Political Economies: Shop Girls in Fin-de-Siècle England

Tressa Morris

University of California, Santa Barbara
Senior Honors Thesis, 2002-2003
History Department

Mentor: Dr. Erika Rappaport

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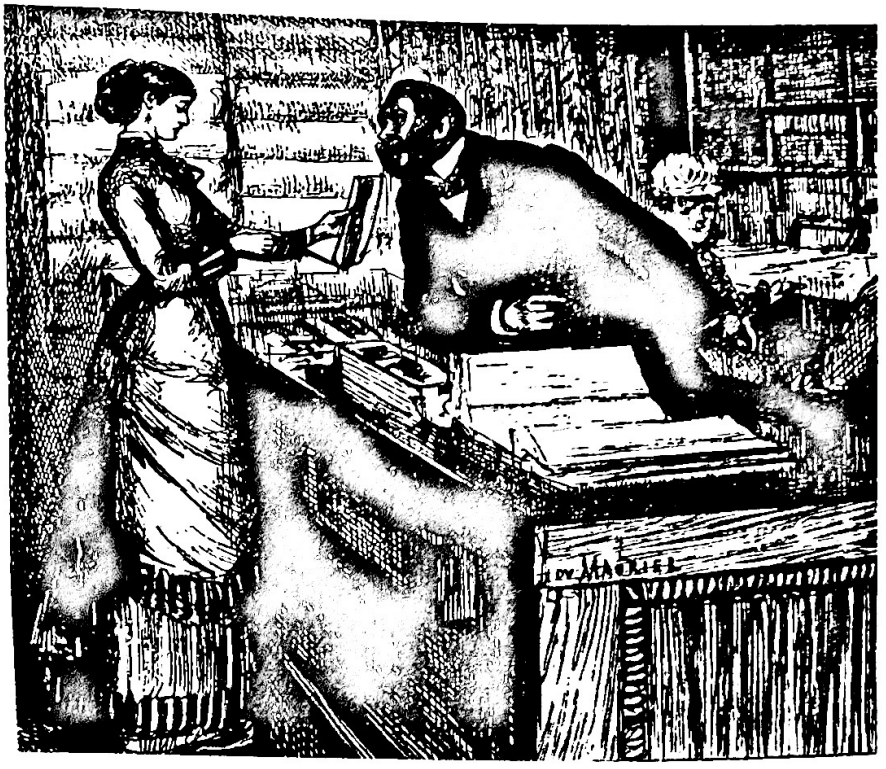

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Bret Beheim - he kept me sane when things were rough. I keep waiting to wake up because you make me so incredibly happy, every single day.

Abstract

Shop girls emerged in the Victorian period as an ambiguous group that was neither working class nor middle class. This ambiguity created social anxieties that questioned shop girls' social standing, morality, work conditions, and health concerns. The massive growth of consumerism in the late 19th century also relates to this new phenomenon of shop girls. By comparing key years in *The Shop Assistant* to contemporary novels and middle class reform agitation, two distinct models of the shop girl emerge. *The Shop Assistant,* a worker-based periodical, shows a group of organizing workers who struggled against their dire work conditions, wages, and lifestyles. Many contemporary novels and middle class reformers propose a very different model of shop girls that is much more pessimistic. This shop girl is entirely at the mercy of her employer, a victim in a luxurious work place that provides too much temptation for the girls. The second model is what secondary sources have picked up, but worker-based periodicals illustrate that the helpless worker is not entirely the reality. Through examining and comparing both models, the shop girl emerges as a topic that warrants further study.

Chapter One: *Background and Introduction*

> I like a shop where the assistants know where to find what I want without unnecessary delay. I like a shop where the shelves are clean and where they do not show dusty packages and soiled goods. I always patronize the cleanest shop I can find. I like to go into a shop where the assistants are anxious to wait on me, where they are desirous of showing me goods, even though I may not make a purchase.[1]

This excerpt, which appeared in a May 1914 issue of *The Shop Assistant*, identifies many of the key responsibilities of a shop assistant. Employers and customers required clean shelves, organized stock, efficient, orderly, and attentive service. Farm labor, prostitution, factory work, and domestic service were the primary occupations open to women in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. However, there was an explosion in the number of female occupations and working women. Shop work became one choice for female labor as the opportunities for female professions increased. The positions of teachers, barmaids, actresses, and shop assistants provided many women with new forms of work.

Late Victorian society faced new challenges from the expansion of international communication, colonialism, and the growth of consumerism and mass production, during a period of economic uncertainty. A new group of young women emerged who worked in large department stores, as well as in the smaller individual or chain stores. Though women had long worked in small shops alongside their husbands or male relatives, in the late 19th century the proliferation of large department stores altered shop work itself. By the 1870s and 1880s many women chose to work in these new department stores as assistants. Thus, the evolution of the shop girl began. These shop

girls developed as an ambiguous group that was neither working class nor middle class. This ambiguity created social anxieties that questioned shop girls' social standing, morality, work conditions, and health concerns.

Historians have examined the shop girl, but have studied shop assistants as they related to department stores, the living-in system, shopping, or consumerism. William Lancaster links historians' disinterest in the shop assistant to the relatively harmonious labor relations, the economic success of department stores, and the domination of the profession by female workers.[2] He also points to the lack of unionization within the profession as a cause for this oversight. This view does explain many factors of shop assistants' lives. Most shop assistants during this period were young women, thus the coining of the phrase "shop girl." Shop girls themselves were slow to organize. However, Lancaster fails to recognize that shop assistants became political and did attempt to organize. A worker-based periodical, *The Shop Assistant*, chronicled the growth of trade unions involving shop workers. This weekly newspaper clearly suggests that male and female workers did attempt to organize and that work conditions, wages, the live-in system, and identity issues inspired them to fight for change.

Overall, the historical and literary sources paint a picture of shop girls that is too pessimistic. Shop girls were much more self-reliant and vocal than many historians argue. The moral complexities of shop girls' public position did not plague the shop girls themselves to the degree that it confounded the public at large. They often chose to focus on their working and living conditions rather than the abstract ideas of morality and identity. Nonetheless, by the 20th century a political identity had emerged that was useful and practical for everyday life.

This paper attempts to illuminate the political identity and organization that emerged between the 1880s and the 1920s. First, I will examine shop assistant's work conditions and the current historical literature. This first chapter is meant to provide critical background on shop work and shop workers. The second chapter begins with a discussion of women's work in the Victorian period, which locates shop girls in the broader context of female labor. The primary analysis follows and examines novels, newspapers, plays, poetry, and autobiographies. I use George Gissing's 1893 novel *The Odd Women*, Katherine Mansfield's *The Tiredness of Rosabel*, and Cicely Hamilton's *Diana of Dobson's* to discuss shop conditions. A careful analysis of *The Shop Assistant* for the years of 1913-1926 follows. These works both absorb the public identity of shop girls and attempt to reach beyond the image. Shop girls' public image was problematic but also became a useful tool for the shop workers and reformers who fought for change.

Working Conditions

Despite its glamorous image, shop work was most often a grueling, dirty, and demanding life. Shop assistants worked very long hours in a physically arduous environment and received inadequate compensation. Outside of work, the employer imposed living conditions and food that were less than sufficient for a healthy lifestyle. Discipline was also an integral part of work and living conditions, as employers monitored assistants' selling behavior, attendance, and demeanor.

The length of the workday varied greatly and depended on the location and type of shop. Shop assistants labored from open to close. Some employees started work before selling hours or worked after closing to stock or design windows. Trade journals state the hours of labor as between 8 am to 9:30 pm, during which the shop girl would

wait on customers, fill orders, and maintain the counter.[3] This thirteen-and-a-half-hour day may also have been a low estimate with some assistants starting prior to 7 am.

Work hours were not only long, but physically demanding. Government reports estimated the work week between 75 to 90 hours in 1884, during which most shop girls were not permitted to sit at any point while on the sales floor.[4] Though an 1899 Act required one seat for every three female shop assistants, many employers imposed fines on shop girls who utilized them. Some employers did not even provide these seats.[5] Employers feared the customers' reactions if they allowed their employees to sit and felt the seats would encourage laziness.[6] The excessive standing led to many health problems and a generally poor constitution.

Shop girls' wages did not reward this extensive and intensive labor very well. In the 1880s shop girls generally earned less than a pound a week. While the elite West End shops paid between 18*s* and 1£ a week, the lower-class shops paid between 7*s* to 14*s*.[7] Some earned commissions, which could add a considerable amount to a shop girl's wage. However, on average shop girls still only earned 42£ a year.[8] These inadequate wages created a major issue for both workers and middle class reformers. Wages related to morality, which became the key issue in the debate over shop work.

The majority of shop girls lived in cramped, dormitory-like settings that were organized, and run by their employers. Shop girls complained of inadequate food, crowded quarters, dirt, bugs, and disease. Rooms were shared by at least two girls, sometimes with up to eight women in one small room. Shop girls had no input in their roommates and employers tended to arbitrarily assign living quarters. Other layouts utilized thin partitions in a barrack-like setup which allowed virtually no privacy. Due to

a lack of sanitation and cleaning, the accommodations often became infested with vermin and insects. The housing generally lacked adequate washing facilities. As one worker stated, "Our paupers (in workhouses) are in many instances better fed and better housed."[9] They were also subject to numerous rules, such as curfews and a no male policy. These deplorable housing conditions contributed to health concerns while the rules promoted a general sense of despair among the workers.[10]

However, while historians focus on the poor conditions, the shop workers themselves were more concerned with the real cost of the live-in system. Employers required shop girls to live-in, and then deducted a significant portion of wages to cover room and board. They then reduced operating costs to a bare minimum and provided deficient living conditions. Historians estimate that shop girls were paid only half their wages in cash because room and board consumed so much of their salaries.[11] Shop workers deplored their living conditions but felt the price they paid only added insult to injury.

