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"Woe to England's Manhood": Masculinity, Class and Liberalism in Britain, 1855-1874

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INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Era has presented, and continues to present, historians with countless opportunities to understand and discuss change in British society and politics. In a nation largely unaffected by the revolutionary currents of continental Europe, change manifested itself in terms of the forces that sought it from within. Movements and ideas which eventually became permanent fixtures of structures of change in the continent translated into muted liberal efforts in Britain, with the development of a robust popular politics being its main outlet. As politicians and reformers in civil society pushed for a more inclusive and liberal socio-political settlement however, much of the period's legislation ironically affirmed exclusionary discourses and conceptions of identity particularly as it applied to class-oriented gender. In this sense, the intentions and ideals of the period's self-professed "people's liberalism" were betrayed by a more pervasive desire to maintain certain social norms and normative conceptions of gendered behaviour. The period immediately following the passage of the Second Reform Act in 1867, the main focus of this project, examines how the discourses that arose and solidified during the Reform debates of 1866 and 1867 contained pointed preferences for a working man that was skilled, a father and a householder. As such, debates around Reform that touted the "ancient position" of the working class or considered working men "our flesh and bone"[1] all played into specific cultural notions of gendered behaviour that distinguished within class groups. The attempt to

[1] Elaine Hadley discusses the importance of Gladstone's famous statement in support of household suffrage, as part of a wider discussion of the Prime Minister's "embodiment of the liberal cause" though the mid-Victorian period in Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010). 330-331.

co-opt preferred masculine identities into the franchise therefore also necessitated a consistent rejection of those who did not fit the cultural requirements for enfranchisement – lodgers, unskilled workers, unmarried men and the poor. As a way of more completely understanding this century of great change and development this project asks questions of the legislation passed during William Gladstone's first ministry, from 1868 up to 1874, in an attempt to highlight the ways in which the Liberalism of the time often fell short of its promise of inclusion by elevating cultural notions of gender as restrictive clauses in a seemingly impartial "Victorian social contract".

Coming to terms with the function of masculinity during this period of popular participation in politics amounts to a contribution to the study of working-class movements and their successes in the 19th century. Indeed, the radical liberal movements of the 1860s find their roots in the sustained networks developed during the height of the Chartist movement from 1838 up to 1848. Divisions in Chartism, based on disagreements on whether the movement should focus on political or specific economic advancements, led to its sharp decline by 1848. By 1851, the Parliamentary Financial Reform Association had begun to absorb parts of the National Charter Association into its notably middle-class ranks, and by the late 1850s it was the largely middle-class National Reform Union which was pushing for an extension of the franchise in England. As such, the 1850s saw a lull in the development of working-class radicalism, as alliances based on particular Palmerstonian and Gladstonian conceptions of Liberalism brought "radical reformers" and "gentlemen of liberal views" closer together on the stage of political action.[2] It was only with the emergence of a solid trade unionist movement by the 1860s that working-class popular politics would become re-energized, although it would do so with a particular preference to the importance of labour in society, a preference which would be in turn coded into

[2] Keith McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*, ed. Keith McClelland, Jane Randall, and Catherine Hall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000). 83.

legislation expanding the vote in 1867. The emergence of a politically coherent middle-class liberalism, coupled with radicals' preoccupation with mid-Victorian governments' imperialist foreign policy, had left the universality and radicalism of working-class liberalism's promise largely blunted.

Historians of this period have widely agreed on the importance of 1867 and the Reform Act of that year to the development of popular politics and, more specifically, working-class identity in the final decades of the Victorian era. As alliances between working-class radicals and middle-class Liberals strengthened, masculinity became an essential criterion of citizenship and this was reflected in the Reform Act of 1867. Keith McClelland takes precedence in this sense, arguing that 1867 was a turning point because reformers "overlaid the idea of property in labour with cultural distinctions which differentiated between forms of working-class masculinity – between a sober, respectable and independent manhood and those 'rough' men."[3] Of course, as Catherine Hall has pointed out, Liberal alliances in the 19th century also preferred a distinctly white version of masculinity, in line with imperial ambitions and self-perceptions pertinent to the period. McClelland further notes that the "independence" which was noted as so crucial of the men desired in the franchise was based on solidly Victorian ideas of the nuclear family and traditional gender roles, whereby a man was legitimized in gendered terms by his ability to maintain his wife and children in the home. McClelland's more recent scholarship on the 1867 Act develops on traditional political approaches to the piece of legislation which discuss it in terms of its significance in the political rivalry between William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli, its impact on the 1868 General Election and as a crystalizing factor in the development of popular politics.[4] For Eugenio Biagini, for example, 1867 exemplifies the ultimate dilution of the claims for universal manhood suffrage touted by the Chartists. Noting the enthusiastic support of working-class reformers for the 1867 Act as a stepping-stone in collaboration with middle-class liberals, Biagini notes

[3] Ibid. 101.
[4] Ibid. 71-89.

that the "missing revival of manhood suffrage" can be explained by the legislative achievements following the 1867 Act which meant there was little appetite for further franchise reform. Biagini begins to consider the effects of the precedent set by the 1867 Act as set out by McClelland, but in ignoring the role of masculinity he misses sight of the way in which legislation during the first Gladstonian ministry continued to affirm such cultural notions of gender.[5]

The legitimization of "independent" manliness by 19th century notions of labour and its importance to the nation has been discussed at length by a number of more recent scholars. McClelland's association of the principle of "independence" with the prevalence of gendered attitudes which mandated the masculine form as being able to attain or preserve a state in which a man would be able to maintain dependents within the home was originally made in relation to the sexual division of labour in the 19th century. Noting the importance of "independence" to the Victorian man, McClelland argues that "the foundations of working-class men's position rested on their subjections to capital and competition within the labour market; but they also rested on the exclusion from subordination of women within capitalist relations of production and the dependency of women within the household."[6] Sonya O. Rose has made a further link to Victorian emphases on "respectability," arguing that "it was a complex value system, held by a wide range of people from varying occupational groups, that had its roots in artisans' and skilled workers notions of independence, the same working-class sources that originated the ideology of breadwinning for men and domesticity for women."[7] In the same way, sociologist Cynthia Cockburn has highlighted a mutually-legitimizing relationship between the values of specifically manual labour and masculinity, noting their "cross-valorisation."[8] Echoing McCllelland's

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[5] Eugenio F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone 1860-1880* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992). 288-295.
[6] Keith McClelland, "Some Thoughts on Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan' in Britain, 1850-1880," *Gender & History* 1, no. 2 (1989). 166.
[7] Sonya O. Rose, ""Manliness, Virtue and Self-Respect": Gender Antagonism and Working-Class Respectability," in *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1992). 149.
[8] Cynthia Cockburn, *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 1983). 139.

suggestion that independence was closely connected to Victorian values of family, Sally Alexander has gone further in noting that for male workers "their status as fathers and heads of families was indelibly associated with their independence as workers through 'honourable' labour and property in skill, which identification with a trade gave them."[9]

Inevitably, this "play on independence" that focused particularly on the importance of skilled labour as a legitimizing factor of masculinity and citizenship resulted in particularly exclusionary discourses which prevailed throughout the century. In his study of the politics of gender in 19th century Britain, Ben Griffin accurately identifies the tangible effects of the language of independence in the rating and residence qualifications upheld in the 1867 Reform Act.[10] He notes that "behind all of the debates on the franchise lay a set of ideas about 'manliness' which generated an imperative that the franchise should not seem to undermine the legitimacy of valued forms of 'manliness' by rewarding 'unmanly' characteristics."[11] Anna Clarke has developed the exclusionary aspect of this particular use of gendered discourse, noting that lodgers were excluded from the scope of the 1867 Act precisely because they were "without a settled stake in society" – in addition to recipients of poor relief, non-house-holding lodgers and bachelors were deliberately excluded from the new franchise because they did not demonstrate the principles of "independence" valued by reformers at the time.[12] Clarke summarizes the exclusionary effects of gendered notions of electoral citizenship into two strands, noting that reformers during the period either emphasized the danger of a violent working-class presence in the franchise, or focused on the intellect of working men as a reason for restricting their access to the

[9] Sally Alexander, "Women, Class and Sexual Difference," *History Workshop* 1, no. 17 (1984). 125-149.
[10] Ben Griffin, *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012). 229-249.
[11] Ibid. 231.
[12] Anna Clarke, "Gender, Class and the Constitution: Franchise Reform in England, 1832-1928," in *Re-Reading the Constitution : New Narratives in the Political History of England's Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. James Vernon (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996). 240-242.

vote.[13] Rose has discussed the gender exclusion and antagonism directly in relation to labour, arguing that the connections made between masculinity, skill and "independence" drove male workers responding "to attempts to introduce women into their trades by excluding them from their unions and their workplaces and by bargaining for gender-segregated employment"[14] – in relation to trade union activity particularly, gender antagonism based on cultural valuations of work-based masculinity is evident.[15]

While Griffin and Biagini have focused more deeply and broadly on policies and cultural developments in Britain during the second half of the century, Clarke and McClelland have focused specifically on the role of gender in the development of liberalism and franchise reform. Asides from a critical evaluation of newspaper material, McClelland draws on his social evaluations of mid-Victorian Britain to develop his argument as the importance of labour to "independence" and the consequent distinctions between working-class masculinities. Similarly, Anna Clarke draws on parliamentary papers and newspaper evidence to track the role of gender not only in the years following the 1867 Reform Act but through to the outbreak of the First World War. Despite McClelland's focus on 1867 and the years preceding it specifically, his analysis of the role of gender and class is more complete than in Clarke's survey. By taking into account representations of men and reformers during the period leading up to and following the passage of the 1867 Reform Act, McClelland provides a more solid idea of the way in which the Act crystalized certain discourses and assumption surrounding working-class masculinity in relation to the development of liberalism at that point in time.

Griffin and Biagini's much more expansive studies of the Victorian area focus deeply on cultural and political representations of working-class and popular liberalism during the period. While Biagini's

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[13] Ibid. 231-232.
[14] Rose, in *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England*. 144.
[15] Sonya O. Rose, "Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict: Exclusionary Strategies of Male Trade Unionists in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Social History* 13, no. 2 (1988).

work contributes greatly to an understanding of the forging of alliances and political identities in relation to emerging forms of Liberalism, his work largely ignores the importance of gender in these developments. On the contrary, Griffin focuses particularly on the role of masculinity in developing legal and franchise policy during the second half of the 19th century, but much like Clark his ultimate focus is on the way in which conceptions of masculinity and the desire to maintain its privileged status affected the struggle for women's suffrage into the 20th century.[16]

If a healthy body of scholarship exists in terms of the ongoing discussion over the role of masculinity and gender in class politics and the development of liberalism in 1867, a gap exists in terms of what McClelland qualifies as "the subsequent assimilation of the politics of the working man – both as subject and object of politics – into the working of politics after 1867".[17] While Clark, Griffin and McClelland together support the notion that exclusionary political discourses were solidified by the 1867 Act, a noticeable absence exists in terms of how these gendered discourses shaped the development of both policy and political organization in the years immediately succeeding it. The works of Sonya O. Rose Ben Griffin contribute largely to our understanding of particular legislation such as the Married Women's Property Act or the Trade Union Act, and Eugenio Biagini's in-depth study of economic policy builds on his extensive discussion of nascent forms of political organization, but none of these scholars track the influence of gendered discourses specifically throughout the major legislation passed during Gladstone's first ministry. As I will show, exclusionary discourses of masculinity which began to develop more forcefully from 1859 and by 1867 had become the norm in politicians and reformers' calls for enfranchisement. Precisely because the implicit preference for home-owning, skilled working men became so tied up with how individuals articulated Reform, the Second Reform Act's enactment of

[16] Griffin. See: Chapters 3 & 9.
[17] McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*. 118.

household suffrage represented a crystallization of political impulses that sought to qualify liberal progress by placing cultural requirements – in this case class-oriented masculine behaviour – on access to the new opportunities nascent of new liberal and Liberal approaches throughout the period 1868-1874.

