that one of these representations is filtered through an explicitly subjective perspective exposes how stereotypes contribute to judgements of the identity of others, distorting our interpretations of their natures.

Indeed, much of our exposure to Martha is also filtered through Bloom, a distancing effect that aids in her largely being rendered a flat character. The two met through an advertisement Bloom placed in a newspaper declaring 'Wanted smart lady typist to aid gentleman in literary work' (202). There is an implication that an epistolary affair was always Bloom's intent: he rejects another typist, Lizzie Twigg, because he finds her unattractive (202). It seems likely this rejection was also connected to their being familiar with one another, detracting from the secrecy Bloom desired for his affair. The character of Martha Clifford is likely based on Marthe Fleischmann: Marthe was a young woman Joyce encountered in Zurich in

[71] Gerty MacDowell is another instance of a female character associated with Bloom who could be seen as a type or stereotype, that of the romance-obsessed young woman. She differs from the typist however, as her 'type' is more general, not conveyed with a designation of job. Unlike Martha, Gerty occupies more space in the narrative and her interiority is explored to a larger extent, as the prose takes on her perspective. Finally, as Richard Ellmann has indicated, Gerty has individual qualities that ensure from the point of her being introduced that she is not simply a parodic version of a young woman from trashy love stories. See Richard Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. 130-1.

[72] Vicki Mahaffey, *Reauthorizing Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 118.

1918.[73] Joyce's encounter with Marthe was initiated by his seeing her in the window across from his, and continued primarily through letters, a brief epistolary affair which was brought to an end by Marthe's lover.[74] These letters, Janine Utell notes, are quite withholding – including on Joyce's part – and their knowledge of one another remained vague.[75] When Martha materialises in Bloom's fantasy in 'Circe', she seems similarly only vaguely known, adhering to type. In Bloom's imagination she is the angry, scorned woman, and this turn from being playfully flirtatious to a demand of marriage is an exaggerated version of the story of Polly Mooney:

> MARTHA: (*Sobbing behind her veil*) Breach of promise. My real name is Peggy Griffin. He wrote to me that he was miserable. I'll tell my brother, the Bective rugger fullback on you, heartless flirt. (583)

The threat of a breach of promise suit is explicit, her veil almost making it seem that Bloom has left her at the altar. This is of course a paranoid fantasy emerging from Bloom's addled mind: because of this framing, this does not wind up reproducing anxieties of feminine sexuality and manipulation as 'The Boarding House' did. Instead, it explicitly exaggerates and caricatures the stereotype – the veil, the sobbing – and by doing so exposes the fear of a type that aids the creation of stereotype. Here, we see a self-conscious exposure of stereotyping as a projection of anxieties.

Yet this somewhat vague knowledge of Martha does not preclude there being some moments of intimacy between her and Bloom, nor does their not meeting in person. Mullin notes the aforementioned scene in 'Circe' and argues at this point the typist has become simply a pastiche; no longer a subject of anxiety or sexually threatening, the typist has been diminished to a parody of a character type and has

---

[73] Janine Utell, *James Joyce and the Revolt of Love: Marriage, Adultery, Desire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 29.
[74] Ibid., p. 29.
[75] Ibid., p. 29-30.

lost her power.[76] But while Martha is caricatured within this particular scene, Mullin's argument does not encompass the moments in which I argue that we can gain a better understanding of Martha, and the intimacy at a distance she experiences with Bloom. Further, I argue that this particular office girl is a vehicle through which Joyce is exploring the nature of brief sexual encounters in urban modernity, in which moments of connection can switch rapidly to disconnection and fragmentation. While, as noted, their affair is epistolary, this does not necessarily obviate intimacy: Kate Thomas has spoken of postal correspondence as creating 'intimate strangers', allowing for a creation of closeness between those who might be technically unknown.[77] The letter, as Janine Utell has explored, is a stand-in for the lover's body, albeit one that reminds one of the distance of the real body.[78] Utell's emphasis is largely on the negative valence of this distance, and yet distance seems to be eroticised by Bloom and Martha. The manner in which Bloom opens the letter highlights this notion of the letter as a stand-in for the body: he tucks it quickly in his pocket and as he walks out of the post office his 'hand went into his pocket and a forefinger felt its way under the flap of the envelope, ripping it open in jerks' (88). These furtive gestures described in sexual terms recall bodily touch. There is a degree of knowledge of Martha's body, too: her mention of 'such a bad headache' (95) is later recalled by Bloom, and he imagines this means she is on her 'monthlies' (479). As Richard Ellman points out, this suggests a moment of recognition by Bloom of Martha beyond an ideal, sexualised type.[79] Maintaining anonymity and distance, a connection is still made between the two. This is distinct from Molly

[76] Mullin, p. 92.
[77] Kate Thomas, *Postal Pleasures: Sex, Scandal, and Victorian Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 1.
[78] Utell, p. 19.
[79] Richard Ellmann, p. 48.

Bloom's affair: she has met her lover Blazes Boylan in person initially as he is the manager for her concert. Boylan writes to Molly, a letter which is delivered to their house which Bloom picks up: 'His quick heart slowed at once. Bold hand. Mrs Marion' (74). Molly is disappointed by this letter – 'I wish somebody would write me a loveletter his wasnt much' (899) – but they sleep together during the day on which the text is set. This discrepancy in physical encounters in each of the affairs could serve to make Bloom's affair more distant and isolating. Yet, as noted the distance is eroticised and seems a key part of the affair. It is the kind of affair which is enabled by urban modernity. While Bob Doran of 'The Boarding House' anxiously worried over Dublin being a 'small city' in which everyone is aware of what everyone else was doing, Bloom takes pleasure in the anonymity of the city. It enables moments of discreet connection, and indulgence of particular sexual proclivities.

While in Martha's letter to Bloom we might sense some performance of the sexualised secretary stereotype, it also reveals glimpses of a more complex character beyond this. The brevity with which this is done underlines her position as a minor character but in a text such as *Ulysses*, momentary details and impressions are privileged as significant modes of characterisation. While in realist texts there is a demand for vast amounts of detail and depth, particularly for major characters – a character-oriented equivalent of Barthes's 'reality effect' – brief impressions of a character are regarded by Joyce as being able to give deep insight into an individual consciousness.[80]

Aspects of Martha's letter are conventional; she opens politely, noting 'I got your last letter to me and thank you very much for it' (94). She plays the lover filled

[80] Roland Barthes, 'The Reality Effect' in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 141-8.

with longing, questioning 'when will we meet? I think of you so often you have no idea' (94). Previously in her letters she would be partaking in the 'Usual love scrimmage' and 'Doing the indignant' – presumably when conversation became more explicitly sexual (96). This suggests she was performing a type akin to that of Polly Mooney, carefully treading the line between disclosing her sexuality and portraying a girlish innocence. But Bloom contemplates how she has 'Changed since the first letter' (95). As such in this letter her flirtations are not exclusively of the expected kind seen in the typist stereotype. She is writing to Bloom's pseudonym, 'Henry Flower, Esq.' and enclosed within the letter is a 'yellow flower with flattened petals' (88, 94). Bloom recognises this as the 'Language of flowers' (95), a romantic language that Martha is employing in a teasing manner – she is alluding to and making a pun of his name, and reverses expected gender roles by being a woman sending a man flowers. She pries with curiosity into his relationship with his wife, demanding 'Do tell me what kind of perfume does your wife use. I want to know' (95). A somewhat teasing question takes on a bossy tone as she pushes the expected boundaries of the extra-marital affair. Thus from the beginning of the letter she shifts from her more polite, conventional phrases and becomes explicit and dominating:

> I am awfully angry with you. I do wish I could punish you for that. I called you naughty boy because I do not like that other world [sic]. Please tell me what is the real meaning of that word. Are you not happy in your home you poor little naughty boy? I do wish I could do something for you. (95)

Martha evokes sexualised ideas of punishment, and a bond is established between Bloom and Martha in their shared sadomasochism. While some critics have suggested that Martha is not the sadist she portrays herself to be and is instead trying to please Bloom, underlying such assertions seems to be the assumption that these

unconventional sexual desires can only be the remit of man; moreover, Martha's continuing to write to Bloom suggests otherwise.[81]

Martha's unconventional desires and somewhat eccentric love letter thus contravene conventional expectations of the sexualised secretary – albeit only momentarily. She strains against the confines of her type in these instances. Marta Figlerowicz has explored how 'flat protagonists' in Thomas Hardy novels explore the 'outward pressures' of societal expectation that impact individuals.[82] In particular, she argues that these characters discover they are 'too narrowly constrained' to challenge these external pressures: this, she suggests, is what forces them to act in such a way that they appear to be flat characters.[83] In a similar vein, the portrayal of Martha Clifford offers a further way of analysing the issue of stereotyping. Bloom recalls that Martha initially performed her stereotype to a greater extent, engaging in a more typical 'love scrimmage' through playing with the tension between innocence and sexuality. She performed her sexual identity, narrowly constrained by type. Her letter gives us glimpses of elements of her identity that are more clearly individuated and specific, however.