The alternatives to the live-in system were not necessarily any more attractive. The shop girl could live on her own, in a bed-sit. Her low wages relegated her to cheaper districts that necessitated a grueling commute. The bed-sits were also generally cramped and dreary.[12] Shop girls could live in apartments setting with other workers but these accommodations tended to be crowded and inadequate for the number of tenants required to cover the rent. The very rare shop girl could remain at home, but this created its own problems. Shop work contributed to a generational gap that produced tribulations within many families.[13]

The live-in system accounted for the majority of employer provided meals, but some shop owners supplied all workers with a midday meal. In general, all employers provided meals that were at best insufficient. Most shop assistants complained the food was bland and poorly prepared. The food was sometimes spoiled, with the bread moldy and the meat rancid. As one shop assistant stated, "I have known bread brought on to the table a fortnight old, green and mouldy, and placed before the assistants to eat."[14] Not only was the food often rotten, it was generally inadequate for the requirements of work. Most employers also gave short meal periods that were generally subject to interruption if the shop became busy. The insufficient nutrition provided by employers forced shop assistants to spend a large percentage of their meager incomes on supplementing their diets.[15]

Discipline regulated shop work through a series of fines for mistakes, breakages, and not making a sale. These fines could deduct a significant portion of the shop girls already minimal wages. These fines were levied by floorwalkers, managers, and owners. Fines regulated the sales floor, as well as attendance, timeliness, and living quarters. The fines created a major issue, between many shop workers and owners including the owner of Whiteley's, a major London department store. Minor infractions could result in shop girls not receiving any wages for their 90 hour work week.

Shop girls also had to maintain a middle-class appearance while providing their own clothing. The public nature of their jobs and the client composition demanded a middle class image. While many employers enforced a strict dress code, others utilized a uniform. Many employers did not provide this clothing or uniform. They expected

shop girls to dress a certain way but did not defray the clothing costs this created. This forced shop girls to pay for clothes specially designed for work.

Shop girls faced difficult conditions at work and at home. Every aspect of their lives could be regulated and fined by their employers. Tardiness, absences, and even health, were all under the control of shop owners. The question emerges, why would anyone want to become a shop girl? While shop girls worked very hard and were paid very little, their position was envied by other working class women. Shop work was often viewed as glamorous because of outside appearances. Shop girls were well-dressed and emulated middle class behavior. Their jobs lacked the monotony of the office while the myth of the shop romance made marriage an imagined possibility for many. Many middle class observers, and working class individuals, did not see through the façade of shop work to the dreary reality that faced shop workers. Rather they accepted the image of the fresh, efficient, and beautiful shop girl at face value.

Literature Review

British historians have studied shop girls as they relate to the colossal growth in consumerism and mass retailing but have not adequately addressed the group's work and leisure practices. Some historians have studied the history of department stores and included shop girls as they relate to these stores. Similarly, Lee Holcombe's book on Victorian working women contains a section on shop girls. Shop girls as a group have not been adequately addressed; however, there are several models from America, Europe, and Australia.

Theresa McBride authored a vital study on shop girls in her 1978 article which examined the French shop girl's daily work and living conditions.[16] McBride quickly

surveys the history of the French department store and the feminization of this employment sector. McBride described how the department store could employ unskilled employees in the form of young women. These female employees received little more than room and board in the beginning, but could gain a salary and benefits with experience. However even with experience and skills, women were often excluded from floorwalker, buyer, or managerial positions.[17] McBride continues with a description of the work conditions, including long hours, strict regulation, compensation, and health concerns. McBride concludes that shop girls' position was precarious due to the harsh work conditions and strict regulations, with the added stress of their living situations being dependent on their work environment. Though McBride examines morality and dress, she fails to address worker politics or identity. McBride argues that French shop girls had become a part of the presentation that was "helping to create an atmosphere of service and contributing to the seductiveness of merchandise."[18] These young girls strived to be middle class but often lacked the formal education and class training to truly gain entry. The seductiveness involved in their work created a questionable morality that only contributed to their social isolation.

Jennifer Macculloch wrote a similar article on Australian shop girls during the nineteenth century. This article suggests that the rise of department stores led to the feminization of shop assistants. Department stores largely employed women because they were docile, cheap, and eager to work in shops. Many employers argued these women could stand the harsh conditions due to their short-term outlook on employment, as many saw it as a temporary occupation until marriage.[19] Macculloch also describes the benefits that department stores offered, such as sick pay, paid holidays, medical care,

and house discounts.[20] Her article clearly examines the work atmosphere of shop girls' lives but does not adequately address their leisure, politics, or work culture.

Two American studies that analyze department stores, shop girls, and the working class are Susan Porter Benson's *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* and Kathy Peiss's *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. These two authors had similar evidence but came to different conclusions regarding the strenuousness of shop workers' labor and regulation. Benson focuses more closely on shop girls and their relation to department stores, examining the shop girl's work conditions, regulations, and benefits. It is interesting to note that the American term for shop girls was salesperson. This term is far less demeaning than the English counterpart, as it does not relegate the women to a child-like status. Benson also concludes that the working-class female dominated department store employees due to their status as a cheap source of uneducated labor.[21] These women were regulated through dress, fines, and rule books. Many department stores put out rule books "to spell both expected conduct and the penalty for violations."[22] Dress regulations were used as a subtle way of controlling the workers while also enforcing clear lines of class distinction.[23] It was deemed necessary to explicitly delineate the customer from the employed. Benson also describes the benefits that were similar to the French and Australian modes, including medical facilities, discounts, and paid vacations.[24] However, she examines how the scheduled hours for workers did not reflect their true time spent on the job. The practices of breaks, split-shifts, check-in and check-out drastically lengthened the hours

of work for salespeople. But surprisingly she showed that these women were paid up to 2/3 more than factory workers after the age of 25. [25]

Kathy Peiss, examines young female workers in New York as a whole, addressing the retail industry in the second chapter of her book, *Cheap Amusements*. Peiss begins her analysis with the same description of department stores and the feminization of retail work. She adds the idea that the job was an appealing alternative to domestic service for many working class girls.[26] Peiss concludes that shop work offered more leisure time than domestic service.[27] While she cites the nine hour workday, this does not match the other historians' discussions of work. Peiss looks at the scheduled nine hours but does not take into account the other aspects of work that Benson discusses particularly well. Peiss also gives salespeople more power over managers than other authors. She argues that they could use their sales skills to manipulate managers as they did customers.[28]

While there have not been any British books entirely devoted to shop girls, there have been several articles that focus on the social anxieties and image of working women. One such article examines how society perceived women working outside the home and the feminization of certain industries. Ellen Jordan's article, "The Exclusion of Women from Industry in Nineteenth-Century Britain," examines the feminization of several industries and the affect of women in the workforce.[29] She states quite simply that women could be employed outside the parental home only if another means of control was in place. This was often in the form of living situations.

> Work for women was only considered appropriate when, as was the case with domestic servants, governesses, dressmakers, shop assistants, they lived in the household of their employer- subjecting them to moral

> supervision out of work hours, and receiving most of their wages in the form of room and board.[30]

However, shop girls still represented women leaving home and joining the workforce. These young women often started work in their teens and lived away from home in developing urban areas. As Jordan's article described, while many employers excluded women from industry, women made up 52% of dress employment by the early 20th century.[31]

These workers represented a new phenomenon where large numbers of women were employed and lived together. This created a fear of feminine sexuality because all previous familial controls seemed to disappear. Similarly, these women risked the loss of their reputation simply by being seen outside after a certain time of day. Judith Walkowitz describes the link between women in public with prostitution in her book *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London.*[32] Walkowitz explains how these shop girls and shopping women were seen as risking their virtue by entering the immoral domain of the public.[33] However, many shop owners sought to replace male shop assistants with female ones for financial and aesthetic reasons. As Walkowitz points out, these women were seen to enhance the seductive and intimate atmosphere of the shops. They were also seen to be more elegant and more capable of reading female customers' desires than male assistants.[34]

Walkowitz develops the link between women in public and street harassment to a greater extent in her article "Going Public: Shopping, Street Harassment, and Streetwalking in Late-Victorian England."[35] She argues that many people equated shop girls with prostitutes because they worked in public. She describes how men collapsed women into one general sexual category that allowed them to sexually harass women.[36]

While women felt they had the right to move through the city unmolested and feel as safe in public as they did at home, they could not ensure they would not be identified as prostitutes.[37] These "public women" were targets simply because they worked or enjoyed the public sphere. As women added to the seductive nature of stores, society sexualized them as well. Walkowitz mainly analyzes shopping women of the middle class and does not clearly separate them from shop workers. So while her work gives insight into public harassment in general, it cannot be directly applied to the working class but this no doubt influenced shop girls' public experience.

In *The Department Store, A Social History*, Bill Lancaster explores the evolution of the department store.[38] The "Behind the Counter" chapter focuses on the living-in system, work conditions, and employment concerns. This chapter examines the "economic, sexual, and political ambiguities of women's involvement in department stores."[39] Lancaster then describes the segregated and highly regulated live-in system. This system was a precise means of employee control that allowed employers to pay significantly less in wages. A majority of the shop girl's wage was paid in room and board but employers found ways to trim the costs to a minimum.[40] The cheap food and crowded conditions often led to bad publicity which contributed to the decline of the living in system.[41] The larger stores found other means of control through fines, training classes, dress, and the threat of immediate dismissal.[42] Lancaster also discussed the clearly defined hierarchy of workers and the relation of this hierarchy to the feminization of the workforce.[43] As Lancaster quotes, "Buying, selling, serving, and being served – women," embodies women's role in

department stores.[44] This is similar to McBride's idea that French shop girls became a part of the store's presentation. These shop girls became intertwined with the identity and façade of department stores.