Central to recent understandings of Victorian class and gender relations has been the notion of class cohesion and the diffusion of class-based tensions as an end of Liberalism itself. McClelland noted that working-class claims for parliamentary reform during the period following 1855 were based on the idea that "their entry into the political nation would entail the end of class politics" and that the selfishness of special interests would have their power of the institutions of the nation eroded.[18] Clarke agrees, concluding that "as a result of the 1866-67 Reform Act debates […] politicians hoped to incorporate working-class masculinity into the Nation and defuse class conflict,"[19] yet neither of these scholars engage substantially with the extent to which working-class masculinity was actually evoked as an intellectual concept when legislation and political organization occurred. Agreement on the importance of class cohesion is widespread however, with Griffin also noting that in the aftermath of the 1867 Act new "constitutional languages" did away with class representation and instead implicitly assumed the political system "should represent individuals, not groups."[20] Yet perhaps the two most significant contributions to this particular area of study belong to Colin Matthew and Eugenio Biagini. Matthew delivers an extensive economic study of Gladstone's budgets from the beginning of the 1850s to argue that the liberalism of the time relied on a "mid-Victorian social contract" where "the propertied classes and the working class confronted each other in the distribution of taxation, and Gladstone and chancellor acted as broker between them," thus reconciling importance of taxation to "right relations"

[18] Ibid. 94.
[19] Clarke, in *Re-Reading the Constitution : New Narratives in the Political History of England's Long Nineteenth Century*. 243.
[20] Griffin. 228.

between the great class of the State.[21] Biagini builds significantly on Colin Matthew's conception of the "social contract," drawing on other contemporary intellectual sources to suggest that Liberals by mid-century hoped for "a libertarian, egalitarian, fraternal and 'State-less' cantonal democracy, in which highly patriotic, independent citizens served the common good like unpaid representatives in local offices."[22]

This project takes the notion of the "social contract" as it may apply to this specific period in the Victorian era seriously, and seeks to understand the ways in which attempts to forge alliances across classes and institutions resulted in thinly-veiled exclusionary discourses and settlements. Expanding beyond Matthew's economic understanding of a "mid-Victorian social contract," I am interested in how reforming legislation in other areas of policy sought to negotiate settlements of equal citizenship for different groups while simultaneously maintaining distinctly Victorian notions of normative behaviour. Gender becomes my main focus in this regard – how exactly did gender become a restrictive, yet hidden, clause in the liberal social contract envisioned by the reformers and activists of 1868 and beyond? The notion of a "sexual contract" has been developed and expanded at length by Carole Pateman who has argued that the ability of a patriarchal figure to exert dominion and control over his household and dependents forms the foundation of the constructed equality of men as a group. Pateman's "sexual contract" cuts through the social contract as a delegitimizing clause in contractual attempts to reach compromises on equality and protection for all members of society.[23] Yet while Pateman focuses on the ways in which a social contract might result in the exclusion of women due to the naturally dominant position of male parties, this project focuses more specifically on the ways in which constructions and iterations of normative "masculinities" resulted in legislative discourses and

[21] H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-1874* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1986). 122-123.
[22] Biagini. 92.
[23] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988).

actions that excluded certain types of men. In understanding the function of masculinity in the development of admittedly Liberal attempts at reform and national cohesion, we become better equipped to comprehend the full scope of gender relations in the mid-to-late Victorian era.

Focusing on Gladstone's own desire to develop a nation where no "invidious" class divisions could be drawn, I focus closely also on the ways in which the language of impartiality worked to veil the use of gender as a restrictive clause in the Victorian social contract. A defining characteristic in the Liberal attempt to forge in Britain a society united by commitments to *laissez-faire*, low taxation and meritocracy was a continuous will to make distinctions within the working class. As Liberal and radical reformers spoke of "the nation" and the need to reflect upon it the virtues of the working class, they simultaneously distinguished between the working-class groups which they thought deserved the benefits of inclusion into the constitution. As such, attempts at impartiality – built into the reforming ideology of several key pieces of legislation during Gladstone's first ministry – implicitly rested on the distinction and exclusion of certain groups within the working class. Pressingly, it becomes clear that these distinctions were in fact made in relation to contemporary cultural notions of normative masculinity. Elaine Hadley has gone some way to discuss the distinction between these entrenched principles of Liberalism and the way in which they were "lived" by citizens, noting that Liberalism's "formalist utopianism" envisioned how "liberalism could happen in a chaotic, heterogeneous, unevenly civilized society, still largely in the grips of an aristocratic hegemony."[24] Gender in this sense was a mediating facet of individual identity to which political liberalism could attach restrictive notions of normativity as a way of navigating the complex contemporary context. As such, it becomes apparent that gender, and specifically the constructed notion of Victorian working-class masculinity, was a qualifying clause in the broader liberal attempt to eliminate undue privilege and value individual merit.

[24] Hadley. 179

A prerequisite for the ongoing public and political negotiation of citizenship for working-class individuals during this period was that they had to adhere to deeply-held notions of masculinity as it was valued by the state.

If the 19th century ideal of beauty was primarily an ideal of manly virtue it posed the ideal male as strong, rational and self-controlled, distanced from sexuality, emotion and any deviant behaviour.[25] While these values indeed applied as base requirements for normative masculine behaviour, as Sonya O. Rose and Keith McClelland have also argued masculinity came to be defined in relation to working-class spaces particularly, as these spaces provided political and economic support for the state. The "cross-valorisation" of labour and masculinity contributed by the second half of the 19th century to a distinct understanding of the virtues of the "working-class man" as legitimized by his work and social position. Those who were excluded from the elevated category of working-class masculine identity were numerous – lodgers, bachelors, unmarried men, those dependent on poor relief systems, unskilled workers, the '*residuum'* and, of course, women. Attempts to define "the nation" in terms of the virtues perceived in those who adhered to working-class masculine behaviour thus inevitably had the effect of excluding a sizeable proportion of the population from the "nation" in discourse and legislation. The dangers of this totalizing desire to elevate aspects of gendered working-class behaviour went unheeded by both Liberal reformers in Parliament and working-class activists outside of it. As Iris Marion Young has argued, "reducing difference to unity means bringing them under a universal category, which requires expelling those aspects of the different things that do not fit into the category. Difference thus becomes a hierarchical position between what lies inside and what lies outside the category, valuing more what lies inside that what lies outside."[26] Much like Young, Elaine Hadley has considered the

[25] George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (Howard Fertig: New York, NY, 1985). 31, 76-80.
[26] Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990). 102.

impact of politics in terms of the body. For her, the "abstract embodiment" of liberalism during the mid-Victorian period posited that the liberal man "could become liberated through 'free thought,' releasing him from the class distinctions, or from the hoary habits and devastating impulses that had for centuries consigned the masses to their subordinate fates, and instead constituting into him and through ideas that only then sought their public voice as opinion."[27] This "re-embodiment" of the citizen through liberal notions of rationality and orderly behaviour necessitated the establishment of normative gender categories as a prerequisite for coherence. In this sense, understanding the function of masculinity in developing Liberal approaches to class relations uncovers the reality of the gendered obstacles to citizenship that existed during the mid-to-late Victorian period.

A brief discussions of attempts at reform in the period before 1867 begins this project. Setting out the precedents for parliamentary reform provides an overview of what becomes an increasingly gendered area of policy from 1832. In Gladstone's failed Reform Bill of 1866 the languages of exclusionary masculinity are found actively and can be linked to what he himself considers to be his vision for Britain. I examine the 1866 Bill in some depth to illuminate existing gentlemanly anxieties about franchise expansion during this period and the role of middle and upper-class conceptions of masculinity on debates about inclusion and reform. The pressure from persistent opponents of reform, or Adullamites, and the prevalence of discourses which emphasized the unpreparedness of working-class individuals for the franchise leads to an extended discussion of the relationship between the moderate National Reform Union and the more radical Reform League in the years before the 1867 Act. Understanding the alliances made by these two organizations with Liberal reformers and each other helps illuminate not only the effectiveness of gendered discourses in political action but also the ways in which compromises made with huge enthusiasm by reformers betrayed original universal hopes for

[27] Hadley. 19-20.

manhood suffrage. An analysis of the 1866 and 1867 debates concludes that value judgments about the value of working-class masculinity were crystallized in the Second Reform Act, laying out the foundation for future policy decisions to assimilate the image of the working man into their ethos and practice.

Taking on McClelland's challenge to develop a more complete understanding of the function of the politics of the "independent artisan" in wider legislative programs after 1867, the second chapter of this work examines closely pieces of legislation which arose out of a distinctly Gladstonian impulse for reform based on merit and the elimination of undue privilege. Developing on Ben Griffin's work on the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, I propose that the passage of the 1873 Judicature Act also formed part of a Gladstonian desire to do away with "class legislation" and ensure equality before the law, while still upholding exclusionary Victorian conceptions of masculinity and working-class behaviour. I extend this argument in a discussion of Gladstone's Budgets since 1855 through to the end of his first Ministry, developing Colin Matthew's idea of the "mid-Victorian social contract" found in Gladstone's chancellorships by considering more seriously the language of Budgets as indicative of an enduring preference for the thrift, industriousness and orderliness of working-class fathers in his socioeconomic vision for Britain at the time.[28] Furthermore, the Cardwell Army Reforms are also discussed as part of Gladstone's vocal opposition to the purchase of commissions and widespread aristocratic corruption in the Army ranks, but opposition by working-class men to these reforms demonstrates once again the prevalence of cultural notions of masculinity in the ways in which men wished to conceive of the image of their nation.

Finally, I look at pieces of legislation to which Gladstone's government found it had to respond, given widespread demands and claims for reform from civil society and powerful local organizations. Here, the aim is to establish that while the discourses of normative masculinity were used and

[28] H.C.G. Matthew, "Disraeli, Gladstone and the Politics of Mid-Victorian Budgets," *Historical Journal* 22 (1979).

developed by the government in its legislative and deliberative processes, working-class reformers also drew on gendered distinctions of working-class behaviour in order to advance their political aims. This was a crucial part of compromises which seemed absolutely necessary during the period, as was the case with the Trade Union Act of 1871 which gave trade unions legal recognition but simultaneously illegalized picketing, drawing on pointed fears of working-class men's propensity to violence. The pressure put on the government to develop a national education system was also susceptible to discourses which highlighted the immorality of the poorest parents and the need for an educational system particularly for the children of skilled artisans. Here, the legislative process becomes deeply entangled in the complicated religious climate of the time, with the political rise of non-conformism and an increasingly anxious Anglican Church both vying for control over the structure of a new education system. I argue, however, that religious considerations came second to working-class claims for *political* control over potential educational opportunities. The rise of the temperance movement saw a renewed emphasis on discourses highlighting the dangers of alcohol to the "independent artisan" but the incorrigible propensity of poorer unskilled men to fall victim to addiction. As with discussions over education, the temperance movement drew from religious sources for its claims to political power over the lives and behaviours of working-men specifically. Insofar as the Education Act of 1870 and the Licensing Act of 1872 both represent exemptions to the enduring Gladstonian commitment to *laissez faire* and minimal government interference, these pieces of legislation still reflect the value placed on the protection and cultivation of a working-class masculine identity within civil society.

By focusing specifically on the period from 1868 up to 1874 this project attempts to draw conclusions as to the function of gender and masculinity specifically in the nascent forms of Gladstonian liberalism which developed during this period. Aware of the great wealth of press and private association sources from the period after the Great Reform Act my work draws on a wide variety of newspaper articles and organizational proceedings to detail the opinions and ideas of reformers in civil

society, as well as how these were received by peers and opponents. The importance of print media during this period has been established by a number of scholars, with Elaina Hadley specifically noting the importance of the newspapers for political visualization during this period – as images of Gladstone's as the "people's William" and his speeches were reproduced in the media, a tangible notion of the liberal political movement materialized.[29] Notwithstanding, the language of legislation and debates in Parliament is central to this enquiry, as I seek to establish how certain semantic fields were deployed and employed in the legislative program of Gladstone's first government. A combination of these sources results in a rich array of opinions and commentary which allows for the tracking of patterns and ruptures both within and outside the House of Commons.