Unlike the characters Figlerowicz discusses, Martha is an emphatically minor character amidst the vast number of characters of *Ulysses*. This adds an extra complication to our understanding of Joyce's deployment of the secretary stereotype. Martha's being a minor character who at points closely adheres to type suggests how our understanding of the identities of others is problematised by our inclination to impulsive judgement of those belonging to particular groups. With regards to the secretary character, this in particular has ramifications for our assumptions of the

[81] Janine Utell suggests Martha is following a script Bloom has set out; see Utell, p. 88.
[82] Marta Figlerowicz, *Flat Protagonists: A Theory of Novel Character* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 94.
[83] Ibid., p. 94.

sexual identity of others. Glimpses at something beyond a narrow type complicate such assumptions, and this is suggestive of the possibility of the diversity of sexualities present in a busy urban environment such as the Dublin of *Ulysses*. This hints at potential sexual liberation enabled by modern urbanity and the possibility it gives for expression of diverse sexual desires. Joyce's work does not present a straightforward celebration of this potential liberation, demonstrating how it is fraught because of the inherent difficulty in the overwhelming city environment not to judge people as types, and thus be disconnected from them. Yet, it offers a recognition of a plurality of desires in the city, and the possibility of some connection to be had through these desires, however brief such a connection might be.

In Joyce, the by now well-established character type of the office girl is no longer the protagonist of a New Woman-style text. She is an all the more narrow type, depoliticised and highly sexualised. Joyce is deliberately rendering the typist a stereotype, and she appears mostly to be a somewhat flat character. But through this, and through moments in which further insight into a character might be gained – albeit only briefly – Joyce conveys the notion of the difficulty of interpreting others, especially with regards to the sexual identity of others. In particular, this is connected with the modern city environment: it has an overwhelming plethora of characters who will be experienced as 'minor', at least from our individual perspective, and only met fleetingly. Because of this Joyce's texts portray the movement from brief moments of sexual connection to distinct feelings of disconnection, an experience of fragmentation that is a key component of the modern city.

Conclusion

> 'Business Girls all round ought to be happy … Telegraph, post-office, telephone, typewriting, and the ordinary business clerks may all be called drudges, if you will, as they go through hour and hour of the same often deadly monotonous routine. Yet if it suits them, what could be better than this life?' – 'Business Girls', *The Typist's Gazette* (1896)[1]

In analysing the figure of the office girl in turn-of-the-century literature, I have argued that she is a version of the New Woman. But as even a journal dedicated to typists acknowledges in its article 'Business Girls', one clear way in which the office girl can be differentiated from the New Woman is that her work is typically composed of 'often deadly monotonous routine'.[2] The rapid turn in this article from describing this monotony to then wondering 'what could be better than this life?' expresses a key finding of this thesis. The question raised is on initial reading cheering and hopeful; it conveys, as many of the office girl characters in the texts examined in this thesis intimate, a sense that such work can be self-fulfilling and meaningful, granting independence and a sense of oneself as a skilled worker.

Yet – even if this is not intended by the author of the article – the question 'what could be better than this life?' takes on a wistful tone when considered alongside literary texts of the office girl. Often, the characters analysed in this thesis do indeed find their work mundane or lacking and contemplate what other options might be better, and what other opportunities might lie ahead. The office girl, whose work is less creative and intellectual than that of the typical New Woman, is not an aspirational figure but one who is continually aspiring. Her work grants her some independence, but is tempered by its mundane nature, and the office girl frequently seeks self-fulfilment outside of her job. This thesis reveals in particular the importance of understanding some key elements of office girl texts which have not

[1] 'Business Girls', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.4, August 6 1896, p. 57.
[2] Ibid., p. 57.

been previously examined, and which provide a fresh perspective on her everyday experience of her work. Through an application of Certeau's *la perruque*, I have argued that daydream and distraction become a way to escape the mundanity of work, while also noting how the routine nature of her work paradoxically enables this escape through allowing her to complete her tasks automatically. I also intervene in arguments concerning the office girl's work life and romances by observing how the required emotional labour of her job affects both of these categories, specifically because it leads to the alienation of her own emotions. Finally, I have offered a fresh perspective on the office girl's relation to other typists and telegraphists, contending that in novels there is frequently a tension between the individual, talented and ambitious office girl and the crowd of typists. Despite hopes being expressed in these texts for the mass advancement of office girls as a collective, the nature of singling out an exceptional individual suggests that such mass advancement may not be possible.

In using the term 'office girl', I have not intended to render this character type a diminutive, diminished figure in comparison to the more respectable and mature-sounding 'New Woman'. Firstly, and most simply, the youth of the characters examined in this thesis is frequently emphasised. This adds to the sense that these office girls are in a temporary state, or period of transition: with the marriage bar, typically they would have to leave their work, meaning if they opt to marry their careers are typically brief. Marriage is not the only alternative to office work, of course, and as such 'office girl' is also intended to connote a wider sense found in these novels that these women are at a stage in their lives which is likely to lead to development and change, and that they are seeking other possibilities and potentialities in order to find self-fulfilment.

As the article about 'business girls' above indicates, invoking girlhood when describing such jobs was common. Yet, another article in *The Typist's Gazette* complains of the usage of 'girl'. Responding not to the numerous other articles in the journal that use the term, but rather to an advertisement of a job for a 'sharp girl typist', the writer retorts that the company in question should replace 'girl' with 'young lady' if they want to receive applications.[3] What seems to be important to the writer of this particular article is the idea that a – very likely male – employer is using this diminutive term. This is not a self-labelling, and thus it is interpreted as an insult. In using the phrase 'office girl' I recognise that this term also communicates how others perceived these women, including the derogatory elements to this perception – in particular, that they were young and frivolous. Yet this perspective seems important to acknowledge when discussing a character type who also, as I have traced in this thesis, is the subject of mockery and becomes over time a distinct stereotype. The term 'office girl' both communicates a cliché, and is intended to suggest the growth and change that these characters aspire to.

The office girl, I have argued, is emblematic of a distinctly modern feminine subjectivity; her identity is always in process. Finding her sense of identity is an ongoing struggle and, as I have established, there is a trope found in these texts in which identity never seems fixed and fully formed. The office girl is specifically a vehicle for exploring modern feminine identity and how it is informed by work, romantic relationships and other ambitions. The office girl has a complex relationship to her work, and I have observed that novelists frequently vacillate between portraying her work as self-fulfilling or as deadening. In particular, the boredom created by the routine of her work leads to a desire to escape the office,

[3] 'All Over the Keyboard', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.19, November 19 1896, p. 295.

even if temporarily through daydream; and the exploitative nature of emotional labour leads to an alienation of feeling. But typically, those characters that are clearly politicised and associate their work with the women's movement are more likely to find their work emancipating; characters in novels by George Gissing and Grant Allen, for instance, perceive their personal independence through earning a wage to be indicative of the progress in the position of women more widely. Several of the women writers I have studied on the other hand, particularly those who participated in office work themselves such as Ivy Low and Dorothy Richardson, are more ambivalent about the positive possibilities of such work. This is not to posit an overall gender divide in perceptions of work – Gissing's novel also contains plenty of pessimistic views about work more generally, and Henry James's 'In the Cage' investigates the mundanity of the life of the telegraph girl – but rather to suggest that the characters who are more invested in feminist politics and less focused on the repetition of daily work life find more positive interpretations of their work.