Lee Holcombe's, *Victorian Ladies at Work*, also has a chapter that describes shop work in England. Holcombe traces the deskilling of the shop assistants job throughout the later half of the nineteenth century. She directly links the feminization of the profession with this deskilling, as a means to gain a cheap labor force.[45] Holcombe also examines the reasons women were drawn to the profession. Shop work offered an aura of middle-class respectability and was viewed as a step up from factory work. These benefits seemed to outweigh the harsh realities of shop work, which included fines, long hours, and excessive standing. Holcombe's conclusions are very similar to Macculloch's conclusions about Australian department store work. The historical evidence suggests that these conditions were not unique to the English shop girl.

Holcombe similarly describes the living-in system as providing inadequate room and board. However, Holcombe examines the social implications of the living-in system more thoroughly than Lancaster. She concludes the system left little opportunity for a social life due to the long hours of work, followed by strict living rules. Women had curfews and no men were allowed in the premises. This drastically shortened the amount of time any worker could spend in courtship.[46] Holcombe also criticized the living-in system for the lack of security. If employees were discharged, they also immediately lost their homes as well. This drastically increased the means of employer control over workers because they provided their homes as well as their salaries.[47]

Another regulation that hurt shop workers was the radius agreement some were forced to sign. These agreements stated that workers could not find employment in the case of discharge within x miles of their previous employer. Due to the multiple locations of many stores, this could entirely exclude shop workers from employment. Similarly, the tight geographic location of shopping districts would prohibit employment in other companies.[48] This feature is unique to Holcombe's scholarship, so it may not have been a widely spread practice. However, Holcombe makes a convincing argument for its damaging role to an employee's life.

Many of the authors discussed above also regard prostitution as a side employment of shop girls.[49] It was something the girls did when they were laid off for intermittent periods of time. Shop girls were also rumored to sell their bodies when their "honest" income slacked off. While few may have actually practiced prostitution, it was a generally accepted assumption that as a group they did. The sexual innuendo attached to the shop girl's persona greatly contributed to the moral ambiguity of her position.

Erika Rappaport's book on the West End of London chronicles the evolution of the shopping area and culture.[50] While the book focuses on shopping and middle-class involvement, it briefly discussed shop girls. Rappaport examines the phenomenon of the shop girl melodrama of the 1880s and 1890s. In these romantic novels and plays, the shop girl commonly escapes the grim reality of her work for the idealized domestic sphere.[51] In these "fictions" the women tend to find an aristocratic husband or inherit a legacy from some unknown relative. Both situations allow the shop girl to rise in class and leave work. The shop girl provided a perfect heroine for the plays as she, "captured the hearts of this diverse audience."[52] The idea of marriage was also picked up by shop

workers' literature. These plays encouraged the view of shop work as glamorous, suggesting the "girl" was sexy, beautiful, and happy while ignoring the grim realities of shop life.

While Rappaport does not fully explore shop girl literature, a Ph.D. candidate for the University of Chicago did extensive research of this literary genre. Lise Shapiro attempts to identify the experiences of shop girls' everyday lives. She also examines how the image of the shop girl was perceived versus how she actually existed.[53] Shapiro uses literature to examine how society imagined shop girls and their entrance into the public. Shop girls faced an "unregulated, public social space of leisure (that) explicitly provided a set of anxieties over her sexual and moral state."[54] While Shapiro's research is literary, she incorporates some historical tools. She gives a brief history of the shop girl that includes the living conditions, fines, hurried meals, and work regulations before using specific literary examples. Shapiro analyzes the intersection, "between fantasy, pleasure, and desire, and the operation within alternate life plots provided by genre of romance."[55] Shapiro, like Rappaport and Walkowitz, describes the department store as a display culture that emphasizes the erotic identity and object status of the shop girl.[56] These working women represented the stores and as Shapiro states, "the female worker highlights the centrality of sexual display."[57]

Several generalizations can be made from these secondary sources. Shop work became feminized due to the cheap labor source young women presented, while many of these young girls saw shop work as an appealing alternative. However, the poor living conditions the live-in system perpetuated and the long hours of work, combined to drastically impact shop girls' health. The very public nature of their job exposed them

moral questionability. These young women experienced a harsh reality in their attempt to elevate themselves from the working class.

The shop girl constitutes an important employment sector for working women, and yet lacks any significant scholarly research. Victorian women were ideally subscribed to the domestic role, but these working women were forced to leave the sanctity of the home. This created a host of social and moral dilemmas for the shop girl, her family, and society. While many of the 19th century primary sources have been analyzed, historians have largely ignored the 20th century. The trade journals, memoirs, newspaper articles, and letters provide ample primary sources to examine the labor and leisure of shop girls, as a topic independent from department store histories. Many workers felt exploited by the public, owners, and management. They felt that their profession took everything from them - their youth, their health, their time, and their wages. This key fact contributed to the development of shop girls' politics and identity, both of which have been largely ignored by historians.

Chapter Two: *Women in the Service Sector*

By 1851 almost 3 million English women worked, with the majority working in agriculture, domestic/personal service, and textiles. As agriculture shifted from a live-in workforce to outdoor labor, women were forced out of agricultural work, largely migrating into domestic service. Women have always been largely overrepresented in areas of unskilled, low paying jobs. The Industrial Revolution highlighted this and perpetuated already existing trends that utilized gender as a division for labor. While women worked outside the home throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the character of that work changed.[58] Increasing competition between men and women in the workplace contributed to familial and marital tensions, as women entered the workforce in greater numbers.[59] With an ever burgeoning economy, large-scale organization of labor began in many different areas. Service employment skyrocketed, including teaching, entertainment, and retailing. This provided more choice for female employment and contributed to the emerging "New Woman."[60] Shop work in particular moved towards a labor pool of replaceable, unskilled workers. The lack of education and skills required by many female occupations made workers expendable and encouraged the exploitation of a cheap labor force. Due to social constructions, employers could pay women significantly less than men so women often dominated these employment sectors.[61] In some areas of labor, the sheer economic growth created a need for employees that necessitated opening the area to women. The combination of these two factors created an atmosphere that provided much greater opportunity for female workers in the last

quarter of the 19th century. This opportunity challenged many of the accepted norms of separate sphere ideology which created an environment where women ideologically should not work but were often forced to out of sheer necessity.[62]

Teachers, clerks, barmaids, actresses, and shop girls are five key jobs in areas that provided many women with employment. Teachers and clerks managed to create respectable professions while actresses, barmaids, and shop girls still struggled to maintain an acceptable identity. Teachers and clerks earned somewhat more and were subject to slightly better working conditions. Teachers unionized, which provided job security while the other groups were not able to utilize effective organization. Clerks and shop girls unionized with some success, but actresses and barmaids had no significant organization. The education required by teaching and clerking provided the respectability that shop work, bar work, and acting could not.

All these women earned less than their male counterparts on average. The professions recruited women during a time of quick expansion that required cheap, but efficient labor. In shop work, women were seen as cheap because they did not have to support families. This theme is often repeated in the other professions. Many clerks accepted their low pay due to their temporary outlook. Barmaids and actresses often had no leverage to gain higher wages. However, it is only in acting that some women were able to gain prestige and wealth. Some famous actresses earned several thousand pounds for a season of work, which is clearly not replicated in the other professions.[63]

Profession	Wages Per Week	Wages Per Year
Teachers	---	72 £
Clerks	7*s* to 1£	---
Barmaids	8*s* to 10*s*	---
Actresses	2£	40-100£
Shop Girls	7*s* to 1£	42£

Many women strove to become members of the middle class through these professions. Teachers and clerks attempted to enhance their profession by increasing the educational standards and excluding excess workers. Shop girls, barmaids, and actresses emulated the middle class in dress and behavior. However, the mere fact that these women worked excluded them from the middle class and existing middle class values that glorified the leisured lady. As an actress, the woman's acting symbolized her fall from grace. In shops and bars, the questionable sexual nature of work precluded any attempts to maintain middle class ideals.

Teachers and Clerks

Between 1875 and 1914 the number of elementary school teachers exploded, with female teachers increasing at a much faster rate. By 1914, there were 165,901 female elementary school teachers in approximately 5,000 schools across England.[64] Many female teachers were recruited from working class pupils who were forced to find a profession to support themselves. The drastic increase in schools forced officials to locate an economically viable and ample source of labor. Women provided this cheap, but efficient labor source.

Female teachers most often came from the upper working class and the lower middle class social groups. The upper working class was generally skilled laborers and

is sometimes referred to as the labor aristocracy. Many upper working class families sought to promote their children to the middle class, while many lower middle class floated between classes. This overlapping and ambiguous social group provided a large number of women who needed some sort of employment to support themselves. Many families could support their daughters through adolescence but not until marriage. The average girl from this group would not marry until her late 20s. This left a ten year period, during which most girls had to support themselves. Families wanted to provide their daughters with a respectable and profitable career. While teachers were considered a lower middle class occupation, it was somewhat more respectable than other available professions.[65]

Teachers attempted to professionalize their job by increasing the required education to university level and tightening the qualifications. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) played a role in this though women were slower to organize into the union. The NUT attempted to curtail uncertified teachers and eventually fought for equal pay. Male teachers generally earned between £10-100 more per year than women. Many more men were clustered towards the higher pay scales as well.[66] These teachers worked long hours in crowded, dirty schools. They were forced to interact with working class students and parents though many attempted to distance themselves from such an atmosphere. Dina Copelman succinctly describes this difficult relationship between teachers' work and ambitions:

> Many women were already used to being in situations where this class position was somewhat ambiguous; where there might be considerable close contact with workers and their children; and where they would be both in a position of power and privilege and of powerlessness at the same time – all of these conditions were characteristic of labor aristocratic/lower-middle-class employment.[67]

This created a tenuous position for teachers who hoped to professionalize their jobs. Many female teachers desperately craved true middle class respectability even though the mere fact they worked forever excluded them from existing middle class status.