The history of Liberalism in Britain is throughout the second half of the 19th century inextricably linked with the history of Gladstone's political strategy and intellectual vision for the country. As questions of parliamentary reform seemed to be settled by 1867, the Liberal Party had the opportunity to promise reform that was wider-reaching and enduring for large swathes of the population. Following the 1867 Act governments had a stake in developing legislation which included and relieved the most populous classes. Despite Gladstone's apparent commitment to this promise, however, it becomes clear that cultural notions central to the Victorian outlook on the structure of society were to prove unsurmountable obstacles to the promise of equality of opportunity and emphasis on individualism touted by Gladstone and his allies. As the terms of a social contract between the classes of Britain became forged throughout Gladstone's first ministry, it was the strength of individuals as *men* which would become the restrictive clause in legislation. Middle-class Liberals were ready to compromise on access to the institutions of the government for the working classes, but first individuals had to prove

[29] Hadley. 337.

their “independence” and “respectability” as men. The result was an inevitably unequal, gendered settlement that rested on thinly-veiled notions of class cohesion and social stability.

CHAPTER I
MASCULINITY, CLASS ANXIETY AND REFORM

In order to understand how conceptual language of masculinity influenced legislative and political action during the years following the 1867 Reform Act, we must first understand how attempts at Reform in the two decades before 1867 set important precedents as to how cultural notions of gender were drawn into debates regarding electoral fitness. In this chapter I will provide an overview of developments following the passage of the 1832 Reform Act up to 1866. Turning a more specific focus to the debates around the 1866 Reform Bill introduced by William Gladstone and defeated by an alliance of Adullamites – Liberal MPs staunchly opposed to any type of Reform – and Conservatives in June of that year, I will look at how the rhetoric of those debates and the agitation that emerged from them set the stage for an 1867 Act which enshrined certain notions of masculinity as acceptable in light of the constitution. Having laid out a framework for understanding the gendered anxieties that played themselves out in the language of reform for both the proponents of Reform and their opponents, a closer look at the 1867 Act will be necessary. Considering the mechanics and content of the Act in light of the political alliances and developments which occurred alongside its passage will provide us with a more specific understanding of the divisive impact and function of masculine rhetoric and the rhetoric of masculinity during this important chapter in British political history.

The period following 1832 up to the mid-1860s was characterized by the inconsistencies in method, language and demands employed by those seeking Reform at the time. The 1832 Reform Act split liberal pro-Reform alliances along class lines with its £10 property requirement and, although the Act did enfranchise up to 18% of the population, working-class radicals felt increasingly isolated from the contemporary political sphere. These radicals had come to lead the Chartist movement by 1838 but once again the movement remained divided over whether it should prioritize economic or parliamentary reform, knowing a staunchly aristocratic political establishment would not deliver both.

Despite these divisions the Chartists remained committed to expanding the 1832 Act and demanded manhood suffrage in no uncertain terms. But the demise of Chartism after 1849 heralded a broader decline in working-class radicalism throughout the 1850s. Both Palmerston and Gladstone drew on an alliance of various radicals, Peelite Tories, Whig landowners and a growing metropolitan press to develop an increasingly organized Liberal political bloc. Furthermore, much as Palmerston's performative foreign policy sought to undercut class tensions, what has come to be known as Gladstone's "social contract of the mid-Victorian state"[30] did much to quell working-class radicalism by reducing the impact of indirect taxation during his Chancellorships.

1866 and 1867 therefore represent important landmark moments not only in the history and trajectory of working-class movements and political appetite for Reform, but also in terms of the way in which these new demands for political inclusion were made. The calls for manhood suffrage that arose out of frustration over the 1832 Act were sidestepped by a new Liberal project that sought to de-emphasize class as a node of political organization. In this climate opportunities for gendering political demands for reform began to arise. If working-class individuals found themselves unable to organize around class, masculinity was to become a new universal language for political organization. As part of a broader attempt to explore the ways in which notions of masculinity played an essential role in the formulation of legislation during Gladstone's first ministry, it is crucial to first examine how claims for Reform developed and crystallized these conceptions of manhood in terms of electoral citizenship, and thus in terms of the constitution itself.

My project goes further than just attempting to identify the existence of masculine discourses in the political sphere. It also seeks to understand the ways in which masculinity was used to differentiate between separate groups within particular class groupings, specifically the working classes

[30] Matthew. 122-23.

in this case. I propose that labels such as "industrious," used to acclaim the working classes during Reform debates, inevitably demonstrates a preference for a man whose "character" is to be considered fit for access to the constitution. The development of the language of the "independent artisan," from 1859 up to 1867, would have a significant and distinctly gendered impact on conceptions of fitness for citizenship and legislative action in the following years.

Gendering Parliamentary Reform: The Reform Bills of 1859 and 1866

The Bills of 1859 and 1866 give us a preliminary insight into the way discourses around masculinity were solidifying as part of political anxieties over inclusion, character and social change. Specifically, the Reform Bill of 1859 demonstrates some of the ways in which the diffusion of class tension by establishment Liberals and Conservatives was coupled with a preference for gender as the unifying political language of Reform. Introduced cautiously by Derby and Disraeli, the 1859 Bill was a blatant attempt to shore up Conservative support in the counties while keeping the borough requirements high. As Maurice Cowling puts it, it was a Bill "to establish that [the Conservative Party] was in the van of progress and to ensure that any measures that were adopted would not do it electoral damage."[31] The 1859 Bill, however, had clearly been influenced by John Bright's vocal proposals from October 1858 which also supported a £10 requirement in the boroughs and differed only from present Conservative proposals in its support for enfranchising compounders. Understanding then that John Bright's 1858 proposals formed part of a much wider Radical platform that argued for taxation reform in favour of the working classes[32] allows us to agree with Miles Taylor's assertion that Bright helped connect the language of the "industrious versus the idle" directly to the matter of parliamentary reform

[31] Maurice Cowling, *1867: Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1967). 63.
[32] McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*. 98.-100.

at the time.[33] The double move is clear – first a concession to the working classes that alleviates but does not directly address their economic hardship, and then an emphasis on the distinct *characters* of the working man and that of those that impede his enfranchisement. By 1859 the Reform conflict was no longer between "aristocrat" and "pauper," it was between "gentleman" and "worker." Implicit in both Bright's proposals of 1858, and the Conservative Bill of 1859, is thus an attempt to shift power away from the "idle" upper-classes and to the "industrious" individuals who formed the active economy. The cultural notions of gender as interwoven with class perceptions that are evident in the Bill would remain and develop with the Bill of 1866 and the Act of 1867.

Gendered class distinctions between different types of working-class individuals were also central to Gladstone's cautious approach to Reform in 1866. In attempting to navigate a difficult parliamentary scene still dominated by the influence of the late Lord Palmerston, Gladstone was unequivocal about the limited nature of his Bill and the difficulties it was to face in the House of Commons. In the very first verses of his speech to Parliament on 12 March 1866 he notes that his Bill must be viewed as "middle-class enfranchisement" and goes as far as asserting that "The county constituency, when thus enlarged, will be a middle-class constituency in the same sense—nay, rather more strictly than under the present system." He delivers these lines in explanation of his proposal to ower the rating requirement from £14 to £12, and against proposals to bring it down to £10 which he argues will bring "not a more but less independent reinforcement of the county voters." The emphasis on the language of "independence" here is noticeable – Gladstone is looking for an "independent addition" to the county franchise that will reflect its current character: patrician, gentlemanly, ordered. Noting that indeed there were very few small tenants in the counties who could meet the £12 requirement, Gladstone argues that those workers who fall within the "newly enfranchised body" would

[33] Miles Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-1860* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1995). 334.

only "be tenants of small holdings of land in immediate connection with the landed class."[34] Again the importance that maintaining the middle-class county franchise holds for Gladstone becomes clear, and when he turns to the working classes specifically he demonstrates a preference for those with "independent holdings" – in proposing the Savings Banks franchise, he notes that those who make use of the capital loan programs are able "to amass their little stores by the time they come to legal age, and thereby, as, we think, to qualify themselves, and justly qualify themselves, for taking part in the choice of those who are to govern the country."[35] In the context of the principles of self-help and laissez-faire economics which delivered the Savings Banks in England, it is clear here that Gladstone equates qualifying for the franchise with the ability to sustain a business – a fitting extension and convergence of the language of "intelligence" and "industriousness" in reference to working-class men.

Gladstone's preferences become even clearer when pressed by John Bright as to the specifics of the government's amendment to the borough franchise qualification. To this, Gladstone simply answers "there must be a house; and if the house is inhabited by the man there is no stipulation as to its value; while if it is not inhabited by the man, it must be worth £6 at least, or one-half of the county qualification."[36] Here, we begin to see the way in which debates about "fitness" were intertwined with emphases on the importance of the household and fatherhood in society. Gladstone sees no reason to place requirements on the value of a house inhabited by a man but where the man is absent a £6 value requirement is placed. This is a clear example of the way in which cultural notions of gender and Victorian "character" were used as safeguards for what was beginning to feel like the inevitability of household suffrage. Drawing on conceptions of the domestic environment as one held together by the

[34] HC Deb 12 March 1866 vol 182 c30.
[35] Ibid. c32
[36] Ibid. c34

male householder who cares after wife and children is a central part of the exclusionary gendered language which legitimized some men over others in light of contemporary discussions about Reform.

Central to the reasons Gladstone's Bill was defeated is the treatment of lodgers and those who rented housing in London and the towns. Addressing this section of the population, Gladstone notes that "we must in that respect leave them as they are," noting that the annual rating requirement of £10/12 would be "an insuperable obstacle." Gladstone takes refuge in the fact that allowing lodgers who meet the £10 requirement would add only 35000 to the town franchise.[37] On this point, both Anna Clarke and Keith McClelland have agreed that the systemic exclusion of lodgers from the franchise formed part of existing preferences for men who could keep their own home and family as deserving of the vote. Bachelors in London who rented a home to be part of the intellectual and social scenes of the period were seen as a nuisance and thus not reflective of the character that was to be encouraged as part of enfranchisement efforts. It is clear that ownership of the house here was a main concern for this conception of reform; indeed, as he argued, a house-holding male may face "no stipulation" about the value of the property in the counties, but only a lowered occupation requirement.

This convergence of the emphasis on occupation, taxation and house ownership as presented in this Bill forms the starting point of my argument that the language and action of parliamentary Reform drew on class distinctions that gendered men and distinguished between forms of masculinity which could be legitimized with the vote. The ideological basis for this was evident when Gladstone argued registration bureaucracies themselves would sort the type of men that would end up enfranchised – for working men, the process of claiming the vote through registration "must be very burdensome," Gladstone notes, but "young men, such as clerks and men of business, familiar with the use of pen and ink, if educated and intelligent persons, and desirous of obtaining the franchise, will estimate the

[37] Ibid. c46

trouble more lightly."[38] This distinction – one made between men who work – assumes that the desire of "intelligent" working men to obtain the vote may be more substantial than that of the general "working man." There's a clear distinction being made about the uneducated and uncommitted worker who is concerned with the menial events of everyday life and the "young men of business" whose desires somehow do align with obtaining the vote. Gladstone develops this point, noting that the "sins" of the working-classes are "sins against themselves" and that, in such a context, it would be "a dangerous temptation to human nature to be suddenly invested with preponderance in power."[39] I will consider this idea of "preponderance" later but compare that sentiment with Gladstone's closing lines in this speech proposing the 1866 Bill –

"I believe that those persons whom we ask you to enfranchise ought rather to be welcomed as you would welcome recruits to your army or children to your family. We ask you to give within what you consider to be the just limits of prudence and circumspection; but, having once determined those limits, to give with an ungrudging hand. Consider what you can safely and justly afford to do in admitting new subjects and citizens within the pale of the Parliamentary Constitution; and, having so considered it, do not, I beseech you, perform the act as if you were compounding with danger and misfortune. Do it as if you were conferring a boon that will be felt and reciprocated in grateful attachment."[40]

Gladstone compares the enfranchisement of new voters to welcoming "recruits to your army or children to your family," terms which are deeply aware of power differentials and allude to paternalistic instincts in primarily institutional terms. This sort of language allows us to understand exactly which kind of men the reformers of 1866 wanted to enfranchise – those who would be thankful and would reciprocate in "grateful attachment." For this it was important to consider the "just limits of prudence and circumspection" according to which these men, strangers to the constitution, must be treated. Occupational, property value and rating requirements were exactly the way to identify those who fell within the limits of what Parliament wanted to "give." Thus when Gladstone pleads to the House to "consider what you can safely and justly afford to do in admitting new subjects and citizens within the

[38] Ibid. cc47-48
[39] Ibid. c58.
[40] Ibid. c59.

pale of the Parliamentary Constitution" he is really talking about the "educated and intelligent" working men who would return the "favour" of enfranchisement with "grateful attachment." What we must consider, therefore, is those who fall outside this "pale of the Parliamentary Constitution" – by definition, from Gladstone's own speech, it is easy to infer that these are those working men who have no stake in society strong enough to prevent their "sins against themselves," those whose human nature is "dangerously tempted" by power. In short, parliamentary reform at this stage was unwilling to enfranchise poor men, but not because they were poor but because they did not demonstrate the right character as *men*, much in the same way a man may be rejected from enlisting in the Armed Forces.