While more aspirational, less mundane work outside of the office is sometimes found by office girls this is typically only true of those who align more with the New Woman by showing themselves to be characters of hidden talents and genius. Moreover, the narrative of the office girl attaining work that involves creative or intellectual satisfaction tends to highlight her contrast with the mass of other office girls, and thus underlines that this more aspirational work is not available to all. The individual is necessarily drawn into contrast with the crowd of typists, but in such a way that often troubles the notion of a collective sisterhood of office girls.

Work with technologies emphasises the repetitive, habitual nature of the office girl's labours, as she continues to tap on the typewriter or sounder until such

movements become automatic. As noted in this thesis, these more mundane aspects of the job lead to the office girl's desire to escape the boredom of her work. Yet the nature of such work means that the everyday in fact manages to hold within it the possibility of escape: repetition which leads to learned habits means tasks can be conducted automatically, enabling escapist daydream and drift of mind. Daydreaming in work can be a gesture of rebellion, indicating not only a desire to escape mundane tasks, but a wider dissatisfaction with the limited opportunities open to women of the period. Additionally, these moments of daydream can make manifest the office girl's hidden creativity and abilities which she may not be able to otherwise express in her work.

Another key aspect of the office girl's routine not previously examined is her emotional labour; the acting of emotion is a type of work which becomes a habitual practice within several of these texts. This practice – in which the worker aims to induce feelings in others, but in doing so also forces herself to try to feel and express a certain affect – can lead to the office girl experiencing an alienation of emotion. The office is located between public and private spheres, part of the world of work but closed off from the general public; there is a certain intimacy to the office which is exacerbated by the office girl's emotional labour. Emotion work and management leads, I have argued, to a warped sense of intimacy for office girl characters. In some instances it can lead to relationships which are motivated by reasons other than love and romance, because the office girl has become used to manipulation of emotion. These motivations, I note, are often more akin to the motivations for a career and vocation than those of a romantic relationship, as the office girl sees the opportunities a partner can provide beyond romance. More harmfully, it can lead to an expectation of exploitation of emotion in one's work and personal life; in *The*

Judge, for instance, the central character Ellen Melville beings to associate intimacy with having to give over her self, and being detached from her emotions. There is an anxiety expressed about the alienation from emotions that can be experienced due to emotional labour, therefore. Emotional labour is a distinctly feminised and typically exploitative form of work which is clearly paralleled in our own contemporary moment in a variety of post-industrial, customer service-oriented careers.

I have argued that the marriage plot is made use of in office girl novels not as a straightforward move towards romance, but as another form of the trope of wishing to escape office work. This complication of motivations for marriage is exacerbated by the effects of emotional labour, as noted. Choosing between marriage and work is typically presented as conflicted and fraught, particularly for those characters who wish to have both, as is seen especially clearly in texts by Rebecca West and Virginia Woolf. In this vein we can see another way in which the concerns of office girl novels parallel issues still explored in contemporary feminist arguments: in our own moment the conflict between romantic relationships and careers is framed as the desire for 'work-life balance', or the cliché of women wanting to 'have it all'. To give one example, Anne-Marie Slaughter's 2012 article in *The Atlantic* titled 'Why Women Still Can't Have It All' discussed the difficulties of a work-life balance for women.[4] The piece swiftly went viral, becoming one of the most read articles in the history of the magazine and receiving a multitude of responses, including on the front page of *The New York Times*.[5] While there are obvious differences – the office girl could not even attempt to choose both work and family due to the marriage bar –

[4] Anne-Marie Slaughter, 'Why Women Still Can't Have It All', *The Atlantic*, July/August 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/> [accessed 3 September 2018].
[5] Jodi Kantor, 'Elite Women Put a New Spin on an Old Debate', *The New York Times*, June 21 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/us/elite-women-put-a-new-spin-on-work-life-debate.html> [accessed 3 September 2018].

the texts examined in this thesis reflect similarly on issues of women's desire to have more than is available to them due to restrictive circumstances.

The office girl is a distinctly modern figure, the feminist issues surrounding whom still strike a chord with contemporary debate; so too the office girl provides an instance of continuity between Victorian and modernist literary texts which analyse the feminine experience of modernity. The texts studied in this thesis include the late Victorian – George Gissing, Grant Allen – as well as instances of high modernist experimentation, with Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. The ongoing feminisation of the role contributed to the recurrence of the office girl character: because of this she continued to be a vehicle for exploring the issues surrounding the ambitious working woman. The office girl becomes a well-known and well-worn character type, or even a stereotype. We have seen how James Joyce deliberately makes use of this stereotype: in Joyce self-conscious deployment of this type renders his typists distinctly flat characters. While texts analysed early on in this thesis pointedly examine the conflict between the exceptional individual office girl and the crowd of typists, as seen in Gissing and Low, in Joyce his stereotyped typists give the sense of office girls as a mass presence, a crowd who are a feature of urban modernity. The idea of knowing others is problematised through this mass presence; so too the idea of connecting with others is rendered difficult by the overwhelming city environment and the modern notion that identity is never complete or stable.

The office girl's prevalence as a vehicle for exploring modern feminine identity crosses genres as well as literary eras, and modernist poetry draws upon this originally Victorian character too, making use of the office girl to analyse conceptions of the troubling nature of modernity. In T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), for example, the typist is a briefly featured figure who forms part of the

poem's cityscape, and in particular becomes a focal point for analysing the poem's portrayal of urban disconnection. Appearing in the third section of *The Waste Land* and seen through the eyes of the prophet Tiresias, the reader has already encountered a cacophony of characters and voices – the original title of Eliot's work, 'He do the police in different voices', highlights this quality of the poem.[6] The multitude of characters, voices and other fragments means the typist only features for around 40 lines and yet much of her character is communicated quickly, in part because Eliot is making use of the typist stereotype. She is a symbol of modernity for Eliot; indeed, he suggested her importance in his notes to the poem by claiming that 'What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem.'[7] This note was written in retrospect, a year or so after the poem and, in general, critics have treated these notes with some suspicion or scepticism, not wishing for Eliot's guidance to dominate readings of his text.[8] Nevertheless the typist figure emerges as key to communicating anxieties about urban disconnection and sexuality that recur in *The Waste Land*.

That the typist of the poem adheres to an established stereotype is clear as has been noted by a number of critics: she lives in small single room, appears to be isolated from her family, and seems to subsist on poor pay.[9] This is made emphatic by the poem: her room, presumably in a boarding house, seems cramped as her laundry is 'perilously spread' outside the window, and the divan is her bed and is

---

[6] Michael Levenson, 'Form, Voice and the Avant-Garde' in *The Cambridge Companion to* The Waste Land, ed. by Gabrielle McIntire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 87-101 (p. 87).
[7] T. S. Eliot, 'Notes on *The Waste Land*' in *T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), p. 78, original emphasis.
[8] Lawrence Rainey, 'Eliot Amongst the Typists: Writing *The Waste Land*', *Modernism/modernity*, 12.1 (January 2005), 27-84 (p. 63).
[9] See Morag Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture, 1890-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 75; Rainey, 'Eliot Amongst the Typists', p. 69.

littered by 'Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays'.[10] She cleans up detritus from breakfast and prepares dinner from 'food in tins' (l. 223). The scene is quasi-domestic but the focus is on processed food, dirt and untidiness from the dishes, laundry and other clothing, suggesting both a lack of space as well as a lack of interest in maintaining a neat home, which subverts more old-fashioned expectations of femininity. The laundry hanging out of the window serves to emphasise the smallness of the room, but also its precarity seems to hint, alongside other signs of the typists' poverty, at the precarious position of the typist, as it seems she is only just economically surviving.