Business experienced a similar boom during the late Victorian era that opened up the clerk's occupation to women. When business was run on a fairly small-scale, women were all but excluded from a clerkship. This was not entirely due to poor education but to specific ideas about gender and property.[68] A clerk was seen as an apprentice who would one day open his own business, and this was not acceptable for women. However, with the rise of large-scale corporations that required much larger office staffs, the apprentice model no longer worked and most clerks never opened their own businesses. At the same time, technological advances made the work easier when the typewriter and shorthand increased in general use. The level of education provided by sound elementary school teaching also became sufficient for clerks. These changes made women a much more attractive labor source because they provided a large pool of economical labor.[69] Female clerks earned between 7*s* to 1£ per week in the 1890s but by 1914 the average salary had increased to 88£ per year.[70]

Female clerks received lower pay than men but often preferred secretarial jobs because the work was lighter and easier than many of their alternatives. However, they still suffered from excessive work hours in crowded offices with poor ventilation.[71] These women were not quick to unionize. Many female clerks also felt they were superior to manual laborers who often made more than they did. They often identified themselves with the middle class, though many came from the working class.

Therefore, many identified with employers rather than the union organizers.[72] The temporary nature of many jobs also inhibited unionism. Some female clerks felt they were only working until they married so they saw no need to unionize. The lack of job security and poor conditions were not so concerning to women who regarded their work as impermanent.

In many ways, clerks and teachers can be compared with each other much closer than with the following groups. These women came from a related background with correlating ambitions of middle class respectability. The sheer necessity of work excluded them from the middle class, while both professions attempted to increase standards, security, and conditions. Female teachers and clerks also experienced unequal pay with their male counterparts for the same work. Both groups of women were cheap, but efficient sources of labor for a profession that experienced a huge expansion which required a drastic increase of workers.

Barmaids, Actresses, and Shop Girls

Bars, department stores, and theatres underwent a similar expansion during the end of the 19th century. While they can be compared with teachers and clerks, the three professions are more closely related to each other. These women worked in public, as service or amusement providers. The public nature of their jobs created a sexual ambiguity that often linked them with prostitutes. Their sexuality was both an economic asset and a social detriment.

Bars provided an avenue of employment for women, located mainly in an urban environment. Women served as barmaids, in pubs, bars, hotels, and clubs. The expansion of the trade increased both the size and quantity of establishments that

required more workers. Women again provided a cheap but efficient source of labor. They were "less expensive, less clumsy, less wasteful and less corruptible."[73] Employers saw women as a way to increase their profits at a time when expansion was vital. Barmaids earned between 8-10*s* per week in the 1890s, which is the lowest paid group discussed.[74] These women were physically separated from their customers by the bar as shop girls were separated by counters.[75] The bar allowed these women to flirt but provided both boundaries and protection.

These women were also mainly from the upper working class and the lower middle classes, as well. Some barmaids came from professional, middle class families but they tended to work in more prestigious establishments. Many women chose this profession because it lacked the monotony inherent in working in an office.[76] With barmaids, there is also the popular myth that they always married well. However, the myth is much stronger with barmaids in the sense that they "always" married well and then prospered within these marriages. The social nature of their jobs made it possible for them to attract and to entertain middle class men.[77] The "saloon preserved the fiction of catering to the gentleman."[78] This contributed greatly to the myth that barmaids married well because it perpetuated the idea that the clientele was middle class and capable of supporting a wife.

Also similar to shop girls, barmaids suffered from long hours, fines, and regulations. They were subject to fines for breakages or pay deductions for laundry, as well as room and board. They needed to maintain a smart appearance, with their typical dress code being simple and all black. The barmaid was expected to be plain because sexual corruption was an ever-present worry for the employer and society. While

sexuality was a resource for the barmaid, it was also detrimental if their sexuality was too pronounced. The key to success was understated sexuality. [79]

Actresses also required sexuality, but it was a much more important asset to their profession. The expansion of the theater created a need for diverse actresses. This led to actresses from all classes, with salaries that spanned all pay rates.[80] This is not to say that acting was an accepted profession. Many still connected actresses to prostitutes, though there is much evidence to the contrary. This can be explained by the close proximity between an actress's workplace and a prostitute's. Many prostitutes worked in theaters and music halls, so the confusion is understandable. While some actresses became mistresses through work, or perhaps even married, the majority did not work as prostitutes.[81]

While many middle class women who entered acting were shunned by their families, some actresses avoided the financial difficulties of an acting career by maintaining family ties. These women were able to experience a surreal acting environment where their creativity and passion were nurtured without any of the hardships many actresses faced. They were however, still hired for amusement and lived a public life. This created social and moral difficulties. Many middle class observers questioned and condemned acting as a profession. They feared their own daughters becoming actresses, but simultaneously demanded more middle class actresses. As one author put it, "middle class ethos prohibited an easy surrender of middle class daughters to the stage, the growing middle class audience demanded their presence. This social hypocrisy became an issue of ever-increasing salience."[82]

Actresses suffered from the same social difficulties as shop girls and were also subject to similar career constraints. Most forfeited their careers upon marriage, unless their husband was an actor also. Retirement was often closely determined by age, and health was a major concern for many actresses.[83] Actresses and shop girls suffered from periodic unemployment due to cyclic patterns. However, actresses often averaged 30 weeks of unemployment during a year due to unpaid rehearsal time which is significantly higher than the average worker's four weeks of unemployment.[84] While some actresses earned more than men, the average actress earned far less. Some earned as little as 2£ a week. This is much more than some shop girls and barmaids earned, but less than teachers and some upper level clerks.

Chapter Three: *All That Glitters Is Not Gold, The Shop Girl Dilemma*

Figure 1. Ada Reeve as the "Shop Girl"[85]

Accepting the Image: Middle Class Discourse

Middle-class observers were obsessed with the figure of the shop girl. Fictional works, periodicals, newspapers, plays, feminist discourse, and even organized labor painted an image of the shop girl as a victim. The helpless girl was a victim of her environment and subject to sexual harassment by her employer and the public at large. Her public presence placed her at the mercy of her employer and other wealthy men. Surrounded daily by luxury, she craved a lifestyle she could not afford on her own. This increased her vulnerability because luxury tempted her to find other means of income, be it as a mistress or a prostitute. Of course marriage was preferable to either of these, but was not always a possibility. Though the melodrama and musical comedies presented the shop girl as a heroine of sorts, most other forms of discourse highlighted her immorality and ambiguity. Thus, the novels and plays on this subject created, and then reinforced, the image of the helpless victim.

One such work is George Gissing's *The Odd Women* (1893). This novel chronicles the downfall of a shop girl, Monica Madden, who finds a husband in an unconventional way[86]. The marriage seems doomed from the beginning, but Monica's morality creates the last schism in the damaged relationship. Monica is one of the three Madden sisters Gissing uses to analyze working women. The original six Madden sisters are left helpless after their father's untimely death.[87] By the time the story takes place, there are only three sisters remaining and Gissing uses the two elder sisters as key figures in Monica's struggle. Alice and Virginia work at very low paying jobs and sacrifice their health for survival. As governesses and companions, the women earn

little more than 10£ a year. However, the women are out of work for most of the novel and living on their meager savings.

Monica was apprenticed to a draper at fifteen and moves to London in her twenty-first year. It is here that the story picks up. Gissing decries the working conditions of shop assistants throughout the novel. He discusses the long hours and the excessive standing as the main evils of the profession.[88] As Monica puts it, "We suffer a great deal from that (no sitting behind the counter). Some of us get diseases. A girl has just gone to the hospital with varicose veins...Sometimes, on Saturday night, I lose all feeling in my feet; I have to stamp on the floor to be sure it's still under me."[89] However as the novel progresses, women's work in general is criticized. Monica's husband, Widdowson, is a major proponent of separate spheres ideology. After his marriage, he makes a very poignant statement: "Woman's sphere is the home, Monica. Unfortunately girls are often obligated to go out and earn their living, but this is unnatural, a necessity which advanced civilization will altogether abolish."[90]

Separate spheres ideology is the central idea that shapes middle class attitudes towards women's work. Middle class observers regarded women as domestic entities, wholly unprepared for public life. Thus, the unprepared women easily become victims when traditional controls and protections are removed. These ideas largely contribute to the image of the shop girl as helpless.

Gissing illustrates women's inappropriateness for public life through the Madden sisters. Virginia becomes an alcoholic, while Monica quickly breaks her marriage vows with another man. While Virginia is painted as the weakest of the three sisters, Monica's sin is far greater because she commits adultery of sorts. It is not clear if she

actually consummates the affair, but she plans to leaver her husband for another man Gissing contrasts Monica with Rhoda Nunn and Miss Barfoot. These two women utilize education and clerical skills to succeed in the world while they teach other women to improve their lots in life through a clerical school the women run. Rhoda Nunn summarizes her wishes for shop girls by the following:

> I wish (shop) girls fell down and died of hunger in the streets, instead of creeping to their garrets and the hospitals. I should like to see their dead bodies collected together in some open place for the crowd to stare it.[91]

Gissing portrays Nunn and Barfoot in a much more positive light, promoting secretarial positions for women. He clearly accepts the idea that clerical work is more respectable than shop work during this discussion. While Gissing's novel is a social criticism, it does acknowledge certain aspects of accepted work and gender norms. Monica switches work briefly before her marriage by attending the women's school. Her sisters want her to gain respectability and improve her health by entering the business sector. Gissing clearly accepts the idea that secretarial work was more respectable and less morally questionable for working women.