The key point of contention for this Reform Bill and those attempted after 1832 continued to be one of proportionality – how would the new franchise distribute powers in different parts of the country? Would the balance of power be shifted, at any rate? It serves our purpose to understand that the calculated ratios that determined the "preponderance" of a class in a particular locality was achieved through a set of normative judgments which made distinctions between working-class masculinities and took deliberate steps to draw boundaries against men considered dangerous to the constitution. In his proposal speech for the 1866 Bill, Gladstone himself went to great lengths to ensure fears of a working-class takeover in the boroughs or the counties were assuaged –

> "The effect of [this Bill] will be not to increase the relative share of the working classes in the representation, but, on the contrary, to diminish that share proportionately, because the influence of the working classes, represented by the very small freeholders, will form hereafter a diminished percentage of the entire county constituency, as compared with that which exists at the present moment."[41]

Indeed, as we have discussed, Gladstone was concerned with maintaining the "independent" power of the existing county voter against that of the newly enfranchised one. For opponents of the Bill who generally opposed Reform, however, his assurances were unsatisfactory. In a widely circulated and cited

[41] Ibid. c33.

article published the day following the proposal of the Bill, the conservative *Pall Mall Gazette* contends that the rise in the number of voters enfranchised as £10 householders in 1832 had been "incomparably more rapid than that of the population" and sums up the impact of the proposed Bill as "in the towns decidedly *democratic,* and in the counties decidedly *anti-aristocratic*" noting that the "preponderance of the wealthier and more educated classes in the boroughs" would be "diminished." This concern with "preponderance" is important because it is made not necessarily in reference to two distinct classes but in this case applied to a the working-class broadly – the *Pall Mall Gazette* also makes a calculated distinction between the kind of non-aristocratic men enfranchised in 1832, noting that "the whole of the 32 percent was composed of the very lowest, worst and most venal of the poor; and that four-firths of the 26% consist of independent and genuine ten-pounders."[42] The same distinction was made by supporters of the Bill who *did* want working men to hold the balance of power in elections. In one of its initial lukewarm reactions to the 1866 Bill, the radical *Reynolds's* resented that "the working classes have no independent political power," arguing that "in no single town in England are the working men so strong on the register, or so organized as to be able to return a man of their own choice, who may be obnoxious to the middle or aristocratic classes."[43] Here the term "obnoxious" is again used to make a moral distinction between classes which even *Reynolds's* will ground in the discourse of "independence" only, as we shall see later.

[42] "The New Reform Bill," *The Pall Mall Gazette*, Tuesday, March 13, 1866. The writer here makes a distinction between those who were originally enfranchised by the 1832 Act and those who have come to be on the voting register since. The charge against Gladstone is that he has miscalculated the numbers and class of people who have gained the vote, making this Reform Bill unnecessary.

[43] "Address of the Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot Association," *Reynolds's Newspaper*, November 23, 1862.

Anxieties and Alliances: Class-oriented articulations of masculinity before 1867

Before we turn to consider the ways in which radicals in the Reform movement articulated their support for an extended franchise by drawing on cultural notions of gender, it is important to consider the anxieties of the "Victorian Gentleman" of this period in light of the developing debates around parliamentary reform. The dominance of Lord Palmerston over the Liberal Party and its emergence and domination in the Commons during the 1860s, remained an important factor in the alliance of politicians from all sides even after his death in 1865. Having opposed parliamentary reform and the extension of the franchise throughout his career, Lord Palmerston instead sought an alliance with the masses through a performative and aggressive foreign policy, as well as extensive Civil Service reform aimed at including the working classes in the operations of the state. Following his death, however, Gladstone's change of direction with the 1866 Bill drew alliances against reform within the Liberal party itself. Leader of a parliamentary faction which came to be known as the "Adullamites," Robert Lowe was renowned for opposing Reform not on the basis that it would allow certain types of men into the franchise, but on the basis that it was unnecessary and unwarranted.[44] But even in Lowe's opposition to the 1866 Bill we see him make distinctions between the types of men who he would *least* like to see enfranchised. He suggests that even those who met the lower thresholds of £20-10 under the 1832 Act were the source of "great corruption" and does not see the benefit of "looking at the artisan" with the proposed £7 threshold despite assurances of their intelligence and fitness. Nevertheless, Lowe asks –

> "If you want venality, if you want ignorance, if you want drunkenness and facility for being intimidated; or if, on the other hand, you want impulsive, unreflecting and violent people, where do you look for them in the constituencies? Do you go to the top or the bottom?"[45]

[44] Homersham Cox, *A History of the Reform Bills of 1866 and 1867* (London, England: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1868). 45.
[45] HC Deb 13 March 1866 vol 182 c147

Despite the fact Lowe is ready to dismiss reform in any shape, he still makes a distinction here as to the different sections that may make up the working class. The "top or the bottom" paradigm is one which is implicit in politicians and reformers' approach to the reform question as they consider who should be enfranchised, but the significant fact is that this hierarchy is placed along cultural notions of gender which value certain types of masculinity over others. Ignorance, venality, drunkenness and intimidation are all qualities which railed against gentlemanly and parliamentary masculinities in Victorian Britain. For Lowe, these distinction between the "top" of the working class and its "bottom" may be irrelevant to his opposition to Reform, but the distinction remained a useful tool for him to demonstrate the dangers of expanding the franchise below the £10 threshold.

Another less adamant Adullamite, the MP Samuel Laing, made this point more clearly – for him, "it was evident that the present working-class £10 householders were superior men of their class. But if the franchise were lowered, others of not so high a character must be admitted to the privilege."[46] How could these politicians decide that high character could be capped-off at £10 or £14 or £7? How could such a rigid boundary be effective? The answer to this question must be that the threshold was a tool through which to exercise moral judgments about the "fitness" of individuals to exercise the vote; and when we ask what these moral judgments contained we can turn to these distinctions made by aristocratic politicians and their supporters. The conservative *Blackwood's Magazine*, a publication which remained opposed to Reform through the 1880s, acknowledges in its opposition to the 1866 Bill that "by their own industry and good conduct, so large a proportion of working men are winning their way to the suffrage both in town in country" but of course goes on to note –

> "There are working men apart from these [trade] Unions – too many, we regret to say – who seek as yet no higher enjoyment than can be found in excess of eating and drinking, and in sheer idleness. We do not speak, of course, of the superior order of mechanics and working men,

[46] HC Deb 12 March 1866 vol 182 c83

> among whom there is a great deal of intelligence, and at least as much of thrift, as among the small shopkeeper and beer-house class."[47]

The pitfalls of excessive and compulsive behaviour are juxtaposed against values of intelligence and composure in a way that deliberately excludes a great section of the working class, but the attack on drinking and eating behaviours are clearly gendered ways of excluding men considered temperamentally unfit for the vote. As such, understanding this language allows us to comprehend that when Samuel Laing says that "the moral aspect of the question must be considered," he is referring to a set of moral judgments which are inextricably gendered during this period and which make exclusionary distinctions among different types of men in relation to how they lead their lives in the context of the political state. These moral preferences are voiced by Laing himself as he considered the scientific origins of modern life later in 1885 when he wrote that a man who "by his industry and energy supports a family in comfort" and makes a happy home "has performed the first duties and tasted the truest pleasures of moral existence", whereas the "man who fails in this is himself a failure."[48]

This analysis of aristocratic attitudes and discourses of masculinity in relation to social behaviour, and as a qualifier for enfranchisement, is important to our broader understanding of the status of gender in mid-Victorian political society. It was precisely this constructed principle of "independence," as shaped and reshaped by its objects and subjects that I propose marked debates about electoral "fitness," and which I seek to trace through a period when questions of inclusion and national citizenship where coming to the foreground of the political scene. By 1866, the Adullamites presented an almost instinctual opposition to Reform that was occasionally reflected both inside and outside the walls of the House of Commons. Laing's speech was commended and reproduced by *The Pall Mall Gazette*; while *Blackwood's* notes that Robert Lowe's speech against the Bill "carried a crowded and breathless assembly along with him," and hopes that "thousands will thus have an opportunity of

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[47] "The Condition of the Government," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, April 1866. 533-534.
[48] Samuel Laing, *Modern Science and Modern Thought* (London, UK: Chapman and Hall, 1885). 312-313.

lingering in detail over the classic wit as well as the sound reasoning that pervades it."[49] Clearly, there was something about this particularly divisive and derisive discourse which struck a chord with middle and upper class men who had by this period developed much more unified and genuinely national avenues for the communication of a preferred masculine behaviour than their working-class counterparts, reading the same novels and periodicals and attending the same educational institutions that upheld a shared set of values and practices. As such, we must take their statements and distinctions seriously. Their rhetoric matters because, as Ben Griffin proposes, "parliamentary performance offered a way for men whose own masculine status was uncertain to claim the authority of the culturally dominant normative masculinity"[50] and, indeed, we are able to see this in their concern with who holds the balance of power and how they may behave. More broadly outside parliament this principle stands. Griffin notes that for the well-educated classes, "self-mastery" referred to the ability to control one's impulses and desires in honour of one's sense of duty, and the result of this self-mastery would be "a state of independence."[51] In light of this, aristocratic men's condemnation of excessive gambling and drinking among their working-class counterparts can be read closely as part of an exclusive narrative that elevated values of personal character among individuals considered to be adherent to normative aspects of "masculine" behaviour.

But then how did working-class men and those who championed the cause of Reform outside Parliament articulate their own claims to the vote? And in which ways did those claims appeal to exclusionary notions of social masculinity? In order to better understand the trajectory of the ideology of reform we must come to terms with the development of the organizations which agitated for it outside Parliament. Formally established in 1864 and 1865 respectively, the National Reform Union and

[49] "The Condition of the Government." 532.
[50] Griffin. 167
[51] Ibid. 174.

the Reform League had in previous years established networks in which the claims for Reform were aligned with social status and political action. Stark differences existed between these two organizations, however, and as leaders of the Reform movement they often contended with real tensions as to the identity and tactics of the movement. Fundamentally, these differences were grounded in the class of each organizations' members. The National Reform Union, known as a "strongly civic body with a heavy representation of merchants," drew on the intellectual liberalism of provincial England and as such its principal aim was to "provide leadership and exert power in the determination of public policy, and to display its strength by carrying the higher artisans along with it."[52] In contrast, the emergence of the Reform League can be traced back to the development of trade unionism in England. Indeed, its association by 1864 with the London Working Man's Association provided it with vastly working-class membership and leadership from former Chartists and Anti-Corn Law League organizers. As such, the tactics and aims of these two organizations differed broadly, with significant implication to how the desired levels of Reform were eventually articulated through to the 1867 Reform campaign.