Critics have also noted her distinct alienation; but extending such arguments I contend that she can also be seen to emblematise that specific form of alienation that comes from the feminised, affective work of the typist, and that this emotional alienation provides a novel perspective on her relationship with the 'young man carbuncular' (l. 231).[11] The relationship is particularly bleak and the couple appear disconnected from one another:

> The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
> The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
> Endeavours to engage her in caresses
> Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
> Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
> Exploring hands encounter no defence;
> His vanity requires no response,
> And makes a welcome of indifference. (l. 235-42)

Rhyming patterns are irregular throughout the poem as a whole, but here Eliot establishes a more regular alternate rhyming structure: the song-like quality, contrasting with the violence that is occurring, makes this passage all the more

[10] T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* in *The Complete Poems & Plays*, l. 224, 227. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
[11] See, for instance, Pamela Thurschwell, 'Supple Minds and Automatic Hands: Secretarial Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Literature', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 37.2 (2001), 155-168 (155).

sinister. While the sex is 'undesired', the girl seems helpless to deny this young man when he 'assaults': he is associated with active words, such as 'Flushed and decided' and 'Exploring hands', but her reaction is one of 'indifference'. Notably, this is hardly a titillating scene, or a dramatic one: as Lawrence Rainey has emphasised, there is no melodrama to this scene of extra-marital sex.[12] This flat affect, I argue, connotes the detached, alienated emotions that are a result of emotional labour. At the conclusion of the scene, 'She smooths her hair with automatic hand, / And puts a record on the gramophone' (l.255-6). The idea of the 'automatic hand' is suggestive of an idea frequently found in texts about the typist, that her work with a machine is perceived to render her machine-like and without agency. But, similarly to her 'indifference' noted above, such automaticity is akin to a reaction to harassment we have seen in texts such as that of Rebecca West. Emotional labour and unwanted sexual advances in work lead to an alienation of emotion, and a lack of response to subsequent instances of emotional exploitation and even assault. Eliot's typist is emphatically alienated, both from her partner and from her own feelings; she is devoid of the potential sense of hope or ambition that was previously key to this type. This character conveys the harmful nature of the sexualisation of the office girl which leads to her being treated like an object, rendering her disempowered and leading to this disturbing scene.

The office girl appears in the modernist poetry of Mina Loy too: her rendering of this character is seen in her unpublished, unfinished poem 'Eros of Offices', written at some point in the 1940s.[13] In this poem the typist is again a

[12] Lawrence Rainey, 'With Automatic Hand: Eliot and *The Waste Land*' in *The New Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, ed. by Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 71-88 (p. 82).

[13] I would like to thank Jacinta Kelly of the University of New South Wales for introducing me to this poem. For Kelly's discussion of her research of Loy's archives which mentions 'Eros of Offices', see Jacinta Kelly, 'Of Archives and Architecture: Domestication, Digital

figure for exploring boredom, but Loy's fragmentary draft focuses on the everyday nature of the workday rather than the private life of the typist that is at the centre of Eliot's poem. As with Eliot, the typist is not a hopeful or politicised figure – perhaps in part this is due to Loy's own rejection of suffragette feminism in favour of, as Rowan Harris has described it, 'a rhetoric of individual self-realisation and creativity'.[14] Instead, Loy focuses on the difficulty the office girl of her poem has in finding any kind of self-fulfilment. Her work is described as 'iterative sterility / piling as days / filing'.[15] The sterile workplace is presented as devoid of joy and creativity, and this sterility seems to be accumulating as it is 'piling', much like her never-ending stack of 'filing'. The repetitive nature of such work is underlined here, as it is through certain words being repeated throughout the poem, with 'iterative', 'piling', 'filing', 'drudgery' all recurring within the short fragment.

The typist's experience of the everyday in Loy's poem seems markedly feminised: she describes how the workdays go on as 'one timeless run in a stocking', a metaphor which inscribes repetition onto a feminine piece of clothing (l. 9). But this is not a straightforward use of the attractive, glamorous secretary stereotype seen in the advertisements examined in Chapter Three. While Loy alludes to this particular stereotype by describing 'Beauty on / the job' (l. 11-2), this beauty and indeed the eros of the title are diminished by such imperfections as the run in the stocking as well as the poem's overwhelming focus on the drudgery of work. Moreover, Loy underlines that the ladder in the stocking is metaphorical as she notes

---

Collections, and the Poetry of Mina Loy', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 32.91-2 (2017), 171-85.

[14] Rowan Harris, 'Futurism, Fashion and the Feminine: Forms of Repudiation and Affiliation in the Early Writing of Mina Loy' in *The Salt Companion to Mina Loy*, ed. by Rachel Potter and Suzanne Hobson (London: Salt Publishing, 2010), pp. 17-47 (p. 17).

[15] Mina Loy, 'Eros of Offices', n.d. (c. 1940s), YCAL MSS 6, box 5, folder 80. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

'Now there are no nylons' (l. 7), suggesting that the poem is set during World War II when nylon production was redirected towards the war effort, leading to a shortage in stockings.[16] Perhaps this typist is one of those women who created the illusion of nylons through drawing a seam on her leg with make up; regardless, this suggests that the portrayal of the secretary's job as glamorous and fashionable seen in advertisements is farcical.

Loy focuses on the drift and distraction of the office girl's mind during her repetitive workday. Allusions to the body and to fashion are overwhelmed by the 'Iterative Eternity' of the day, an eternity 'of succession / of classification

piling filing' (l. 1-3). Elements of the fragmentary nature of poem, including the blank spaces between words and the phrases that hover to the right of what seems to be the main body of the poem as with 'piling filing' in this instance (l. 3), can be attributed to this being an unfinished draft; yet such a structure is also typical of Loy's poetry. As Andrew Michael Roberts has pointed out, the gaps in the form of Loy's poems interrupt 'the illusions of 'voice'' and the idea of the 'poetic subject' being consistent or whole.[17] In 'Eros of Offices' in particular the short lines and the erratic spacing on the page seem to represent the lack of coherence to the secretary's subjectivity, in part because her selfhood is at once informed by but not invested in her work. The fragmentary nature of the poem suggests too the drift of her thought as she absent-mindedly shifts between tasks. Loy's poem thus focuses on glimpses of the office's girl interiority as she goes through the everyday routine of her work.

Eliot and Loy both deploy the office girl character type, specifically making use of her as a vehicle to explore particular ideas around women's experience of

[16] Richard Cavendish, 'Months Past', *History Today*, 64.10, October 2014, p.9.
[17] Andrew Michael Roberts, 'Rhythm, Self and Jazz in Mina Loy's Poetry' in *The Salt Companion to Mina Loy*, pp. 99-128 (p. 103-4).

boredom and the everyday. While for Eliot this moves to an observation from afar of modern sexuality and emotional alienation, Loy's fragmentary poem delves into the interiority of the office girl, exposing the reader to the mundane nature of her routine. The office girl is as noted a figure whose identity is in process, searching for numerous ways to find self-fulfilment. As such she is a vehicle for exploring a multitude of issues surrounding modern femininity: this encompasses, as I have explored, women's relationship to work, including her required emotional labour; daydream and distraction as ways of finding moments to express creativity amidst routine; and the conflict between individual self-fulfilment and difficulties of collective advancement of a group of women workers. Analysing such categories develops our understanding of the office girl's everyday life. She is a version of the New Woman, a woman worker whose more notably everyday narrative is found across different eras, but who always appears distinctly modern.