Monica's morality becomes an integral part of the second half of the novel. Her immoral decisions wreck her own marriage, as well as damage another couple's relationship. She also brings the reputation of a gentleman into question by refusing to explain her actions.[92] While all this is not directly related to her position as a shop girl, her profession is where her morality is first questioned. The public meeting between Monica and Widdowson would never have occurred if Monica was not wandering the streets of London alone on her day off. Similarly, Widdowson hates Monica's habit of

independence that she developed while working as a shop girl. He wants her to be a "proper" wife and stay at home with him.

From *The Odd Women*, a partial picture of shop girls emerges. Monica learned independence and spirit when she worked outside the home. Upon her marriage, she was unable to curb this behavior even at the request of her husband. Monica's "unnatural" independence created tensions within her marriage that directly contributed to her affair. Monica represents an image of the shop girl that scared and horrified many middle class reformers. Gissing carefully examines the long hours, poor health, and immorality that became key issues during the Victorian era.

Several controversies emerged throughout the last decades of the 19th century. Many middle class reformers focused on shortening the hours of work. While some sources cite work days of only eleven hours, most use thirteen-fifteen hours as the norm.[93] These individuals cite excessive standing as a physically detrimental form of labor cruelty. A West End physician published a large pamphlet on the health effects of shop work in the 1890s. He concluded that many shop girls' health problems could be directly linked to the excessive hours of work. Dr. Edis listed overwork, excessive standing, hurried meals, and insufficient relaxation as causes for many of the diseases that plagued shop girls. Edis joined the reform agitation to gain seats for female shop assistants. It was also his contention that

> Many of these young women are often compelled to throw up their prospect of an honest living in London, from their inability to endure the fatigue and discomfort caused by their incessant standing.[94]

Here again, morality is played upon. Edis claimed many shop girls were forced to be immoral, or earn their livelihood dishonestly, because their working conditions were so harsh. Edis definitely views these women as victims in need of protection.

Many women's magazines picked up this thread, perpetuating the idea that shop girls needed middle class protection. Early closing societies sprung up where the members pledged not to shop after 6:00 pm. This attempted to force owners to close earlier.[95] However, these early closing associations often had little effect as long as owners still found it profitable to remain open later. This did not stop women from continuing to write about the cruelty shop girls endured. Many such articles chronicled the downward spiral shop work forced upon these girls. The long hours and harsh conditions often ruined her youthful health and left her without a means of support, for in London "no money means - death."[96]

> If a girl is physically strong, she may be able to endure, for a time, the long days of work; but if not strong, and she does not show unusual business ability, she must quickly take an inferior position. Her salary is then reduced and she finds that the strictest economy is needed, if she would dress decently.[97]

It is interesting to note that middle class language infantilized the female shop assistants they intended to protect. The shop girl was not allowed adult status by her employer, or reformers.

While drapers often got involved in the debate, they tended to shift blame and yet also portray shop girls as victims. However the shop girls were the victims of the shopper, not the employer. Drapers blamed their long hours and strict requirements on the customers. Many employers claimed ladies expected to be waited on instantly, and would be utterly shocked to see a shop girl seated at work. The *Draper's Journal* put it

rather bluntly, "(lady customers) are responsible for mind agony that frequently results in wrecked lives and for wretched life histories."[98] Another employer cites "the folly of his customers" as the reason for enforcing standing.[99] Many shoppers expected deference and having a social inferior sitting would not be deferential.

Even as employers blamed their customers for harsh conditions they described the female shop assistant as weak and suffering. These employers admit the shop girls are "subjected to a physical strain which is more than the strongest constitution ought to be called upon to bear."[100] The drapers clearly recognized the ill effects of shop work but tried to negate their responsibility. It was the customers who created an unhealthy environment through their demands. The imperious, selfish women were the cause of the shop girl's plight. In this sense, the drapers are attempting to make themselves victims of the shopper's whim. But employers further victimize shop girls through their language and description. Another employer periodical, the *Draper's Record* portrays shop girls as weak. One article claims shop girls lack the strength to properly display merchandise. The author argues that female shop assistants cannot properly maintain the stock as well.

> Many retail firms , especially in the provinces, are represented in their dress departments by female hands...this is a mistake...it is a well-known thing that young ladies have neither the flexibility of wrist nor the muscular development of arm that are required to tighten a piece of dress goods. Therefore, they are little calculated to keep their stock in good condition.[101]

While this was clearly an attempt to discourage the employment of female shop assistants, the writer utilized the existing picture of the shop girl as weak to accomplish this. This departs from blaming customers but unmistakably highlights the shop girls lack of skills, strength, or usefulness.

The *Drapers' Record* also discusses early shopping promotions. The owners attempted to decrease crowding in afternoons by offering "bargains" between 9 am and 12 pm. This often backfired though, by creating a backlog of customers close to 12:00 pm.[102] The drapers are trying to deal with inconveniences of crowding while still increasing their business. However, the article does not show the drapers were at all concerned with their employees' difficulties with overcrowding.

The primary sources show a middle class preoccupation with shop work. However, a feminist paper illustrates the futility of many attempts to regulate female shop work. Madeline Greenwood argues in *Shafts* that regulating only women's shop work will merely necessitate their replacement by male shop assistants. She also argues that men are just as susceptible to exhaustion and disease as women in the same working conditions. This article focuses on the effects of legislation rather than crying for the protection of victims.[103] A second article, "Seats for Shop-Assistants Bill," supports the idea that men will replace women. "A small shopkeeper would consider that by employing one or more women he would be subject to the visits of the inspector to se if he provided proper and sufficient seats, and all such inspection is intensely distasteful to the retail trader."[104]

Rejecting the Image: Plays, Stories, and Working Class Periodicals

Katherine Mansfield criticizes the dreary life of the shop girl in her 1908 story, "The Tiredness of Rosabel."[105] The story describes the shop girl's difficult life, both at home and at work. A problematic customer ruins the day while the cold commute and sparse accommodations ruin the evening. Rosabel articulated that, "a scone and a boiled egg and a cup of cocoa at Lyons are not ample sufficiency after a hard day's work in a

millinery establishment."[106] Rosabel purchased violets which made it impossible for her to buy a good dinner. Some critics would argue that Rosabel chose finery over nourishment, but this illustrates her meager financial resources. She was forced to choose aesthetics or food. =Rosabel's dreary home contrasted with the finery of her workplace. This created a difficult dichotomy in her life. She wanted to be the wealthy customer who could easily afford nice things and food. The violets illustrate Rosabel's attempts to emulate middle class behavior.

Mansfield focused on Rosabel's day at work and subsequent daydreams. A thorny customer and her male companion ruined Rosabel's day and prompted her spiteful visions of revenge. They demanded a particular hat while patronizing Rosabel as the "poor dear." This enraged Rosabel with, "a sudden, ridiculous feeling of anger (that) had seized Rosabel. She longed to throw the lovely, perishable thing in the girl's face."[107] At home, Rosabel dreams she stole the man from the horrid woman and has a luxurious life. She imagines that after a brief affair, the two marry and Rosabel never works again. This common daydream emerges in shop life. The middle class or elite male shopper often became the object of these dreams which encouraged shop girls to engage in flirtation and coyness. These behaviors, in turn propagated the sexual image of the shop girl by middle class society. The man often became an integral player as he tempted the shop girl into immoral behavior. The man in Rosabel's story flirts with her and compliments her "damned pretty little figure."[108] While Rosabel ignores his compliments, they prove an interesting example of such temptation and the way in which shop girls were objectified. Rosabel's daydreams are filled with the luxuries she simply cannot afford. The violets she chose over food become a central figure in her

dreams. Food also bounds her imaginary fantasies. Sugar, milk, and cream give way to an inviting home and luxurious clothing. These things offer Rosabel an escape from the dreary bed-sit she inhabits after her demanding day.

Several plays at the turn of the century highlighted the growing debate over shop work: *The Shop Girl, The Girl Behind the Counter, Our Miss Gibbs,* and *The Madras House* are some examples. These plays depict the growing concern over shop work, as well as the difficulties in gaining sympathy due to the clothing, image, and behaviors of shop workers. One particular play, *Diana of Dobson's* illustrated the difficulties of London shop life.[109]

Scene from *Diana of Dobson's*[110]

The play chronicles a young shop girl's inheritance and subsequent squandering of this money.[111] Written by feminist Cicely Hamilton and published in 1908, this play helped expose the problems with shop work.[112] Diana inherits 300£ and chooses to live in luxury for one month rather than invest or utilize the money long term. She flits off to

Paris to shop and then goes to a small village to pretend to be a wealthy widow. In this month she falls in love with a man under these false pretenses. Diana does reveal the truth before fleeing back to London. However, her truth prompts the man, Bretherton, to give up his income and earn his keep.[113]

This play clearly represents many of the themes middle class reformers decried. But, through a careful reading of the play, working class identity emerges while illustrating the difficulties of shop work. These difficulties are presented from the workers' point of view through vocal, active, and strong methods. The opening section of the play provides a clear picture of shop girls while the closing section illuminates class identification.