At its founding meeting in 1864 in Manchester, the National Reform Union set its aims in stark contrast to the organizations which would later form the Reform League. The Union's first objective would be "to obtain such an extension of the franchise as shall confer the Parliamentary Suffrage, in Counties and Boroughs, on every male person, householder, or lodger, *rated or liable to be rated for the relief of the poor.*"[53] This differs clearly from early calls for reform in 1862 by the Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot Association whose aims were "precise and definite – namely, registered manhood suffrage by the ballot."[54] But by 1865 the Reform League had also departed from the radical demands of

[52] Cowling. 243.
[53] "Rules of the Reform League, 1865," in *British Working Class Movements: Select Documents 1789-1875*, ed. G.D.H. Cole and A. W. Filson (London, UK: MacMillan).
[54] "Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot Association" in ibid.

its predecessors – its constitution called only for "the extension of the elective franchise to every resident and registered adult male person *of sound mind, and unconvicted of crime."*[55] By connecting Reform to the payment of rates the National Reform Union was seeking to make crucial distinctions as to the type of man who should be allowed into the franchise. Equally, the Reform League sought to link the franchise to residence and homeownership broadly as a way of converging existing notions of social gender and utility to the working class to justify its eligibility to the franchise. The 1867 Act would crystallize these gendered distinctions by making the payment of rates the only requirement for the vote while at the same time emphasizing the importance of the father-householder. Abandoning and rejecting the notion of manhood suffrage in this important phase of political organization for the Reform movement meant boundaries had to be drawn as to who was to benefit from potential success.

It was in this ambiguous space left by the Union that access to the vote would become gendered among men, be it through rating requirements that placed the father-householder firmly at the heart of the political constitutions, or through other measures which could be supported by the "gentlemanly" classes in Parliament. The Reform Union's proposal to enfranchise only men who were "rated or liable to be rated for the relief of the poor" presented it, as the MP Ernest Jones contested, "too liable for all sorts of modification in committee."[56] The downgraded, ambiguous demands of the Reform Union can be interpreted as defining of the wider compromises the Reform movement was willing to make by the mid-1860s in order to settle the matter of parliamentary representation. This approach by the Reform Union's is extremely important because by 1866 the Reform League had decided to "fuse" itself with the existing "old associations" in the hope of becoming "united in one body."[57] This ambitious move to adopt the Reform Union would be significant because while the Reform League had a vastly organized

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[55] "Rules of the Reform League, 1865," in *British Working Class Movements: Select Documents 1789-1875*.
[56] "National Reform Conference at Manchester," *Reynolds's Newspaper*, Sunday, April 24, 1864.
[57] George Howell, "Reform League Letter Book, September, 24, 1867," in *British Working Class Movements: Select Documents 1789-1875*, ed. G.D.H. Cole and A. W. Filson (London, UK: MacMillan, 1965). 522-523.

and galvanized membership in the cities, it was the Union that was the "creation of Radical politicians" and thus formed much of the intellectual direction of the movement.[58] By 1867, the Reform League became the main organization adding the push for Reform, but by co-opting the structures and philosophies of the Union it had a distinctly different approach to political action by the time the Second Reform Act had come to the table.

In the context of this compromise made by reformers with regards to the centrality of character to franchise fitness, John Bright became central to articulations of working-class claims to the vote in relation to the development of the Reform movement by 1866. His relationship with the reform movement extended back to the mid-1850s, when he encouraged the politicization of workers' organizations around suffrage following the advent of Chartism. But his proximity to the National Reform Union must have been out of a preference for its more civic and corporate purpose, as well as its ability to draw on the particularly provincial forms of middle-class Liberalism in which Bright's radicalism often found political inspiration. For Cowling, the Union's intellectual leaders, such as Bright, "saw the social and political advantages of working-class complaisance" and equally acknowledged "the dangers to be feared from working-class hostility."[59]

By the autumn of 1866 the attempt by the leaders of the Reform League to expand its appeal and political legitimacy by drawing on the National Reform Union's speakers and infrastructure was in full swing. In a series of speeches by John Bright to mixed Union and League audiences across the country, the new tone of the Reform movement was set. In Glasgow, Bright exclaimed that "if a class had failed, let us try the nation," drawing on working-class resentment of the aristocratic political class by highlighting its "general corruption and putridity" as well as its "greed" and "luxury." Yet Bright also attacked the "ignorance" of the English pauper, and argued "we can only reach the depths of ignorance

[58] Cowling. 242.
[59] Ibid. 243.

and misery and crime in this country by an appeal to the justice, and the virtues of the people." In a similar turn of phrase referring to the political class, Bright makes the distinction between class and nation – he argue that the greed of the aristocratic polity "does not represent the intelligence of the nation, but the prejudices, the privileges, and the selfishness of a class."[60] It is essential for us to understand these distinctions, for by drawing on the notions of "justice and intelligence" that Bright sees in those who should receive the vote (i.e., the "nation") he draws boundaries based not on class but on cultural notions of citizenship. By doing away with "class" as a failed node of organization, Bright invites his audience to look to character as a legitimizing condition for the franchise. Insofar as a "character" was a crucial aspect of Victorian social behaviour and interaction, its content was specifically gendered to elevate virtues of fatherhood and homeownership[61] – read "independence" – over traditional attributes usually associated with class. In essence, cultural notions of gender carve out from the "nation" those whose class makes them seemingly unfit for the vote.

These cultural notions of "justice and intelligence" were inextricably linked to gendered conceptions of social status. If replacing "class" with "nation" was Bright's essential move in reformulating the language of Reform, his encouragement of cooperation was equally important for the movement's infrastructure. In a London speech in December 1866 Bright entreated the Union middle-classes to "rejoice at the noble exhibition, the orderly and grand exhibition of opinion which has been made by the working men of England and Scotland" and the League workers to abstain from violence in their pursuit of the vote, asking both organizations to "have no jealousies among each other."[62]

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[60] John Bright, "Glasgow, October 16, 1866," in *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by the Rt. Hon. John Bright Mp*, ed. James E. Thorold Rogers (London, UK: MacMillan & Co., 1878).
[61] Clarke, in *Re-Reading the Constitution : New Narratives in the Political History of England's Long Nineteenth Century*. 240.
[62] Bright, "London, December 4, 1866," in *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by the Rt. Hon. John Bright Mp*.

Emerging from a seemingly seamless union of these two organizations which differed in political deliberation was a solidification of normative conceptions of masculinity. In a political sense, the merging of the National Reform Union and the Reform League was political advantageous for Bright; as Cowling argues, by "destructively uniting" the government's enemies, Bright was able to put sharp pressure on Gladstone and Disraeli to include plans for Reform in the plans for government.[63] Yet more significant seems that in Bright the movement had found a leader who transmuted defiance of the aristocracy into an assertion of moral solidarity between the middle and working-classes. This moral solidarity, however, was ultimately built on gendered terms. The emerging alliance between middle-class and working-class men calling for the extension of the franchise was wrought in tension with the aristocracy, but also highly aware of its need to primarily present itself as respectable and independent, in order to be able to appeal to the dominant conceptions of desired masculinities imagined by Parliament and its constituent figures. Indeed, merely a day after the London speeches by Bright in December, *The Times* notes that even "the sturdiest Conservative must be willing to admit, that the more intelligent mechanics are at least the equals, in all that constitutes good citizens, of the small shopkeepers who now possess the franchise," and praises the audiences of the new united Reform movement as "respectable people, with a large admixture of 'rough' elements."[64] This perception of the fused movements plays directly into the cultural importance of intelligence as derived from a specific profession and its role in defining a "respectable" man who deserves the vote. For a staunchly establishment paper such as *The Times* this is such an evident fact that even *the sturdiest Conservative* must accept it.

At this point it is worthwhile considering how much claims for reform had been downplayed and rearticulated by 1866. In 1862 when the Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot Association was formed,

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[63] Cowling. 250.
[64] "The Demonstration of Monday Was Appropriately," *The Times*, Wednesday, December 5, 1866.

it was precisely the sort of union with the National Reform Union that was feared. Their pursuit for unqualified manhood suffrage was a part of their commitment to "be able more effectually to secure our legitimate demands as Unionists" and was strongly opposed to "turn our trades societies into political organizations."[65] This conception of obtaining reform for workers *as* workers seems largely absent by 1866 after the Reform League and National Reform Union took to the stage. The desire by *workers* to extend the franchise for *all men* seems to have been replaced by a need to appear as desired intelligent and *independent workers* in order to be able to gain the vote *just* for those who fell within the boundaries of that newly-emphasized category, largely promoted by the Reform movement itself. This shift holds importance throughout the period because the call for "manhood" suffrage would essentially become one of suffrage only for the adult male who was socially useful. This is a trend that would endure well into the 1880s, with the absence of demands or appetite for manhood suffrage defining the political sphere under Gladstone and Disraeli in the 1870.[66]

This shift experienced in terms of the language of Reform can be somewhat explained in relation to the function of trade unions within the movement. The Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot Association drew on its trade union connections because of the growing strength and influence that the Trade Unionist movement carried in relation to reform in the development of mid-1860s claims for Reform. McClelland writes that it was the "centrality of organization, and especially trade union organization" was crucial to the growth of the Reform movement on a national level. Of course, it is important to note, as McClelland emphasizes, that it was not only the artisan trades and trade unions which participated in the activities of the Reform League in 1866-7, but also members of 'aristocratic' trades and trade unions.[67] The mixture of professions and class backgrounds forms part of the alliance

[65] "Address of the Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot Association."
[66] Biagini. 275-296.
[67] McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*. 112-113.

formed from 1865 and helped the entire movement gain the cultural legitimacy on which it built its political demands. Yet as Harold Benenson points out, men's political associations in the Chartist movement and in union activity strengthened their shared identity as men and promoted their common identification as family providers.[68] This would have been more of a necessity for union members from the 'lower trades' as they sought to live up to the expectations of masculinity set by the middle-class reformers and match that of those who were readily conceived of as belonging to the "intelligent" professions, but the language embraced by men from across the trade union and reform movements broadly suggests masculinity was a very prevalent if unspoken concern. As a shipwright in Tyneside said in 1851 during a dispute with his employers, unison between workers was necessary in order to not "submit to be treated as they have been […] if they do, they will unman themselves very much."[69] As Sonya O. Rose notes, "Being the head of a family, and a skilled worker, surely meant valuing their own individual independence, but prior to industrial transformation it is unlikely that men were expected to shoulder the full burden of economic responsibility for their families throughout the family life-cycle,"[70] and as such, the Trade Union presented working-class men with a unique opportunity to defend and articulate their masculinity away from the concerns with respectability and orderliness emphasized by middle-class and upper-class liberals. This all changed as the unionist approach to Reform, along with its demands for manhood suffrage and radicalizing power within the early Reform League, was swallowed up by the alliance with the middle-class approach from 1865. Deemphasizing Trade Union participation and association in the struggle for Reform was a key aspect of the compromise wrought in the mid-1860s.

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[68] Harold Benenson, "Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx's Theory of the Working Class," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 25 (1984). 1-23.
[69] "A Shipwright on the Tyne," *Newcastle Chronicle*, March 14, 1851.
[70] Rose, "Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict: Exclusionary Strategies of Male Trade Unionists in Nineteenth-Century Britain." 202.

Forging the Second Reform Act: Agitation and Masculinity in and around the Reform Act of 1867

The events of 1866 certainly had the effect of affirming the terms on which the Reform League sought expansion of the franchise for its members, as McClelland shows, but in terms of the nature of the discourse surrounding Reform the Hyde Park riots of that summer also had the effect of putting the contending class-oriented masculinities in dialogue with each other. By 1866 the solidification of the Reform movement also began to pose a more united opposition to the blossoming prospect of a Conservative ministry if Gladstone's Bill were to fail. Once it did, the Reform League incited its members to march on Hyde Park, to put pressure on the newly-formed Conservative ministry and to ensure the Reform question was still attended to even after Gladstone's defeat. Under these circumstances the July demonstration in Hyde Park became a contentious space in which the working men of the Reform League and the established gentlemen at the head of government as well as the police would negotiate their perceptions of each other in terms of their behaviour and (potential) access to government. Sir Richard Mayne's surprisingly harsh notice to Edmund Beales that the Hyde Park meeting should not go ahead cites as the main reason that the "large numbers of persons is calculated to lead to riotous and disorderly conduct, and to endanger the public peace."[71] This is striking because large demonstrations occurred in Hyde Park with frequency during this period, and suggests to us that Sir Richard's concern with the meeting had to do more with his perception of the character of these men – they were incapable of orderly political demonstration, prone to destructive and reprehensible behaviour. Edmund Beales contends precisely on this point of fitness for political participation in his response to Sir Richard. He notes that the Reform League's men are demonstrating precisely "to show that they do care for the franchise, and thus refute the aspersions cast upon them."[72] As such, the demonstration in Hyde Park

[71] "Attempt of the Tory Government to Suppress the Right of Public Meeting," *Reynolds's Newspaper*, July 22 1866.
[72] Ibid.

became a way for these contending expressions of masculinity to model actions and responses directly in relation to ideas of fitness for political participation. For Sir Richard Mayne, and presumably for Gladstone and Bright who were careful to distance themselves from the demonstration, the events in Hyde Park that July were destined to only highlight the propensity for disruption these men had; but for those seeking the vote, this was an opportunity for them to assert themselves as ready political agents, able and willing to engage in the political discussions of the day.