Appendix: Images

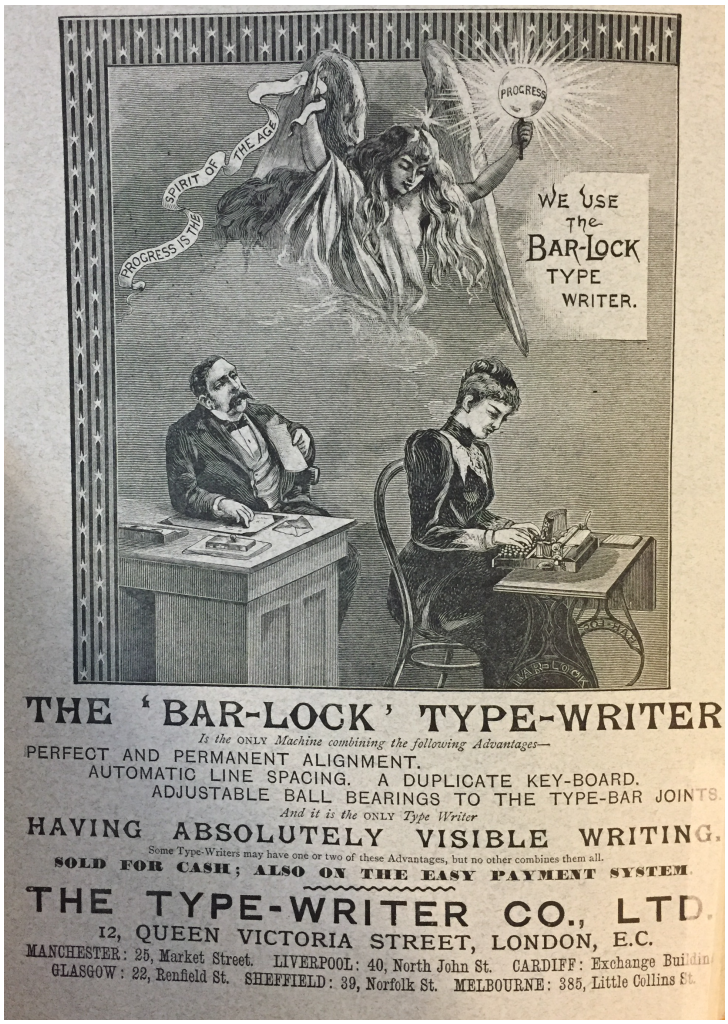


Figure 1, Advertisement for the 'Bar-Lock' typewriter, *The Author*, 1.11, 1891. Copyright The British Library Board, SHAW90.



Figure 2, Henry Moran, 'Why Jones Stayed at the Office', Ogden's Midnight Flake Advertisement, 1900, chromolithograph. Photograph courtesy of The National Archives, London, COPY 1/172, folio 372.



Figure 3, Masthead, *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.2, July 23 1896. Copyright The British Library Board, LOU.LON 67 [1896].

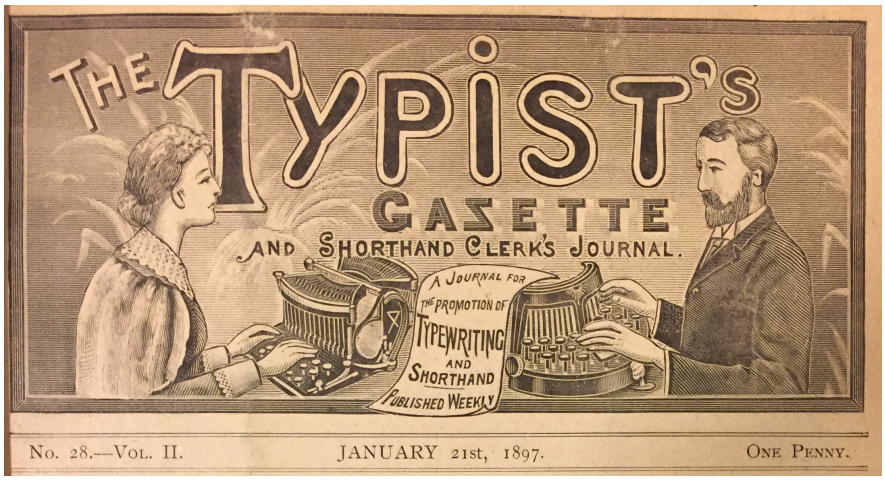


Figure 4, Masthead, *The Typist's Gazette*, 2.28, January 21 1897. Copyright The British Library Board, LOU.LON 67 [1897].



Figure 5, Masthead, *The Typist's Gazette*, 2.31, February 11 1897. Copyright The British Library Board, LOU.LON 67 [1897].

Bibliography

‘All Over the Keyboard’, *The Typist’s Gazette*, 1.19, November 19 1896, p. 295

Allen, Grant, ‘The Girl of the Future’, *Universal Review*, 7 (1890), 49-64

——, *Physiological Aesthetics* (London: H.S. King & Co., 1877)

——, ‘“Physiological Aesthetics” and “Philista”’ in *My First Book: the experiences of Walter Besant [and others]*, ed. by Jerome K. Jerome (London: Chatto & Windus, 1894), pp. 43-52

——, ‘Plain Words on the Woman Question’, *Popular Science Monthly*, 36, December 1889, pp. 170-181

——, [as Olive Pratt Rayner], *The Type-writer Girl* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1897)

Anderson, Gregory, ‘The white-blouse revolution’ in *The white-blouse revolution: Female office workers since 1870*, ed. by Gregory Anderson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 1-27

Anderson, Nancy Fix, ‘Eliza Lynn Linton, Dickens, and the Woman Question’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22.4 (Winter 1989), 134-141

——, *Women Against Women in Victorian England: A Life of Eliza Lynn Linton* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987)

Arata, Stephen, ‘On Not Paying Attention’, *Victorian Studies*, 46.2 (Winter 2004), 193-205

Armstrong, Tim, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005)

——, *Modernism, Technology and the Body: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Asendorf, Christoph, *Batteries of Life: On the History of Things and Their Perception in Modernity*, trans. by Don Reneau (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993)

"attention, n.", *OED Online* (March 2017) http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/12802?redirectedFrom=attention [accessed June 12, 2017]

Attridge, Derek, *Joyce Effects: On Language, Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

‘Automatic Action in Typewriting’, *The Typist’s Gazette*, 2.36, March 18 1897, p. 148

Bailey, Peter, 'Parasexuality and Glamour: The Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype', *Gender & History*, 2.2 (Summer 1990), 148-172

Barber, Paul, *Vampires, Burial and Death: Folklore and Reality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988)

Barnes, Louisa Ellen, *How to Become Expert in Typewriting: A Complete Instructor* (St Louis, MO: Arthur J. Barnes, 1890)

Barthes, Roland, 'The Reality Effect' in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 141-8

Baudelaire, Charles, 'The Painter of Modern Life' in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* ed. and trans. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964), pp. 1-40

——, 'To a Woman Passing By' in *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. by Keith Waldrop (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006)

Bauman, Zygmunt, *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi* (Cambridge, Polity: 2004)

Bayly, Susan N., 'The English Miss, German Fraulein and French Mademoiselle: foreign governesses and national stereotyping in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe', *History of Education*, 43.2 (2014), 160-186

Beddoe, Deirdre, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars: 1918-1939* (London: Pandora Press, 1989)

Begnal, Michael H., 'The Unveiling of Martha Clifford', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 13.4 (Summer 1976), 400-406

Bennett, Arnold, *Lilian* (London: Cassell and Company, 1922)

Beribitsky, Julie, *Sex and the Office: a History of Gender, Power, and Desire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012)

Berlant, Lauren, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008)

Birnstingl, Harry J., 'The Human Minority', *The Freewoman*, 12, February 8 1912, p. 235

——, 'Uranians', *The Freewoman*, 7, January 4 1912, p. 127-28

Blackburn, David, 'The Spectator's review of Dracula, 1897', *The Spectator*, 25 April 2012, < https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2012/04/the-spectators-review-of-dracula-1897> [accessed 30 July 2018]

Bland, Lucy, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-*

1914 (London: Penguin, 1995)

——, 'Heterosexuality, Feminism and *The Freewoman* Journal in Early Twentieth-Century England', *Women's History Review*, 4.1 (1995), 5-23

Boone, Joseph Allen, *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998)

Bowlby, Rachel, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (New York: Methuen, 1985)

——, 'Woolf's Untold Stories' in *Everyday Stories: The Literary Agenda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) pp. 146-169

Brennan, Matthew C., 'Repression, Knowledge and Saving Souls: The Role of the "New Woman" in Stoker's *Dracula* and Murnau's *Nosferatu*', *Studies in the Humanities*, 19.1 (1992), 1-9

Briganti, Chiara and Kathy Mezei, *Domestic Modernisms, the Interwar Novel, and E.H. Young* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Brown, Terence, 'Introduction' in James Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2002), pp. vii-xlvv

'Business Girls', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.4, August 6 1896, p. 57

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 2006)