Diana represents a struggling shop girl and through her language a much more proactive, vocal, and bitter employee emerges. She certainly is not the passive victim who accepts her lot in life. A major issue for Diana was the 127 rules that governed the living and working conditions. Diana realized at one point that if every fine were imposed, it would result in 1£ 15*s* 9*d*, more than she earned in a week.[114] She in particular was fined "3*d* for being late at the counter and 3*d* for unbusiness-like conduct."[115] The floorwalker levies these fines which creates a gulf between the shop girls and managers. Diana justifies her choice to sit down in the following passage:

> There wasn't a soul at our counter, and nobody about, and I was feeling dead beat, so I though I'd chance it and sit down for a moment on one of the seats which the government insists shall be provided...and I knew I was dead sure to be reported for sitting down in business hours – government regulations notwithstanding.[116]

From this, the audience sees the shop girl's view on government regulations and employer decisions. Diana visibly feared utilizing the governementally-provided seats

but her physical body required it. The ability for Diana to articulate government regulations illustrates an educated worker. She realizes her place in the workforce contradicts the Shop Seat Act but her economic dependence prevents rebellion.

It is only after her inheritance grants her independence that her total rebellion occurs. She rebels against her 13£ a year salary that resulted in "5 bob a week" after clothes, fines, and lodging.[117] This 13£ a year salary is significantly lower than the 42£ a year average reported by Hosgood. Hamilton most likely was citing the salary that shop girls actually received, after room and board deductions, fines, and any other employer enforced fees. Hamilton was obviously using this figure to shock and appall the audience.

After Diana gained her 300£ inheritance, the petty tyranny and regulations of the living-in system became too much for Diana to handle. She chose to take her money and have one month of pure bliss. "Now I'll have a month of everything money can buy me, and there are very few things that money can buy – precious few."[118] Though Diana realizes her money can only buy a few things, she values these things above prudence. She rejects the slavery imposed by working in a lower-class urban shop for the dignity and independence money provides.[119]

The conclusion of the play illustrates the gulf between those who work and those who do not. Bretherton, the gentleman Diana falls in love with, rejects his 600£ income to try to earn his keep for six months. After a few months of earning his keep, he and Diana see each other on the street. He treats her with a new admiration for her ability to support herself. His previous rejection of her working class status is erased. The pair are able to overcome the gulf that separates them through Bretherton's rejection of his

income. The play concludes with the joining of the working class shop girl and the middle class man. This recurrent myth of shop romance takes a new twist in *Diana of Dobson's*. She meets her future husband outside the shop when she is posing as a wealthy widow. However, the couple only comes together after her identity as a shop girl is revealed.

This myth of marriage attracted many to shop work while providing an impetus for others to remain in retail. The middle class husband provided a goal for shop girls during their difficult work. The entrapment many middle class observers tied to shop marriage simply does not exist in *Diana of Dobson's*. She does not take advantage of her imagined status to marry a man who could entirely support her. This clearly contradicts the idea that all shop girls schemed to entrap a husband through questionable morality. While the play provides some ammunition for middle class arguments, upon closer examination a complex picture of shop girls emerges. Diana rebels against her station in life to seize the opportunity of wealth and luxury. However, her identity as a shop worker remains intact even during her interlude as a wealthy widow.

The Shop Assistant

The Shop Assistant provides a wealth of evidence that stems from actual shop workers, as well as middle class reformers, editors, and writers. This magazine allows a thorough examination of the workers' own concerns and issues from their own perspectives. A typical issue included union reports, editorials, advertisements, rooms for rent, job openings, as well as education-based articles aimed at improving shop assistants' job skills. *The Shop Assistant* was devoted to many working and lower middle class jobs including clerks, dressmakers, shop workers, grocers, and porters. The

paper was sprinkled with issues that affect all workers but focuses on wages, and work conditions. *The Shop Assistant* also refers to female shop assistants as shop women, which differs from most middle class references to the women. This does not infantilize the women as many other periodicals did.

I examined *The Shop Assistant* from 1913-1926, these years illustrate a much more active and organized body of workers than historians report. The organization that largely occupied *The Shop Assistant* was the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks. The NAU boasted a membership of over 64,000 by 1924.[120] With many hundreds of thousands of shop workers employed, a membership of 64,000 was small. However, the union had a visible presence throughout the pages of *The Shop Assistant* that reflects its ability to affect change. The publication of union activities would probably also have helped to galvanize workers and educate them of the possibility of change.

Several other unions are discussed in Margaret Bondfield's *A Life's Work.* Bondfield worked as a shop girl in her youth and became active in unions and trade organizations during her twenties. She worked as the assistant secretary to the Shop Assistant Union starting in 1898, and this union also graced the pages of *The Shop Assistant.* She canvassed shops to recruit workers for union membership. While she recounts the difficulty in gaining union members, it is important to note that some areas had local union branches that had laid the groundwork before she arrived.[121] Bondfield related the activities of the Women's Trade Union League, the National Federation of Women Workers, and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers as well.[122] From *The Shop Assistant* and Margaret Bondfield's writings, unions clearly existed.

One key debate in *The Shop Assistant* revolved around the living-in system. The articles focused on the negotiations for staff to live out due to the poor conditions. The bulk of the articles appear in the earlier years, between 1913-1915 but the issue is visible through to 1926. An example in the "Women's Pages" of a January 1913 issue, discussed attempts at a live-out campaign in Manchester. Margaret Jones analyzed the effects of the lack of cooperation between male and female shop assistants. In this case, the employer abolished living-in for men but only "improved" the situation for women. Jones argues against the common union belief that "only where the women members were active did the women concerned enter into the fighting line with the men."[123] According to Jones, Manchester women were organized, in fact they were among the first women to organize and had a very active women's council. However, the lack of male solidarity and awareness weakened the cause of women's living conditions. The article shows a clearly organized group of women, capable of protest and action. This is a very different picture from the helpless victim portrayed above.

A cover article in January 1914 illustrated that shop assistants took an active role against living-in. The author describes the situation as "a long and wearying fight the shop assistants have made against living-in."[124] It is evident from both these articles that shop assistants did not accept the live-in system as a simple necessity of employment. Several articles throughout 1914 discuss another crumbling live-in system. In each article, abolishment of the live-in system was directly related to employment unrest and agitation. A February article describes the Shop Assistants' Union's success at ending the live-in system at the James' Brothers firm in Swansea. This chapter of the Shop Assistants' Union negotiated 12s 6*d* for those who chose to live out.[125]

> And so the Living-in system is tottering. Its very foundations are being shaken and ere long people will be expressing surprise that shop workers ever submitted to this remnant of Fuedalism.[126]

This conclusion illustrated the heart of the argument against the live-in system – feudalism and misplaced paternalism.

A 1926 article also described union negotiations for employees' ability to live out. According to an agreement with the Wholesale Textile Association (WTA), the staff only had to give a week's notice for their intent to live out. "The staff desire to live out, and application has been made on their behalf under one of the clauses...Those living in to live out if they so desire, by giving one week's notice to employers."[127] However, this was not being honored by the company. The staff referred the matter to the representatives of the WTA who negotiated on their behalf. This exemplifies proactive worker organization with specific goals in mind, mainly the end to forced living-in. These two articles clearly illustrate the complicit part of unions and organizations in gaining a live-out agreement.

When compared with secondary sources, *The Shop Assistant* creates an image of shop workers that is much more active and organized. Historians have studied only the live-in system of the 1880s and 1890s. However the periodical shows that cases of living-in persisting until the 1920s. Historians often tend to refer to the end of the system as more a product of bad publicity and rising costs of living, than as a result of worker agitation. For example, Christopher Hosgood addressed the live-in system in his article "Mercantile Monasteries: Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain."[128] Hosgood uses an employer statement to address the end of live-in. The employer pointed to independence and character as reasons why he ended his

live-in system.[129] He felt the live-in system degraded the dignity and character of shop workers. Hosgood does not discuss worker agitation in nearly as much detail. He does look at *The Shop Assistant* between the 1890s-1910s, so perhaps the worker agitation did not exist during this period. However, Hosgood leaves the reader with the impression that living-in ended largely by the early 1900s. Lancaster also does this in his discussion of the live-in system, placing the responsibility for the halt of the system on the employers' desires.[130] *The Shop Assistant* chronicles a much later end to the live-in system as well as a proactive role of employees in its resolution.

A major justification for the live-in system was the protection of shop girls' morality, which is proposed both by primary and secondary sources. These girls were living outside the family home, many of them for the first time, and thus removed them from parental supervision. Victorian fears of female sexuality compounded this lack of parental control. The living-in system provided a means of regulation because it regulated the living conditions, free time, and social behavior of its tenants. Sylvia Rosen, in *The Shop Assistant*, uses immorality as a reason for the live-in system. She points to the large number of women in the profession as well as their youth, "One has to remember that the drapery trade employs the greatest number of young women, in consequence of which one unfortunately gets the greatest amount of immorality amongst this class."[131] These assistants were inundated with questions about their morality and, she claims, some used that as an excuse for immoral conduct. One girl she quoted states, "Oh well, we drapery assistants have the name, so we might as well have the game."[132] Middle class reformers often accused shop girls of prostitution, as well as simple immorality. Some chose to engage in the behavior that the middle class expected of

them due to a lack of economic security. Prostitution provided an economic asset to struggling shop girls because it allowed them to supplement their incomes with an easily accessible commodity, their bodies. Some shop girls chose to embrace the labels rather than fight for their pure reputation. The individual quoted above obviously believed she was already labeled as immoral so she might as well gain something from this.

Immorality was also used in shop girls' campaign for better wages. A headline, *Dishonest wages make dishonest assistants*, bluntly lays out the argument.[133] The debate contends that if shop girls were paid more they would not be tempted to steal, lie, or sell their bodies. It is only the minimal wages that attract girls to other means of income. The author sarcastically comments,

> I sometimes imagine what a hullabaloo there should be if all underpaid assistants made up their wages each week to our minimum rates (which are low enough in all conscience) by helping themselves to their employers' stock.[134]

They were attracted to the luxury items they clearly worked day in and day out surrounded by. This prompted many to become immoral. The author was sympathetic to shop girls plight, but was careful to delineate where their support ended.