The Hyde Park demonstration of July 1866 thus solidified existing discourses of masculinity in relation to franchise fitness in a spectacular display of force and political symbolism for both working-class men and upper-class "gentlemen". Much debate exists surrounding the exact events of July 18 in London – a lot of it questions the use of force by both police and demonstrators, and the Hyde Park railings are seen as an important contested border by both those hoping to "maintain order" and the demonstrators' wishes to be able to *access* government. But it is the discourse of orderliness, as it was applied specifically to working-class men during the agitation, which is central to an understanding of the role of masculinity in identity articulation during this period. In a much cited *Times* article the day after the demonstration, an indictment of the demonstrators is made in unequivocally gendered terms – "the great majority of the people in the crowded streets were the usual slouching, shambling man-boys who constitute the mass of the ordinary London multitude."[73] Yet the *Times* does make a distinction between these "man-boys" and the "decent mechanics," those who by their "dress and appearance" seemed to belong to the middle class. This distinction, as we have seen, has the function of favouring one type of working-class masculinity over another; yet Hyde Park is important for this type of discourse because the distinction becomes intertwined with the question of access to Parliament. Given the low character of the demonstrators, the *Times* asserts that "they have shown conspicuously how useless

[73] "We Trust That Mr. Beales and His Friends Are," *The Times*, July 24 1866.

such gatherings as these are for political discussion, and how easily they might produce serious danger to the public peace."[74] Of course, however, the paper is not disputing the efficacy of public political action as such, it is doing so in this case because the participants are these "London roughs" all too prone to endanger the peace: "man-boys" not yet mature enough for the demands of political discussion.

In his assessment of the events during the summer of 1866 in Hyde Park, McClelland also draws on news articles and contemporary opinion to note that the demonstration had affirmed a fact that had already been latent in Victorian political society since the 1840s – that the working men being represented by the Reform League were seeking entry to the political nation as respectable and sober citizens.[75] In what seems like a direct response to the assertions of *The Times*, *Reynolds's* notes and asks "the working classes are refused admission to the representation and Government through the parliamentary gate. Is admission only obtainable by tearing down the aristocratic railing and ornamental fences by which the 'constitution' is surrounded?"[76] What is striking here is the way in which the language of radical action, as forged by a frustrated perception of the "idle" aristocracy I have discussed, is here mixed with the language of access to the "constitution." *Reynolds's* also makes a distinction between the working-class men taking part in the demonstration, noting that there increasingly are "more intelligent" contingents in the Reform League's movement, making its engagement with the language of order and constitutions more relevant. Beneath the extensive condemnations of the aristocracy, this article has the claim that these "intelligent" working men have a right to "tear down" the barriers that prevent them from accessing the constitution. These are the men for whom radicalism in 1866 is seeking to deliver the vote. As such, we can see how those who made claims for the vote,

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[74] Ibid.
[75] McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*. 71-77.
[76] "The Battle of Hyde Park, -the Police Versus the People," *Reynolds's Newspaper*, July 29 1866.

those who sought to institute it, and those who opposed them all made implicitly gendered distinctions *within* the working class. After Hyde Park, this discourse had become a solid one, but the Reform League had also begun to engage with the establishment's discourse of order and temperamental fitness for the franchise in a more noticeable way. Understanding that this was the main point of contention for those sceptical about expanding the franchise, the Reform movement was clear about what it had to do to convince legislators to pass a new Reform Act.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the 1867 Reform Act and its passage is the fact that it came to happen not as the result of public agitation or ideological commitment, but rather as a consequence of the political ambitions and personal posturing of figures in the House of Commons. Following the fall of Gladstone's government in reaction to the failure of the 1866 Bill, Disraeli and Derby formed a minority Conservative government set on the passage of Reform that would both quell agitation outside Parliament and settle alliances within it. Disraeli's emphasis on the "restoration" of the working classes to their "ancient position" in the constitution by February 1867 as he proposed his Bill[77] pointed to a clear objective – undermining the Liberal cause by proposing Reform that included even more working-class men than the 1866 proposals. In practice, this move by Disraeli meant a shift away from property qualifications and towards rating qualifications at the individual level. Gladstone's response was to oppose the Bill and stick by his preference for a £5 rating requirement, a move that brought him into disrepute in his own party and highlighted Parliament's preference for household suffrage at this time. This new and distinctive approach to Reform crucially abandoned a tool for electoral exclusion that had defined every attempt at Reform since 1832 up to now. The commitment by Disraeli and Derby to rated residential suffrage has been the source of much debate for recent historians of the period – it has been argued that Disraeli indeed sought to build a skilled working-class foundation for a new constitution

[77] HC Deb 25 February 1867 vol. 185 c951.

driven by "Tory Democracy,"[78] or that a "one-nation" approach to politics required a broader coalition of different elements in British society,[79] and that Disraeli's personal rivalry with Gladstone shaped the Act to demonstrate Gladstone's deficiencies as leader and parliamentarian.[80] By analysing the negotiations and effects of the Act closer, we may be able to theorize more accurately about its intentions.

Gladstone's show of executive arrogance after the Second Reading of the 1867 Act in April serves to highlight the loose but deep alliances that held party groupings in tension during this time in Parliament. At a meeting on 5 April 1867, Gladstone simply told members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party that they should vote for his fixed rating qualification and unite to prevent Disraeli's more radical proposal. Of course, Radical and moderate Liberals refused to be associated with a measure that was more illiberal than the Conservative proposal and thus joined forces with Adullamites who believed the extensive Conservative proposal would provide a settlement against manhood suffrage to carry out the famous Tea Room Revolt that delivered a decisive victory for Disraeli on April 12 and ensured the ultimate Royal Assent of the Bill.[81] At this stage it is important to recognize once again how pervasive the will to exclude poorer unskilled men remained in shaping proposals for Reform. Like the Adullamites, the centre-Left Liberals who participated in the Tea Rom Revolt did so because they endorsed a restricted type of Reform.

Once Gladstone's preference for a fixed rating qualification was defeated, it only remained for his opposition to the "unsustainability" of excluding tenants who paid rates through their rent to be dealt with by the House of Commons. In May, during the Amendment stage of the Act, Liberal G.

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[78] Richard Shannon, *The Age of Disraeli, 1868-1881: The Rise of Tory Democracy*, *A History of the Conservative Party* (London, England: Longman, 1992).
[79] Gertrude Himmelfarb, "The Politics of Democracy: The English Reform Act of 1867," *Journal of British Studies* 6 (1966).
[80] Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone: A Biography* (New York, NY: Random House, 1997).
[81] Cowling. 195-197.

Hodgkinson introduced an amendment to thus abolish the practice of compounding the payment of rates with rents, meaning *all* tenants were to pay directly and thus qualify for the vote. Once again surprising his party, the House and Gladstone, Disraeli rose to endorse Hodgkinson's Amendment and, as a result, bring about household suffrage for Britain. Disraeli's rationale for accepting the Hodkinson Amendment is inconclusive. It is believed broadly that he did not particularly wish to abandon the safeguard against numbers provided by the exclusion of compounders, but instead believed that it was right to support the amendment then and appease moderate Liberals to pass the Bill before the Parliamentary session ended. What is certain is that the abolition of compounding introduced an extra 500,000 men to the franchise and made these proposals for Reform the most far-reaching ever to have been passed in Britain.

In light of this unintended "leap in the dark," as Lord Cranbourne famously called it, that had vastly increased the size of the electorate, how are we to make sense of the discourse of exclusionary masculinity that has been defining of Reform up till this stage? The answer lies implicit in the clauses of the Act and the actions of all politicians. What becomes clear in a focused view of the passage of the Act is that there was no appetite in the Commons, by 1867, for manhood suffrage. The 1867 Act came about as result of compromises made on the basis of cultural notions of class-oriented masculinities and contemporary notions of work and Victorian "character." Yes, the 1867 Act gave Britain household suffrage but, as McClelland points out, "restricting the vote by residence and rating qualifications was to exclude the mass of the poor and poorer sections of the working class,"[82] even though this Act did so to a lesser extent than its unsuccessful predecessors. In fact, what is distinctive about the 1867 Act is this renewed emphasis on the household and its centrality to the eligibility for the vote. It represents a crystallization of the overlaying of the idea of property in labour with cultural distinctions which

[82] McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*. 97.

differentiated between forms of masculinity. This was clear even in the actions of the Tea-Room Revolters – Locke noted that his fellow mutineers could not support Gladstone's instruction to support the fixed rating qualification because it could be seen as an attempt to replace Disraeli's franchising proposal "that a man who is a householder and pays his own rates is to have the vote" with Gladstone's disenfranchising one "that if a person is a householder but is rated below a particular line, he is to have no vote."[83] What is striking here is that the household is the determining feature of support for these Liberals – for them, it does not matter how much the house of man might cost or what his rates might amount to, it is the mere fact that he is a *householder* that entitles him to a vote. McClelland agrees that this is a notion on which even the Reform League could agree by 1867, noting that they "shared the vision" that "in espousing the virtues of domesticity and the demonstration that to be a father and husband with a dependent wife and children was to show, in one important way, how the respectable working class had won its position of deserving the vote."[84]

The emphasis on the cultural importance of the household as a legitimizing factor of masculinity is once again visible in the continuous exclusion of lodgers from the franchise, Indeed, all the bills for Reform by any party, including the 1867 Act, involved restrictive provisions for lodgers aimed at enfranchising only middle-class ones. When it came to the vote, the emphasis on fatherhood and householder status was central and essential to admission as a way of identifying the "sober" and "independent" working men who would ultimately help define the constitution.

In this sense we are able read Disraeli's proposal of the 1867 Bill in different terms. When he refers to his duty as that of "restoring" the "ancient position" of the working-classes in the parliamentary scheme of the country, Disraeli is appealing to a particularly gendered and class-oriented

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[83] John Locke at Party meeting April 5 1867. *The Times,* April 6 1867.
[84] McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*. 99.

conception of working-class masculinity that essentially elevates the virtue of "independence," as shown through fatherhood and homeownership, above anything else. As Anna Clarke and Keith McClelland have suggested, these were the central tenets of Victorian "character" as associated with criteria for potential "fitness" for the franchise.[85] Indeed, when he vows and promises to the House that he will "retain" the "general character" of Parliament, Disraeli draws on a critical Victorian value that permeated the liberal conception of what an upright, sober working-class man should look like and behave.

These constructions and distinctions made in relation to gender and class are also evident in John Bright's famous speech, delivered in the heat of the 1867 debates, explaining the reasons why the poorest in society must be excluded. In this speech, Bright agrees with Disraeli's proposals that "all persons who are rated to some tax […] should be admitted to the franchise," but goes on to note that there is a small class in each constituency for "which it would be much better if they were not enfranchised, because they have no independence whatsoever." In line with the very distinctions I have traced throughout this chapter, Bright ends this section of his speech noting that "there is no class so much interested in having that class excluded as the intelligent and honest working men." Bright calls this class, defined by "almost helpless poverty and dependence," the *residuum*.