Caird, Mona, *The Morality of Marriage* (London: George Redway, 1897)

Capuano, Peter, *Changing Hands: Industry, Evolution and the Reconfiguration of the Victorian Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015)

Carr, Nicholas *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011)

Carswell, John, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983)

Cavendish, Richard, 'Months Past', *History Today*, 64.10, October 2014, p. 9

Certeau, Michel de, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984)

Cholmondeley, Mary, *Red Pottage* (London: Virago, 1985)

Clarke, Bruce, *Dora Marsden and Early Modernism: Gender, Individualism, Science* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996)

Coleman, Deirdre, and Hilary Fraser, 'Introduction – Minds, Bodies, Machines' in *Minds, Bodies, Machines: 1770-1930*, ed. by Deirdre Coleman and Hilary Fraser (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-18

Colligan, Colette and Margaret Linley, 'Introduction: The Nineteenth-Century

Invention of Media' in *Media, Technology and Literature in the Nineteenth Century: image, sound, touch*, ed. by Colette Colligan and Margaret Linley (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1-22

Colón, Susan, 'Professionalism and Domesticity in George Gissing's *The Odd Women*', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 44.4 (2001), 441-58

Comitini, Patricia, 'A Feminist Fantasy: Conflicting Ideologies in *The Odd Women'*, *Studies in the Novel*, 27.4 (Winter 1995), 529-43

Crary, Jonathan, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999)

Crossley, Nick, *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994)

Cullen, L.M., 'Dublin' in *James Joyce in Context*, ed. by John McCourt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 173-83

Danahay, Martin A., *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)

Davy, Teresa, '"A Cissy Job for Men; A Nice Job for Girls": Women Shorthand Typists in London, 1900-1939' in *Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work*, ed. by Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover (London: Macmillan Education, 1986), pp. 124-44

Delap, Lucy, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Delgado, Alan, *The Enormous File: A Social History of the Office* (London: John Murray, 1979)

Devereux, Roy, *The Ascent of Woman* (London: John Lane, 1896)

Devlin, Kimberly J., 'Pretending in "Penelope": Masquerade, Mimicry, and Molly Bloom' in *Molly Blooms: A Polylogue on "Penelope" and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Richard Pearce (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), pp. 80-102

"distraction, n.", *OED Online* (March 2017), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/55730?redirectedFrom=distraction [accessed June 12, 2017]

Doyle, Arthur Conan, 'A Case of Identity' in *The Adventures and Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 1996)

DuPlessis, Rachel Blau, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of*

Twentieth-Century Writers (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985)

Eliot, T.S., 'Notes on *The Waste Land*' in *T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004)

——, *The Waste Land* in *T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004)

Eltis, Sos, 'Representing Work' in *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian into Modern*, ed. by Laura Marcus, Michèle Mendelssohn and Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr (Oxford: Oxford University of Press, 2016), pp. 463-80

Elkin, Lauren, *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Vintage, 2017)

Ellmann, Maud, *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Sigmund Freud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Ellmann, Richard, *Ulysses on the Liffey* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972)

Epperson, Gordon, *The Mind of Edmund Gurney* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997)

'Fair Typists and their Treatment', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.13, October 8 1896, p. 269

Fawcett, Millicent Garrett, '*The Woman Who Did*', *The Contemporary Review*, 67 (May 1895), 625-31

Felber, Lynette, 'A Manifesto for Feminine Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', in *Rereading Modernism: New Directions in Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Lisa Rado (New York: Garland, 1994), pp. 23-40

Feldman, Jessica, 'Modernism's Victorian Bric-a-brac', *Modernism/modernity*, 8.3, (September 2001), 453-70

Felski, Rita, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995)

——, 'The Invention of Everyday Life', *New Formations*, 39 (1999), 15-31

Feltes, N. N., *Literary Capital and the Late Victorian Novel* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993)

Fernihough, Anne, *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Figlerowicz, Marta, *Flat Protagonists: A Theory of Novel Character* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

Fleissner, Jennifer L., ‘Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer’s Stake in *Dracula*’, *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, 22.3 (2000), 417-55

Flint, Kate, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)

"flirt, n.". *OED Online* (March 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/71674?rskey=Ekdc3P&result=1&isAdvanced=false> [accessed April 20, 2018]

Forman, Ross G., ‘A Parasite for Sore Eyes: Rereading Infection Metaphors in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*’, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 44.4 (2016), 925-47

Forster, E. M., ‘People (continued)’ in *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 71-84

Foster, Hal, ‘Prosthetic Gods’, *Modernism/modernity*, 4.2 (1997), 5-38

Friedman, Susan Stanford, ‘Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies’, *Modernism/modernity*, 13.3 (September 2006), 425-43

Galvan, Jill, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859-1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010)

Gan, Wendy, *Women, Privacy and Modernity in Early Twentieth-Century British Writing* (Basingstoke: Pan Macmillan, 2009)

Gane, Nicholas, ‘When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done?: Interview with Donna Haraway’, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 23.7-8, 135-58

Gifford, Don, and Robert J. Seldman, *Ulysses Annotated: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008)

Giles, Judy, *The Parlour and the Suburb: Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2004)

Gilman, Sander L., *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Gissing, George, *The Collected Letters of George Gissing*, ed. by Paul F. Mattheisen and Arthur C. Young (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1993), V

——, *The Odd Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

——, *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist*, ed. by Pierre Coustillas (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1978)

Goody, Alex, *Technology, Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011)

Green, Barbara, 'Complaints of Everyday Life: Feminist Periodical Culture and Correspondence Columns in *The Woman Worker*, *Women Folk* and *The Freewoman*', *Modernism/modernity*, 19.3 (2012), 461-85

Greenslade, William and Terence Rodgers, 'Resituating Grant Allen: Writing, Radicalism and Modernity' in *Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the* Fin de Siècle, ed. by William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 1-22

Greg, W.R., 'Why are Women Redundant?', *The National Review*, 28, Apr 1862, pp. 434-60

Groth, Helen, 'The Soundscapes of Henry Mayhew: Urban Ethnography and Technologies of Transcription', *Cultural Studies*, 18.3 (December 2012), 109-30

Hack, Daniel, *The Material Interests of the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005)

Hagner, Michael, 'Toward a History of Attention in Culture and Science', *MLN*, 118.3 (April 2003), 670-87

Hanscombe, Gillian E., 'Dorothy Richardson versus the Novel' in *Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction*, ed. by Ellen G. Friedman and Miriam Fuchs (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989)

Haraway, Donna, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991), pp.149-82

Hardt, Michael, 'Affective Labor', *boundary 2*, 26.2 (Summer 1999), 89-100

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press)

——, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2005)

Harris, Rowan, 'Futurism, Fashion and the Feminine: Forms of Repudiation and Affiliation in the Early Writing of Mina Loy' in *The Salt Companion to Mina Loy*, ed. by Rachel Potter and Suzanne Hobson (London: Salt Publishing, 2010), pp. 17-47

Hayles, N. Katherine, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics,*

Literature and Informatics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999)

——, 'Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes', *Profession* (2007), 187-99

Heidegger, Martin, *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking*, trans. by Andrew J. Mitchell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012)

Heilmann, Ann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)

Herzog, Eve Elana, 'The Pleasure of the Flirt: Flirtation and Narrative in the Nineteenth-Century British Novel' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2003)

Highmore, Ben, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002)

——, *Ordinary Lives: studies in the everyday* (London: Routledge, 2010)

Hochschild, Arlie Russell, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003)

Huyssen, Andreas, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other' in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 44-62

'Impressions of Office Life', *The Woman Worker*, 25, November 18 1908, p. 616

James, Henry, *Henry James Letters, Vol. 3 1883-1895*, ed. by Leon Edel (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980) III

——, 'In the Cage' in *Selected Tales* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001)

James, William, *The Principles of Psychology: Authorized Edition* (New York: Dover, 1950), I

Jameson, Frederic, 'Ulysses in History' in *James Joyce and Modern Literature*, ed. by W. J. McCormack and Alistair Stead (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 126-41

Johnson, Jeri, 'Joyce and Feminism' in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 196-212

Jones, E. E. Constance, 'An Aspect of Attention', *The Monist*, 8.3, April 1898, 356-77