> I do not advocate that they should help themselves in this way, but they certainly should *help themselves*, and it is our work to show them how. The bulk of shop workers do not at present appear to have glimpsed the way nor realized their own powers in combination.[135]

This argument resembles that of the middle class reformer, but places agency in the hands of shop workers. However, *The Shop Assistant* pointedly used higher wages as the solution rather than protecting shop girls from villains or temptation. This stance is only one of many used to support better wages. More classic economic reasons are cited, regarding cost of living, social conditions, and skill level.[136]

The public's ability to accept the fresh, smiling faces shop girls were forced to project without looking further to question their actual lives contributes to the glamorous image of shop work. The dichotomy between the physical requirements of their jobs and the need to appear gracious explains the glamour of such a difficult position.

> She must not appear to be overworked or harassed or tired, she must always appear fresh, and smiling, and eager. For this reason there is a decided tendency to ignore the darker side of shop life, on the grounds, that the shop assistants do not show any obvious signs of suffering or hardship.[137]

This idea encapsulates a self-awareness the effects the requirements of their job have on the public's sympathy. This illustrates more than just a self-awareness, it demonstrates a growing class consciousness among shop workers. According to E.P. Thompson's epic *The Making of the English Working Class*, class identity occurs when a group can "feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to theirs)."[138] Here, shop girls realize the very nature of their job reduces middle class sympathy while it simultaneously separates them from the middle class. This galvanized shop girls as a group because it further isolated them from the middle class society many sought to join. The previous quote contradicts the idea that the shop girls appear haggard and exhausted only when they're mistreated. It was impossible for the public to know from simply looking at the face across the counter work if a shop assistants' life was endurable.

The Shop Assistant also reports court cases regarding wrongful dismissal and violations of the shop acts. This provides an important tool for shop assistants. The paper educates them on what constitutes a wrongful dismissal, at the same time as providing a vindication for the terminated employee. A July 1914 article, describes how

one shop girl was unjustly fired for stealing. She then sued for wrongful termination. The employer had no real evidence, and the plaintiff was awarded £100 in damages.[139] Another July article recounts how an employee won damages after a wrongful dismissal over a half-holiday dispute. The shop girl had made arrangements for her half-day off, but the employer refused to allow her to leave. The employer wanted to keep the store open but the shop girl left anyways and was fired. The court found employers could not change half-holidays without proper notice. "He thought shop assistants were entitled to make arrangements for a holiday when they were expecting it in the ordinary way."[140] These two instances illustrate how vocal employees fought for their rights, and how *The Shop Assistant* publicized these fights.

Shop act reports also provided employees with the specifics of the law they may not otherwise know. The young shop girl had little exposure to the Parliament, but this paper allowed her to gain a level of understanding about legislation that impacts her life.[141] One particular article summarizes the shop legislation from 1886-1914. This discussion concludes that while the legislation exists, many shop assistants were still waiting to feel its effects.[142] The tone of the article is clearly pessimistic, but it still provided a valuable resource. Legislation regarding work hours, early closing, and shop seats can only be effective if it is properly enforced and shop workers have to be a part of that enforcement.

The Shop Assistant fostered a group identity among shop workers through advertisements, stories, and poetry. Some inserts in the text also provide an avenue for solidifying the group identity:

> Where *The Shop Assistant* has the largest circulation there the members are the most militant. Cause and effect.[143]

> When you have read *The Shop Assistant* pass it on to a shop mate. Insist on your newsagent exhibiting a poster and displaying a copy of the paper in prominent position[144]
>
> Read the "S.A." regularly and pass it on to a fellow worker[145]

While all are definitely advertisements for the paper, they do foster a sense of class identity and strength. The paper assumes its readers have the ability to change the circumstances of their lives. This fact alone provides impetus for organization.

The poetry and short stories illustrate another aspect of this growing class consciousness. *The Shop Assistant* published works of well known poets such as Longfellow, as well as that of unknown workers. These poems fostered the growing class consciousness, as organizations and unions struggled for reform.

The Shop Girl[146]
I dread the light of the tomorrows dawn
And the weight of the future years
My life is blurred by a hope deferred
And my hands that rise to the sullen skies
Are wet with a woman's tears
I never may know surcease from woe
But I know of fortune's frown;
I am one of a score of thousands more
Who toil in the cruel town.
And the wolves of lust and poverty
Are waiting to drag us down

This poem shows not only a shop girl, but an educated individual. The woman uses pessimistic imagery to describe the shop girl's plight. It plays upon the predatory villains that middle class reformers felt lay in wait for working girls. Common threads of overwork also show up in this poem, as does the idea that this shop girl is one of many. "I am one of a score of thousands more," illustrates a clear identification with other shop girls. A second poem also promotes class consciousness.

Only a Working Girl[147]

I know I am only a working girl, and am not ashamed to say
I belong to the class of those who toil for a living day by day
With wiling feet I press along in paths I must tread;
Proud that I have the strength and skill to earn my daily bread.
I belong to the "lower classes" that's a phrase we often meet,
And there's some who sneer at the working girls as they pass them on the street.
They stare at us with proud disdain, and their lips with scorn will curl,
And oftentimes we hear then say, "She's only a working girl!"
Only a work girl, thank God! With willing hands and heart!

This poem illustrates a clear class consciousness through statements such as, "I belong to the lower classes." This is a comprehensible statement of group identity. The writer undoubtedly works on her feet and earns a living through labor. This working girl, however, illustrates pride in her independence. This poem is less pessimistic than the previous one but shows similar ideas and characteristics. She rejects the idea that working girls are somehow improper or worthy of scorn. The young woman gains strength from her identification with working girls and does not submit to the disdain of the middle class.

Another literary genre was short vignettes that satirized characteristics of shop life. One such story addresses the work of the Early Closing Association (ECA). The worker, Silvante, is relaying to her poor invalid sister the fact she now has to work all day on Saturdays. She links it to the interference of the ECA. Silvante sarcastically relays the ECA's position: "the public are respectfully asked not to deal at shops which refuse to consider their employees."[148] This blatant irritation at middle class interference into working class life was understandable when such interference often created more problems than it solved. The ECA sometimes caused change, but not necessarily change which truly benefited workers. Shop workers identified more with the problems of long hours and harsh conditions, than with the abstract ideas of middle class reformers.

Drawn by Macfarl.

AT THE SALES.

Lady Shopper (going without her husband): "Dear me, I do feel as if I was forgetting something."

[Reproduced by courtesy of "London Opinion."

Figure 2. Cartoon from *The Shop Assistant*, 12 August 1922, 667.

This comical cartoon hits on shoppers' characteristics. This illustration shows a well-dressed, elderly woman leaving a store with packages, but forgetting her husband.[149] This plays on many themes within *The Shop Assistant* about difficult customers. Many such articles throughout Victorian periodicals illustrate how employers and employees deplored the consumer driven women who made their lives so difficult.[150] While the cartoon is funny, it also exemplifies the group shop workers often felt they were fighting against. These women created the need for their employment, but also contributed to the harsh realities of shop work. The "angel in the house" middle class ideology of separate spheres many Victorians subscribed to also excluded shop girls from middle class life due to the fact they worked. The attainment of middle class

status was what many shop girls aspired to so this ideology was particularly detrimental to them. The "angel in the house" created both an ideal and an enemy for anyone who could not live up to it.

The Shop Assistant provides a wealth of evidence which stems from the workers' perspectives. By examining these sources, it is possible to reveal a proactive, vocal, and organizing group of shop girls. Though their public image created difficulties for social interactions, shop girls tailored this image as it suited them. The victim image that was perpetuated through Victorian novels and plays is clearly refuted by *The Shop Assistant*.

Epilogue

> The old type of shop assistant who trembled before the gaze of employer or shopwalker has passed away. The new shop assistant is far more competent, and consequently far more independent, than the assistant of a generation since. The modern shop assistant takes a pride in knowing not only his own particular department but also all the details of the stock of his firm. He understands the qualities and uses of the articles he sells. He is an authority on textures and can explain to puzzled customers exactly what will suit their purpose. He is able to tell what colours will blend and what colour a particular customer should wear. Often people would be dressed in far better taste if, after naming the price and quality they needed, they consulted the assistant regarding colour and pattern.[151]

This article from a 1921 article in *The Shop Assistant* illustrates the massive change that had occurred in shop workers' demeanor. While the sex is masculine, the ideas can be applied to shop girls as well because gender neutral terms simply were not used until very recently. From this excerpt, it is evident that the shop assistant was not weak and helpless. This shop assistant had independence, authority, and intelligence. The shop assistant of the past was alluded to, but it is apparent that reality had shifted. The shop assistant could give advice to customers, while *improving* the customer's habits and dress. This assistant was not entirely dependent on the whim of the customer.

These ideas are more fully developed in *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* by Madeline Henrey. This autobiographical fiction recounts the experiences of a London shop girl. Julia is the central character in the book and is based on Madeline Henrey's own life. Henrey uses a fictional store and location, but closely examines shop girls' home and work lives. She does not date the book, but since Julia is seventeen and Henrey was born in 1906 it is possible to tentatively date the book to 1923. From other aspects, it is also apparent the book takes

place in the 1920s. The fictional nature of this book does complicate the analysis, but it still provides a valuable source.

Julia lived at home with her widowed mother and worked at a large London department store. She quickly became a valued employee in her section and made friends with another shop girl. Through her interactions with her department manager, Julia's ideas about shop work were formed. The friend's, Edith, input also contributed to Julia's developing identity. According to Edith, advancement was the only thing that makes their jobs worthwhile.[152] Another statement from the manager in Julia's department more carefully defines a good salesgirl.