The language and principles settled with the 1867 Act had been a part of the Reform debate for some time. As we have seen, it played a crucial role in the way Gladstone's 1866 was formulated, debated and opposed. It influenced the ways in which the Reform movement organized and aligned itself, and definitely influenced the rhetoric aristocrats used to voice their dissent. Yet if we accept the crystalizing power of 1867 for this discourse, how can we begin to think about the future and how it

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[85] Keith McClelland, "Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan' in Britain, 1850-80," in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, ed. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London, England: Routledge, 1991). And Clarke, in *Re-Reading the Constitution : New Narratives in the Political History of England's Long Nineteenth Century*.

would influence Gladstone's coming ministry? The place is to begin is right in the middle of the 1867 debate, for as the Hodgkinson Amendment was debated and became increasingly likely to pass Gladstone was aware of the fact he had to realign himself with the new approaches to inclusion and popular politics being charted by the Reform Bill. On May 11 1867 Gladstone gave a speech not to the Reform League but to a large contingent of the Reform Union. By this point, he had abandoned both his opposition to household suffrage and his opposition with regards to compounders had been crushed by Hodgkinson. At this meeting of essentially middle-class liberals Gladstone voiced his support for the Bill and challenged Disraeli to complete is passage promptly. This meeting is crucial because it represents the renewal of an alliance not with the enfranchised-to-be working classes but rather with the liberal middle classes who had so far dragged their feet on the issue of Reform. This was the beginning of a campaign by Gladstone to rouse the middle class in the belief he could lead it once the dust of 1867 settled. Cowling expertly assesses Gladstone's radical shift in position, noting that "his new position might not be effective in the House of Commons, but if the question were not settled soon, his position was likely to grow outside."[86] Gladstone was preparing himself to take up the reins of government under the new 1867 settlement, but had chosen to do so by focusing on the middle-classes as the foundation for his next move.

As I will show in the next chapter, Gladstone's submission to the middle classes and their conception of class-oriented masculinity continued to play an important role in terms of how his ministry formulated legislation from within and responded to demands from without. The language of exclusion though gendered class notions was not done away with by the 1867 Act, instead it was co-opted by what would be a distinctive new form of nineteenth century liberalism that would constantly

[86] Cowling. 257.

seek compromises on class issues as a way of maintaining established systems of political exclusions that were essentially based on prevalent cultural notions of social masculinity and its perceived ideal forms.

CHAPTER II
GENDER, CLASS AND REFORM AND THE BIRTH OF GLADSTONIAN LIBERALISM

The period following the passage of the Second Reform Act in 1867 is the main focus of this project. The discourses that arose and solidified during the Reform debates of 1866 and 1867 contained a pointed preference for a working man that was skilled, a father and a householder. As such, debates around Reform that touted the "ancient position"[87] of the working class or considered working men "our flesh and bone"[88] all played into specific cultural notions of gendered behaviour that distinguished within class groups. The attempt to co-opt preferred masculine identities into the franchise therefore also necessitated a consistent rejection of those who did not fit the cultural requirements for enfranchisement – lodgers, unskilled workers, unmarried men and the poor. As I have shown, these discourses began to develop more forcefully from 1859 and by 1867 had become the norm in politicians and reformers' calls for enfranchisement. Precisely because the implicit preference for home-owning, skilled working men became so tied up with how individuals articulated Reform, the Second Reform Act's enactment of household suffrage represented a crystallization of political impulses that sought to qualify liberal progress by placing cultural requirements – in this case class-oriented masculine behaviour – on access to the new opportunities nascent of new liberal and Liberal approaches by 1870.

If the push for reform in the 1860s was part of broader liberal commitments to change by both Liberals and Conservatives, the 1868 election represents another stage in the development of gendered discourses in politics and civil society. By understanding the claims and outcomes associated with the 1868 election we get a sense of the ways in which Gladstone developed his approach to Reform in relation to a distinct form of liberalism that sought vastly different aims to Disraeli's intended vision with the 1867 Act. This new vision coupled a desire to include "deserving" individuals in the constitution as much as

[87] Disraeli, HC Deb 25 February 1867 vol. 185 c951.
[88] Gladstone in reference to working men in 1867, HC Deb 10 June 1884 c1954.

possible with a pervasive anxiety to control and diagnose their behaviour in relation to accepted forms of masculinity. In assessing the legislation of Gladstone's 1868 government I focus sharply on the ways that political motives often served the gendered interests of an evidently anxious Victorian "gentleman" and "gentlemanly" class both within and outside Parliament.

In an attempt to develop a more exhaustive understanding of the ways in which liberalism during the period was able to both formulate and respond to agitation for legislation and reform I take a dual approach to my analysis of Gladstone's 1868 ministry. Taking Gladstonian liberalism seriously as a new phenomenon born out of the tumultuous political realignments following the Reform Act of 1832, this analysis first considers legislation and reform considered to have originated directly from the ideological commitments articulated by Gladstone himself as he advocated a new approach to politics after 1866. A solid understanding of how Gladstone formulated legislation in relation to his own ideological vision allows us to draw valuable contrasts and parallels with the ways that his 1868 ministry *responded* to calls for reform and specific legislative change from groups and sections of society which consistently questioned the inclusivity and boldness of the solidifying Liberal coalition of Whig, Peelite and middle-class interests. The period of Gladstone's first complete ministry, from 1868 to 1874, provides exciting opportunities for this approach: the plethora of legislation and reform undertaken during the period reflects both the bold ideological impulses of a forging ideological movement and the increasingly common propensity for civil groups to form and actively lobby parliament for more extensive social and economic reform.

This dual approach to the legislation of Gladstone's first ministry is important to this project's analysis of the function of gender in mid nineteenth-century ostensibly liberal commitments to meaningful reform and inclusivity. It allows us to determine the extent to which gendering may have been a decisive agent in the formulation of seemingly liberal policies from Gladstone's perspective, and whether civil groups also played into the language and notions of "respectability" and "independence"

that dominated considerations of working-class inclusion at the time. As such this approach encourages us to come to terms with the way in which the cultural notions of gendered behaviour that ran through legislative action and discourse formed part of a cycle wherein the language used to articulate them was used and co-opted by government and citizen constantly, resulting in an increasingly normalized conception of a single respected masculinity perceived as desirable within the constitution.

The language of "independence," having drawn on contemporary notions of intelligence, self-help and the social value of labour, became central to how Liberals and working-class reformers themselves conceived of the opportunities for reform during Gladstone's first ministry from 1868. Highly valuing the idea of a society no longer afflicted by class agitations that had in many ways plagued the preceding decades, Gladstone set out to pursue a legislative program that publicly legitimized those workers who adhered to the principles of order, thrift and self-help which had become central to notions of citizenship through the 1867 Act. The Married Women's Property Act of 1870 and the Judicature Act of 1873 were proposed as "classless" legislation, aimed at giving equal access to the legal system to individuals regardless of their social status. Yet the distinctions made with regards to lower-working class behaviour in discussions of family life meant these Act merely reflected middle-class Liberal anxieties over the seemingly reckless behaviour of lower-working class men who appeared to be incapable of maintaining a home without vice, violence or destitution. The economic reforms which defined the period as the era of Free Trade further drove the governmental preference for those workers who were able to demonstrate the "right" character. Reforms in taxation sought to create a sensible balance between the working and established classes on the basis of their contributions to society, while making no progress on aiding the abjectly poor. The emphasis on work and contributions to society meant the removal of seemingly unjustified privilege in state institutions became also an essential part of the Gladstonian program of reform during his first ministry. Indeed, the Army Reforms sought to infuse a powerfully symbolic state institution with the image of the laborious and respectable working man, but in this the government was

largely unsuccessful, and workers themselves became weary of the influx of young, poor and unskilled men into the Army. Legislative codifications of working-class respectability and working-class reiterations of its importance had clearly had impact not only on the individual self-perception of men but on their conception of the state as a reflection of the citizens it deemed to be representative of its values.

Central to an analysis of the pervasive gendered attitudes that may have shaped legislation during the period from 1868 up to 1874 is the Gladstonian impulse to reclaim the language of populism and affinity for the working man used by Disraeli to pass the 1867 Act through Parliament. This move to reconnect with the newly-enfranchised classes had begun for Gladstone even before the passage of the 1867 Act – as I have discussed, Gladstone's meeting with the Reform Union in May 1867 demonstrated a desire to push the middle and established classes to accept those who would be enfranchised by Disraeli's Bill. This is important because it represents a departure from Disraeli's approach to Reform. While Disraeli attempted to create social "unity" by checking the interests of an expectedly Tory working class with the privileges of a Conservative establishment in a move to converge the existing conservatisms of these two groups,[89] Gladstone sought to foil the power of the newly enfranchised class by co-opting it into a solidly middle-class liberalism. Both approaches would have different ramifications for the way in which gender attitudes shaped class-oriented legislative action, and I will focus primarily on Gladstone's approach in this chapter.

[89] Shannon. 130-145.

Reclaiming the spirit of Reform: The General Election of 1868

Insofar as the period from 1859 up to 1867 can be interpreted as a contest between Gladstone and Disraeli based on a cautious desire to include working-class elements in the operations of government, tendencies after 1867 had not changed. The approach taken by Gladstone connected a deference for ethical values in government to long-standing Radical rejections of the "Old Corruption" of Parliament, a critique that saw the operations of Parliament as "an exercise in rewarding fellow aristocrats rather than an attempt to pursue the common good".[90] By 1868 Gladstone had begun to declare himself an enemy of privilege and firmly in favour of greater equality and opportunity for the working class. Angus Hawkins notes that the traditional view of a 'liberal advance' in mid-nineteenth century Britain included "the replacement of patronage by a more meritocratic public ethos", such as Gladstone espoused, in the administrative bodies of Victorian Britain.[91] Recently, much work has been done on the growth of ethical values and professional self-denial in the higher civil service, particularly by Rodney Lowe and Barry O'Toole,[92] but much of the process whereby this ethos became embedded throughout the civic realm remains largely uninvestigated. Taking Gladstone's personal commitment against corruption and privilege seriously as a defining impulse within his ministry, it becomes important to examine the ways in which such commitments co-opted and reformed cultural notions of gender as well as how these continued to be used as exclusionary tools.

Recent research that uses economic and data-based analysis to investigate nineteenth-century political action and behaviours has concluded that the extension of the franchise in 1867 was not a

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[90] James Thopmson, "Good Government," in *Languages of Politics in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. David Craig and James Thompson (London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). 28.
[91] Angus Hawkins, *Victorian Political Culture: "Habits of Heart and Mind"* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2015). 17.
[92] Barry O'Toole, *The Ideal of Public Service: Reflections on the Higher Civil Service in Britain* (London, England: Routledge, 2006). 32-36; Rodney Lowe, *The Official History of the British Civil Service: Reforming the Civil Service, Volume I: The Fulton Years, 1966-81*, *Government Official History* (London, England: Routledge). 17-41.

decisive factor in increasing the Liberal share of the vote in the General Election of 1868. Berlinski and Dewan find "no evidence that electoral reform has a causal effect on the immediate electoral outcome of the 1868 election." Despite the fact the Act did indeed have a constituency-level impact on party and candidate competition, the study rejects the view that reform was related to strategic political calculation. Berlinski and Dewan's empirical study, which analyses constituency data on franchise registration and income, add to a growing consensus that rejects the notion that Disraeli proposed the 1867 Act in order to win the election of 1868. [93] By the time it had passed, Disraeli's measure had increased the voting population by only 45% in counties as opposed to 145% in the boroughs, where most Liberal support lay. [94] Inevitably, it was the plethora of issues discussed during the 1868 that delivered a victory for the Liberals. It was Gladstone's alignment with voter opinion on Ireland, the economy and education, among other things, that combined with "the People's William's" oratory powers to ensure a Liberal administration in 1868.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways in which Disraeli's passage of the 1867 Act consumed and crystallized the gendered discourses of class exclusion while attempting to enlarge a franchise in terms that aligned with his vision of a Britain where worker and aristocrats had aligned and mutually-inclusive interests. As such, it helps to understand politicians' intents during this period not in the context of fixed long-term political ambition, but more in terms of how certain measures and discourses could advance their position at the given time. For Disraeli, it was crucial to capitalize on Gladstone's failure to pass Reform in 1866 and, once he witnessed the Liberal propensity to turmoil during the 1867 debates, it was important for him to effectively steal the glory of Reform from a Gladstone who had for so long seemed destined to deliver it. It is in this context that I propose we understand the outcomes of the 1868

[93] Samuel Berlinski and Torun Dewan, "Did the Extension of the Franchise Increase the Liberal Vote in Victorian Britain? Evidence from the Second Reform Act," *LSE Department of Government: Political Science and Political Economy Working Paper* 1 (2010). 22.
[94] Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, "Why Did the West Extend the Franchise? Democracy, Inequality and Growth in Historical Perspective," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115, no. 4 (2000). 1188.

election. By focusing closely on how Gladstone articulated his claim to a Ministry in 1868 particularly in relation to the Act of 1867, we get a sense of how his victory represented an extension and evolution of the gendered discoursed that formed part of the language of Reform.