Joyce, James, 'The Boarding House' in *Dubliners* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000)

——, *Ulysses* (London: The Bodley Head, 1960)

Kantor, Jodi, 'Elite Women Put a New Spin on an Old Debate', *The New York Times*, June 21 2012 <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/us/elite-women-put-a-new-spin-on-work-life-debate.html> [accessed 3 September 2018]

Kaye, Richard A., *The Flirt's Tragedy: Desire Without End in Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002)

Keep, Christopher, 'Blinded by the Type: Gender and Information Technology at the Turn of the Century', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts,* 23.1 (2001), 149-73

——, 'The Cultural Work of the Type-Writer Girl', *Victorian Studies*, 40.3 (Spring 1997), 401-25

Kelly, Aaron, *Twentieth Century Irish Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Kelly, Jacinta, 'Of Archives and Architecture: Domestication, Digital Collections, and the Poetry of Mina Loy', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 32.91-2 (2017), 171-85

Kenner, Hugh, *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978)

Kent, Susan Kingsley, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 1990)

Ketabgian, Tamara, *The Lives of Machines: The Industrial Imaginary in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011)

Kistler, Jordan, 'Mesmeric Rapport: The Power of Female Sympathy in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 23.3 (2018), 366-80

Kittler, Friedrich A., *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* trans. by Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990)

——, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999)

Kracauer, Siegfried, 'Cult of Distraction' in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. by Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 323-30

——, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, trans. by Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1998)

Kuelpe, O., 'The Problem of Attention', *The Monist,* 13.1, October 1902, 38-71

Kuhn, Reinhard, *The Demon of Noontide: Ennui in Western Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976)

Kumar, Krishan, 'From Work to Employment and Unemployment: the English Experience' in *On Work: Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*, ed. by R. E. Pahl (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 138-164

'The Lady Typist', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.4, August 6 1896, p. 51

Langbauer, Laurie, *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999)

Lazzarato, Maurizio, 'Immaterial Labour' in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. by Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 133-47

Ledger, Sally, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the* Fin-de-Siècle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

Lefebvre, Henri, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. by Sacha Rabinovitch (London: Allen Lane, 1971)

Leland, Charles, *Quickness of Perception* (New York: J.P. Downs, 1891)

Leonard, Garry, '*Dubliners*' in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 87-102

Levenson, Michael, 'Form, Voice and the Avant-Garde' in *The Cambridge Companion to* The Waste Land, ed. by Gabrielle McIntire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 87-101

Levine, Jennifer, '*Ulysses*' in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 122-48

Liggins, Emma, *George Gissing, the Working Woman, and Urban Culture* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006)

Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (New York: Routledge, 1991)

Linton, Eliza Lynn, 'The Revolt Against Matrimony', *The Forum*, 10, January 1891, p. 585-95

——, 'The Wild Women No. 1: As Politicians', *Nineteenth Century,* 30, July 1891, p. 79-88

——, 'The Wild Women No. 2: As Social Insurgents', *Nineteenth Century*, 30*,* October 1891, p. 596-605

Littau, Karin, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies and Bibliomania* (Cambridge:

Polity Press, 2006)

'Love-Making by Telegraph', *The Telegraphist*, 1, December 1 1883, p. 4

Low, Ivy, *The Questing Beast* (London: Martin Secker, 1914)

Loy, Mina, 'Eros of Offices', n.d. (c. 1940s), YCAL MSS 6, box 5, folder 80. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Luckhurst, Roger, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Lyons, F. S. L., *A New History of Ireland: Ireland Under the Union, 1870-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), VI.II

Mahaffey, Vicki, '*Dubliners*: Surprised by Chance' in *A Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Richard Brown (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 19-31

——, *Reauthorizing Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

——, *States of Desire: Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, and the Irish Experiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Mahoney, Kristin, *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

'Manchester Typist', 'Letter to the Editor', *The Woman Worker*, 26, November 29 1909, p. 647

Marcus, Sharon, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999)

——, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007)

Marks, Patricia, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1990)

Marx, Karl, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), I

——, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. by David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

McLaren, Angus, *Sexual Blackmail: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002)

McCormick, Leanne, 'The Dangers and Temptations of the Street: Managing Female Behaviour in Belfast During the First World War', *Women's History Review* (2016), 414-31

McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Sphere

Books, 1964)

Menke, Richard, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008)

Mettrie, Julien Offray de la, *Machine Man and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. by Ann Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

'Mimi', 'Thoughtless Women Clerks', *The Woman Worker*, 18, October 2 1908, 454

Morton, Peter, 'Grant Allen: A Biographical Essay' in *Grant Allen: Literature and Politics at the* Fin de Siècle, ed. by William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 23-44

Mullin, Katherine, *Working Girls: Fiction, Sexuality and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Murphy, Patricia, *The New Woman Gothic: Reconfigurations of Distress* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2016)

Nash, John, 'Introduction: Joyce in the Nineteenth Century' in *James Joyce in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by John Nash (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 1-14

National Union of Clerks, 'Letter to the Editor', *The Woman Worker*, 3, January 20 1909, p. 63

Nordau, Max, *Degeneration*, trans. from the second edition of the German work (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993)

Norton, Anne V., *Paradoxical Feminism: The Novels of Rebecca West* (Lanham: International Scholars Publications, 2000)

O'Sullivan, Tim, John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery and John Fiske, *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 1994)

Oksala, Johanna, 'Affective Labor and Feminist Politics', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 41.2 (2016), 281-303

Oliver, Kathlyn, 'Asceticism and Passion', *The Freewoman,* 13, February 15 1912, p. 252

Olson, Liesl, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Ophir, Ella, 'Modernist Fiction and "the accumulation of unrecorded life"', *Modernist Cultures*, 2.1 (2010), 6-20

Ophir, Eyal, Clifford Nass and Anthony D. Wagner, 'Cognitive control in media multitaskers', *PNAS*, 106.37 (2009) 15583-15587

Otis, Laura, *Networking: Communicating with Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002)

'Our Views', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.13, October 8 1896, p. 196

Outka, Elizabeth, 'The Transitory Space of *Night and Day*' in *A Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Jessica Berman (Chichester: Wiley & Sons, 2016), pp. 55-66

Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian into Modern, ed. by Laura Marcus, Michèle Mendelssohn and Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr (Oxford: Oxford University of Press, 2016)

Parasuraman, Raja, 'The Attentive Brain: Issues and Prospects' in *The Attentive Brain*, ed. by Raja Parasuraman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), pp. 3-16

Parsons, Deborah L., *Streetwalking: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Pease, Allison, *Modernism, Feminism, and the Culture of Boredom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Perkin, Harold, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Petro, Patrice, 'After Shock/Between Boredom and History' in *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 265-84

Phillips, Natalie M., *Distraction: Problems of Attention in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016)

Pikula, Tanya, 'Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Late-Victorian Advertising Tactics: Earnest Men, Virtuous Ladies, and Porn', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 55.3 (2012), 283-302

Pillsbury, W.B., *Attention* (London: Swann Sonnenschein, 1908)

Poovey, Mary, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988)

Posner, Michael I., 'Progress in Attention Research' in *Cognitive Neuroscience of Attention*, ed. by Michael I. Posner (London: Guildford Press, 2004), pp. 1-8

Price, Leah, 'Grant Allen's Impersonal Secretaries: Rereading *The Type-Writer Girl*'

in *Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the* Fin de Siècle, ed. by William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 129-42

Price, Leah, and Pamela Thurschwell, 'Introduction: Invisible Hands' in *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture*, ed. by Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 1-12

Pykett, Lyn, *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992)

——, 'Portraits of the artist as a young woman: representations of the female artist in the New Woman fiction of the 1890s' in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, ed. by Nicola Diane Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 135-50

Rabinbach, Anson, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1990)

Rainey, Lawrence, 'Eliot Amongst the Typists: Writing *The Waste Land*', *Modernism/modernity*, 12.1 (January 2005), 27-84

——, 'From the Fallen Woman to the Fallen Typist, 1908-1922', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920,* 52.3 (2009), 273-297