> Perhaps I should explain to you exactly what I mean by initiative. Initiative is to say frankly what strikes you about the merchandise and in what way customers react to it. When you have difficulty in selling something, when you are obliged to use a great deal of persuasion , that is the moment to come up and tell me. The smallest piece of information can be as vital to a store buyer as news of troop movements to a general in the field. If you wish to become a good salesgirl always imagine that you are not an employee but that you own the store.[153]

This salesgirl is very different from the victim-oriented picture presented in late 19th century sources. Julia developed this salesgirl persona, but also developed a dual personality that split between salesgirl and customer.[154] Her identity as a shop girl became only part of her identity as a young woman. Julia's work in the shop only reinforced her desires to marry and settle down. "The handling of artificial flowers at the store...made her wish ardently for a garden with her own."[155] Julia's dreams became more ambitious as her experience in the store improved.

However, Julia realized a very important truth about beauty and consumption. "The entire store revolved on beauty and charm in the same way as love was supposed to make the world itself go round. When people cease to make use of charm, thought Julia,

there will be no fun left in buying and selling."[156] This statement locates Julia in the sales world while illustrating an imperative self-awareness. She obviously realizes the nuts and bolts of stores and consumption. However, she expands the idea to the world while enjoying her place in this world.

However, even in this source old ideals of working women are prevalent. There was clear competition between clerks and shop girls. Julia and Edith discussed the merits of office work and conclude that shop work was far better. Shop work offered a commission, which provided a concrete explanation of the level of much work engaged in during the previous month.[157] Secretaries envied shop girls because they did not have to sit in an office all day and experienced the changing face of customers.[158] Still even after all this discussion and analysis, Julia feels girls were not mean to work at all. Julia may be a newer brand of shop girls, but she still holds prevalent gender ideologies and morality as truth.

The 1920s shop girl in these two sources was very unlike those encountered during the last quarter of the 19th century. Though secondary sources have not examined this shop worker, it is evident that the sources do exist. Madeline Henrey's book and articles in *The Shop Assistant* provide new information about the shop girl. The shop girl identity and persona changed throughout the Victorian era and these changes needs examination. Julia emerges as an interesting and intriguing example of this new shop girl that warrants further study.

Notes

*Cover Art from Lee Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales, 1850-1914* (Conneticut: Archon Books, 1973), 115.
[1]*The Shop Assistant*, May 23, 1914, 431.
[2]Bill Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995).
[3]*Draper's Journal*, May 27, 1880, 2; *Draper's Journal*, June 2, 1880, 7.
[4]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 110.
[5]Cecil Barrington, *The Shop Hours Acts 1892-1904* (London: Butterworth & Co, 1905), 1.; *The Drapers Journal*, May 27, 1880, 2.
[6]*The Draper's Journal*, June 3, 1880, 7.
[7]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 111.
[8]Christopher Hosgood, "Mercantile Monasteries: Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (1999): , 329.
[9]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 112.
[10]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 112-13.
[11]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 112.
[12]Katherine Mansfield, *The Complete Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (Avondale: Golden Key Press, 1974).
[13]Madeline Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl* (Great Britain: Aldine Press, 1971).
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[16]Theresa McBride, "A Woman's World: Department Stores and the Evolution of Women's Employment," *French Historical Studies* 10, no. 4 (1978).
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[22]Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 139.
[23]Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 140.
[24]Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 194.
[25]Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 201.
[26]Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 39.
[27]Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 40.
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[30]Jordan, "The Exclusion of Women from Industry in Nineteenth-Century Britain,", 288.
[31]Jordan, "The Exclusion of Women from Industry in Nineteenth-Century Britain,", 274.
[32]Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[33]Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 49.
[34]Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 49.
[35]Judith Walkowitz, "Going Public: Shopping, Street Harassment, and Streetwalking in Late-Victorian London," *Representations* 62, no. Spring (1998).
[36]Walkowitz, "Going Public,", 6.
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[38]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 3.
[39]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 5.

[40]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 126.
[41]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 129.
[42]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 131.
[43]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 137-38.
[44]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 171.
[45]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 106-08.
[46]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 117.
[47]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 135.
[48]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 135.
[49]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, Lancaster, *The Department Store*, Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, Walkowitz, "Going Public."
[50]Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
[51]Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 198.
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[53]Lise Shapiro, "Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1914" (University of Chicago, 1999), 14-15..
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[58]Roland Quinault Patrick O'Brien, ed., *The Industrial Revolution and British Society*, first ed. (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993), Chapter 2.
[59]For further discussion see Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (University of California Press, 1995).
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[61]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 104.
[62]For further discussion see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
[63]Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), 26.
[64]Dina M Copelman, *London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism 1870-1930* (London: Routledge, 1996), 33.
[65]Copelman, *London's Women Teachers*, 35.
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[68]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 141.
[69]Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, 144.
[70]Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 32.; Copelman, *London's Women Teachers*, 76.
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[74]Bailey, "Parasexuality and Glamour,", 164.
[75]Bailey, "Parasexuality and Glamour,", 157.
[76]Bailey, "Parasexuality and Glamour,", 159-60.
[77]Bailey, "Parasexuality and Glamour,", 161.
[78]Bailey, "Parasexuality and Glamour,", 163.
[79]Bailey, "Parasexuality and Glamour,", 161-62.
[80]Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 3.
[81]Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 80-82.
[82]Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 76.
[83]Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 53.

[84]Davis. *Actresses as Working Women*, 33.
[85]Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 199.
[86]Monica meets Widdowson in public, with no introduction from anyone. She struggles with how to explain this to her friends and family, but continues to foster the relationship with Widdowson.
[87]The other three sisters die from consumption, suicide, and accidental drawing.
[88]George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (1893), 27, 33.
[89]Gissing, *The Odd Women*, 38.
[90]Gissing, *The Odd Women*, 173.
[91]Gissing, *The Odd Women*, 38.
[92]Monica is seen outside Barfoot's house while waiting for her lover's return. She refuses to explain why she was outside Barfoot's house for fear of discovery. However, Barfoot's love interest hears of this and assumes he is the man Monica is having an affair with. She asks Barfoot to explain his involvement, and when he refuses, she feels this only confirms his adultery. The relationship between the two is irrevocably damaged.
[93]*The Draper's Record*, 27 August 1887
[94]As cited in Shirley Neale, "Arthur Wellesley Edis (1840-1893): Obstetrician and Gynaecologist," *Journal of Medical Biography* 4, no. 4 (1996): , 203.
[95]*Englishwoman's Review*, 16 June 1884, 295-296.
[96]*The Woman's Signal*, 26 September 1895, 205.
[97]*The Woman's Signal*, 26 September 1895, 205.
[98]*Draper's Journal*, 17 June 1880, 1.
[99]*Draper's Journal*, 27 May 1880, 2.
[100]*Draper's Journal*, 3 June 1880, 7.
[101]*The Draper's Record*, 27 August 1887, 57.
[102]*The Draper's Record*, 12 November 1887, 330.
[103]*Shafts*, July-Sept 1899, 25.
[104]*Englishwoman's Review*, 15 July 1899, 208.
[105]Mansfield, *The Complete Stories of Katherine Mansfield.*
[106]Mansfield, *The Complete Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, 524.
[107]Mansfield, *The Complete Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, 527.
[108]Mansfield, *The Complete Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, 527.
[109]Joel Kaplan and Sheila Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102-05.
[110]As pictured in Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 109.
[111]Cicely Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's* (The Century Co., 1908).
[112]Margaret Bondfield, *A Life's Work* (Hutchinson & Co, 1948), 38-62.
[113]Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's* 248-69, 95.
[114]Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's*, 5.
[115]Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's*, 8.
[116]Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's*, 12.
[117]Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's*, 14.
[118]Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's*, 43.
[119]Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's*, 63.
[120]*The Shop Assistant*, 13 March 1926, iii.
[121]Bondfield, *A Life's Work*, 51.
[122]Bondfield, *A Life's Work*, 57-61.
[123]*The Shop Assistant*, 13 January 1914, 4.
[124]*The Shop Assistant*, 17 January, 1914, 1.
[125]*The Shop Assistant*, 7 February 1914, 105.
[126]*The Shop Assistant*, 7 February 1914, 105.
[127]*The Shop Assistant*, 12 June 1926, 482.
[128]Hosgood, "Mercantile Monasteries."
[129]Hosgood, "Mercantile Monasteries,", 340.
[130]Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 127.
[131]*The Shop Assistant*, 2 August 1913, 501

[132]*The Shop Assistant,* 2 August 1913, 501.
[133]*The Shop Assistant,* 18 April 1914, 304-305.
[134]*The Shop Assistant,* 18 April 1914, 305.
[135]*The Shop Assistant,* 18 April 1914, 305.
[136]*The Shop Assistant,* 22 January 1916, 52.
[137]*The Shop Assistant,* 3, January 1914, 5.
[138]E. P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1963), 9.
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[140]*The Shop Assistant,* 25 July 1914, 501.
[141]*The Shop Assistant,* 5 February 1921, 92
[142]*The Shop Assistant,* 17 January 1914, 1.
[143]*The Shop Assistant,* 2 August 1913, 500.
[144]*The Shop Assistant,* 29 April 1914, 693.
[145]*The Shop Assistant,* 4 April 1925, 209.
[146]*The Shop Assistant,* 7 March 1914, 185.
[147]*The Shop Assistant,* 7 March 1914, 185.
[148]*The Shop Assistant,* 4 April 1925, 269.
[149]*The Shop Assistant,* 12 August 1922, 667.
[150]*The Shop Assistant,* 24 January *1925,* 63.
[151]*The Shop Assistant,* 19 February 1921, 130.
[152]Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* 85.
[153]Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* 68.
[154]Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* 119.
[155]Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* 167.
[156]Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* 196.
[157]Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* 213.
[158]Henrey, *Julia: Reminiscences of a Year in Madeline's Life as a London Shop Girl,* 141.

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