——, 'Secretarial Fiction: Gender and Genre in Four Novels, 1897-1898', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 53.3 (2010), 308-330

——, 'With Automatic Hand: Eliot and *The Waste Land*' in *The New Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, ed. by Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 71-88

Raitt, Suzanne, 'Virginia Woolf's Early Novels: Finding a Voice' in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Randall, Bryony, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Ray, Philip, '*The Judge* Reexamined: Rebecca West's Underrated Gothic Romance', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 31.3 (1988), 297-307

Raykoff, Ivan, 'Piano, telegraph, typewriter: listening to the language of touch' in *Media, Technology and Literature in the Nineteenth Century: image, sound, touch*, ed. by Colette Colligan and Margaret Linley (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 159-88

Redmond, Jennifer and Elaine Farrell, 'War Within and Without: Irish Women in the First World War Era', *Women's History Review* (2017), 329-41

Richardson, Angelique and Chris Willis, 'Introduction' in *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact:* Fin-de-Siècle *Feminisms*, ed. by Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 1-38

Richardson, Angelique, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

——, 'Who *Was* the New Woman?' in *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian into Modern*, ed. by Laura Marcus, Michèle Mendelssohn and Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr (Oxford: Oxford University of Press, 2016), pp. 150-67

Richardson, Dorothy, *Journey to Paradise: Short Stories and Autobiographical Sketches*, ed. by Trudi Tate (London: Virago Modern Classics, 1989)

——, *Pilgrimage I: Pointed Roofs, Backwater, Honeycomb* (London: Virago, 1979)

——, *Pilgrimage II: The Tunnel, Interim* (London: Virago, 1992)

——, *Pilgrimage III: Deadlock, Revolving Lights, The Trap* (London: Virago, 1979)

Roberts, Andrew Michael, 'Rhythm, Self and Jazz in Mina Loy's Poetry' in *The Salt Companion to Mina Loy*, ed. by Rachel Potter and Suzanne Hobson (London: Salt Publishing, 2010), pp. 99-128

Rosner, Victoria, *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005)

Ruth, Jennifer, 'The Victorian Novel and the Professions' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Novel*, ed. by Lisa Rodensky (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2013), pp. 398-411

'Salutation', *The Typist's Gazette*, 1.1, July 16 1896, p. 3

Sanders, Lise Shapiro, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2006)

Savoy, Eric '"In the Cage" and the Queer Effects of Gay History', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 28.3 (Spring 1995), 284-307

Schaffer, Talia, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 2000)

——, *Romance's Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Schreiner, Olive, *Woman and Labour* (London: Virago, 1978)

Seltzer, Mark, *Bodies and Machines* (London: Routledge, 1992)

Senf, Carol A., '*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman', *Victorian Studies*, 26.1 (Fall 1982), 33-49

Shiach, Morag, 'Modernism, the City and the "Domestic Interior"', *Home Cultures*, 2.3 (2005), 251-67

——, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture, 1890-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

——, 'Modernity, labour and the typewriter' in *Modernist Sexualities* ed. by Hugh Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) pp. 114-29

'Shorthand and Typewriting Clerks', *The Girl's Own Paper*, 1144.18, Nov 30 1901, p. 136

Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing* (London: Virago Press, 1987)

Shuman, Cathy, *Pedagogical Economies: The Examination and the Victorian Literary Man* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2000)

Simmel, Georg, 'Flirtation' in *Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love*, trans. by Guy Oakes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 137-52

——, 'The Metropolis and Modern Life', in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), pp. 11-19

Slaughter, Anne-Marie, 'Why Women Still Can't Have It All', *The Atlantic*, July/August 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/> [accessed 3 September 2018]

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Spacks, Patricia Meyer, *Boredom: The Literary History of a State of Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Stearns, Peter N., *Jealousy: The Evolution of an Emotion in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1989)

Stevens, Hugh, 'Queer Henry *In the Cage*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, ed. by Jonathan Freedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 120-38

Stiles, Anne, 'Cerebral Automatism, the Brain, and the Soul in Bram Stoker's

Dracula', *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences*, 15 (2006), 131-52

Stoker, Bram, *Dracula* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997)

Stutfield, Hugh, 'Tommyrotics', *Blackwood*s, June 1895, 833-45

Sullivan, Hannah, *The Work of Revision* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013)

Sutherland, Gillian, *In Search of the New Woman: Middle-Class Women and Work in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Tapscott, Don, 'How Digital Technology Has Changed the Brain', *Bloomberg Business Week* (10 November 2008), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2008-11-10/how-digital-technology-has-changed-the-brainbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice> [accessed 12 June 2017]

Taylor, Frederick Winslow, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (London: Harper & Bros., 1911)

Thom, Deborah, 'Women, War Work and the State in Ireland, 1914-1918', *Women's History Review* (2017), 1-18

Thomas, Kate, *Postal Pleasures: Sex, Scandal, and Victorian Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

——, 'A Queer Job for a Girl: Women Postal Workers, Civic Duty and Sexuality 1870-80', in *In a Queer Place: Sexuality and Belonging in British and European Contexts,* ed. by Kate Chedgzoy, Emma Francis and Murray Pratt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 50-70

Thurschwell, Pamela, 'Henry James and Theodora Bosanquet: On the typewriter, *In the Cage*, at the Ouija Board', *Textual Practice*, 13.1 (1999), 5-23

——, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

——, 'Supple Minds and Automatic Hands: Secretarial Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Literature', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 37.2 (2001), 155-68

Titchener, E.B., *Lectures on the elementary psychology of feeling and attention* (London: Macmillan, 1908)

Tuke, Daniel Hack, *A Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*, ed. by D.H. Tuke (London: J&A Churchill, 1892), I

Tyler, Annie C., 'Are Women Selfish?', *The Woman Worker*, 19, October 19 1908, p. 468

Utell, Janine, *James Joyce and the Revolt of Love: Marriage, Adultery, Desire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Vicinus, Martha, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985)

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Auguste, *Tomorrow's Eve*, trans. by Robert Martin Adams (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982)

Wainwright, Terence, 'Female Suffrage in Ireland: James Joyce's Realization of Unrealized Potential', *Criticism*, 51.4 (2009), 651-82

Wånggren, Lena, *Gender, Technology and the New Woman* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017)

Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 2001)

West, Rebecca, 'And they all lived unhappily ever after', *TLS*, July 26 1974, p. 779

——, 'The Fate of the Drudge' in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 170-4

——, 'The Fool and the Wise Man' in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 79-86

——, 'The Future of the Middle Classes' in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 111-5

——, *The Judge* (London: Virago, 1980)

——, 'On Mentioning the Unmentionable' in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 202-6

——, 'So Simple' in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 70-4

——, 'Spinsters and Art' in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 42-7

Weeks, Kathi, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics', *ephemera*, 7.1 (2007), 233-49

Wicke, Jennifer, 'Henry James's Second Wave', *The Henry James Review*, 10.2

(Spring 1989), 146-51

——, 'Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and its Media', *ELH*, 59.2 (Summer 1992), 467-93

Wild, Jonathan, *The Rise of the Office Clerk in Literary Culture, 1880-1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, 1976)

Winning, Joanne, *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000)

Wilson, Elizabeth, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991)

Winthrop-Young, Geoffrey, *Kittler and the Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011)

Wolf, Maryanne, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (Thirplow: Icon, 2008)

Wolff, Janet, 'The Invisible *Flâneuse*: Women and the Literature of Modernity', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 2.3 (1985), 37-47

Wolfram, Sybil, 'Divorce in England 1700-1857', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 5.2 (1985): 155-86

'Women Clerks', *The Woman Worker,* 17, September 25 1908, p. 438

'Women Clerks — Remarks by One Who Knows', *The Woman Worker*, 22, October 28 1908, p. 543

Woloch, Alex, *The One vs. The Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003)

Woolf, Virginia, 'Modern Novels' in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), III, pp. 30-6

——, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), III, pp. 384-88

——, *Night and Day* (London: Penguin, 1992)

Wu, Wayne, *Attention* (London: Routledge, 2014)

Zimmeck, Meta, 'Jobs for Girls: the Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914' in *Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918*, ed. by A.V. John (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 153-78