The language of restraint and caution that defined Gladstone's approach to Reform in 1866 remained present in his articulated political vision in 1868. In an important letter addressed to the electors of his South-Wester Lancashire constituency, Gladstone proposed himself as "the advocate of a policy of trust in the people, tempered by prudence, and averse to violent and hasty change."[95] Directly defending the idea of "trust" he built into the proposal and actual measures of the 1866 Bill he continues, noting that he advocated for "the smallest that could meet the just claims of the unfranchised classes, and which were studiously limited in order to disarm jealousy, prejudice, and fear".[96] Here, we see Gladstone checking his preference for the inclusion of the working-classes with a cautious consideration of cultural notions of character which ultimately play into the gendered exclusion built into discussions of Reform at this stage in time. The mention of "jealousy, prejudice, and fear" represent pointedly gendered class-oriented rejections of precisely those left out by the process of Reform – lodgers, the "residuum," unmarried men and the violent. In the wake of the Hyde Park riots, a preferred masculinity had arisen and since the 1867 Act was seen to have settled on such an image of the "respectable" man, those left out by the Act continued to be the subject of this type of exclusionary rhetoric. Gladstone fears in his letter that the Act would "reduce our institutions to the pattern of the American Republic,"[97] in what once again constitutes a reinforcement of strictly British (English) approaches to democracy where a specific "gentlemanly" behaviour was expected, encouraged and monitored.

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[95] William Gladstone, "To the Electors of South-West Lancashire - October 9 1868," in *The Speeches of the Rt. Hon William Ewart Gladstone Mp in South-West Lancashire* (Liverpool, England: Egerton Smith & Co., 1868). Iii.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid. IV.

Gladstone's speech to his relatively affluent constituency on October 9 1868 stands in stark contrast to a speech given just six days later in Liverpool, an increasingly industrial and staunchly working-class town. There Gladstone claimed that "under the name of a measure of progress, it was a measure of reaction; under the name of a measure for enlarging the political influence of those great classes who were almost excluded from the representation, it actually narrowed and lowered the influence of those classes".[98] Now Gladstone was all about intention – he blasted Disraeli for building the Dual Vote measures into the initially-proposed Bill, calling the Act "a measure of retrogression and reaction".[99] Although the Dual Vote proposals, which would have given wealthier voters in the counties two votes to offset the enfranchisement of workers, would be dropped during the Reading stages of the Bill, Gladstone asks the voters of Liverpool to assess the "honest intentions" of Disraeli, ostensibly suggesting that the latter had no real desire for meaningful reform. It is important to note, however, that Gladstone himself called for an expansion of the franchise in 1866 that would only give the vote to more affluent working men in the counties who were "tenants of small holdings of land in immediate connection with the landed class." The political anxiety to include only men who demonstrated qualities associated with established class-oriented masculinities transcended the political divide, but were often manipulated and negotiated in relation to progressive commitments. In the same way Gladstone finds it acceptable to be cautious against the "jealousy, prejudice, and fear" of the newly-enfranchised to his Lancashire constituency, it is acceptable for him to praise the "labouring men" who had "proved their *intelligence* and *heroism* during the terrible period of the cotton famine" in his Liverpool speech.[100] Equally, Disraeli imagined a Britain where social "unity" would be brought about by "restoring" the position of the working-class in the

[98] William Gladstone, "Amphiteatre, Liverpool - October 14 1868," in *Speeches of the Rt. Hon. W.E. Gladstone, M.P., Delivered at Warrington, Ormskirk, Liverpool, Southport, Newton, Leigh and Wigan, in October 1868* (London, England: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1868). 20.
[99] Ibid. 21.
[100] Ibid. 25-36.

constitution, but it was still important for him and his party to include proposals for Dual Votes in the 1867 Bill.

If the language of class-oriented gender exclusion had no fixed point of reference in either party, ideological grouping or political leader, it is essential to note how Gladstone co-opted it by 1868 and linked it directly to his vision of liberalism for Britain at the time. In the Liverpool speech Gladstone sets out as his main opposition to the 1867 Act that the compounding of rates had been abolished. He notes that this would place an unnecessary "liability" for the newly-enfranchised classes. Yet it is difficult to read this criticism in anything other than paternalistic terms. Gladstone ask what this "might mean to a man who never heard of rates" and essentially notes that it an "inconvenience" to men already preoccupied with other work.[101] But Gladstone's previous opposition to the abolition of compounding rates in 1867 was inextricably linked to his preference for a restrictive $5 fixed-rate franchise that deliberately stopped short of household suffrage. In opposing the abolition of compounding in this way now, Gladstone is trying to have his cake and eat it – he appears to support the working-class in their new position within the franchise, but rejects the very measures which allowed them in, on political terms. There is yet another important step to Gladstone's co-opting of this regulated language of inclusion – a rejection of corruption. Gladstone explains his opposition to the abolition of compounding on the basis that workers and tenants will still need to find a middle-man to pay their rates and that these would ask for a commission that could in turn be exploited, since rate payment was the only qualification for the vote in these cases. As such, Gladstone notes –

> "We saw that a new fountain of corruption would be opened by those provisions; while they left the franchise to the independent action of the man himself, they left it perfectly open to the local legal gentlemen who conducted the operations of the elections to enfranchise compound householders by hundred to ensure the success of a particular candidate."[102]

[101] Ibid. 20-25.
[102] Ibid. 27.

Indeed, this may be a valid criticism of the state of constituency and land relations at the time, but it is Gladstone's juxtaposition of the "independent" man against the "legal gentleman" that represents the co-opting and development of gendered language in relation to class-oriented considerations of reform and inclusion.

By articulating and consolidating these links during his tour of Warrington, Ormskirk, Liverpool, Southport, Newton, Leigh and Wigan in 1868, Gladstone provides us with a framework with which to understand the function of gender within his political vision. Firstly, the distinction between the "independent" man and the "gentleman" proposes an ideological willingness to side against privilege. In a political climate defined by popular speeches and an ever-growing franchise, privilege no longer secured victory in politics. Secondly, his emphasis on the *protection* of the newly-enfranchised voters from corruption originating from wealthier elements in society co-opts the rejection of "Old Corruption" which contributes importantly to distinctions made by working-class men as to the value of the "male" virtues of industriousness and independence. Gladstone is able to use the language of corruption against Disraeli's vision of a working class and aristocracy united as he appeals to a more pressing practical concern of the middle-class and aristocracy alike – the propensity of the newly-enfranchised workers to be bribed and corrupted by men of wealth for political purposes. Thirdly, by articulating these oppositions in relation to Disraeli's only defining parliamentary action by this period, Gladstone is able to directly associate Disraeli with regressive measures which really intended to maintain the working-class unfranchised or with "diminished privileges." In this sense, the language of class-oriented masculinity was constantly co-opted and reused selectively to shape important ideological and political rhetorics during this period.

These principles would come to define the approach of Gladstone's ministry to policy during this ministry. In his letter to the voters of South-West Lancashire we can trace the trajectory of analysis taken in this chapter. In light of the effects of the 1867 Act, Gladstone advocated for an approach that values an

"increased strength for our institutions, and a more vigorous march, both of legislative and administrative policy". As such, I will focus on the ways in which the Cardwell Army reforms and the Judicature Act operated along anxieties arising for an enlarged franchise and the propensity to emphasize gender in them. Gladstone also demonstrates himself concerned with "the rapid growth of wealth, especially among the classes of the greatest activity and enterprise" and hopes that "the paramount interest of the lately enfranchised classes in thrifty administration may operate powerfully to bring about a change" in the management of the country's finances. [103] In his speech to supporters in Liverpool, Gladstone pointedly articulated the aim of his potential government as "the relief of the newly enfranchised class from needless and most vexatious interference with their social arrangements."[104] As such, having understood the key assumptions Gladstone makes in relation to the economy and administrative policy, – namely that the "intelligent" and "independent" men enfranchised in 1867 would have some sort of impact on it – it will be my aim to examine exactly how these gendered qualifiers shaped legislation in his ministry. In relation to reform of legal systems, the emphasis on masculinity functioned to create exclusionary clauses in what was touted as "classless" legislation. The formulation of both the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 and the Judicature Act of 1873 demonstrate the function of gender in the great compromise wrought by Liberals seeking cautious class cohesion during the period.

Against "class-legislation": Working-class Masculinity, the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 and the Judicature Act of 1873

By 1869 Liberal support had rallied around the passage of a Married Woman's Property Bill that could protect the wages and earnings of married women from their husbands. Discussions surrounding the Bill demonstrate tense class-oriented gendered anxieties towards the inclusion and protection of

[103] Gladstone, "To the Electors of South-West Lancashire - October 9 1868," in *The Speeches of the Rt. Hon William Ewart Gladstone Mp in South-West Lancashire*. III.
[104] Gladstone, "Amphiteatre, Liverpool - October 14 1868," in *Speeches of the Rt. Hon. W.E. Gladstone, M.P., Delivered at Warrington, Ormskirk, Liverpool, Southport, Newton, Leigh and Wigan, in October 1868*. 28.

women in the law. The will to create laws that distinguished in class terms to reinforce specific cultural notions of gender seems to have influenced the Gladstonian approach to legal reform. Lord Cairns, an important figure that would later help shape the Judicature Act of 1873, established in an 1870 speech that it was only poor women that should be within the scope of the 1870 Act – "in most of the manufacturing districts, especially in the North of England, there were abundant instances in which poor and industrious women, who had exerted themselves to maintain their families, had been exposed to the evil of having their small earnings pounced upon from time to time by intemperate, idle, or dissolute husbands, for purposes entirely foreign to the support of the family."[105] As Ben Griffin's extensive work on the Married Women's Property Bills has shown, when it came to women with landed wealth, the concern of MPs was to ensure that women *submit* to the will of their husbands.[106] Indeed, the Liberal MP Shaw Lefevre would argue in 1868 that "it was with the humbler classes that the change would be the greatest, and it was there the change was most needed," noting that the changes passed in the 1870 Act "would make very little difference with the wealthy."[107]

The creation and overwhelming passage of a Bill constructed to protect only poor women drew on exclusionary languages of masculinity as the basis for class-oriented legal commitments. Firstly, the Act did not protect women's property – it would not be until 1882 that legal protections would go beyond earnings and wages, solidifying the idea that men were entitled to the management of property in marriage and thus strengthening the social value of the householder worker. Indeed, as Anna Clarke points out, Conservatives would consistently oppose suffragists' calls for married women's property rights because they feared women could therefore also claim political rights,[108] and as we have seen the case was not much different in the Liberal party. Secondly, the Act presumed the behaviour of working men as

[105]"Parliamentary Intelligence - Married Women's Property Bill," *The Times*, 22 June 1870.
[106] Griffin. 90-91.
[107] "Parliamentary Intelligence - Married Women's Property," *The Times*, 22 April 1868.
[108] Clarke, in *Re-Reading the Constitution : New Narratives in the Political History of England's Long Nineteenth Century*. 244-245.

"intemperate, idle or dissolute" and prone to default on his moral responsibilities to home and wife – by contrasting this image of working-class masculinity with that of the "industrious" woman, Parliament sent out a clear message as to its own vision of acceptable masculine behaviour. Thirdly, the design of the Act to include only poor women removed upper-class males from potential scrutiny by the courts – the belief that upper-class women were already protected deliberately sidesteps the question of the morality of upper-class husbands and points to the latent anxiety of the mid to late-Victorian "Gentleman" to preserve a position of unquestioned moral authority in the private sphere. As Griffin notes, "the emergence of a social model which simply compared the poor) where male behaviour was a problem) with the rich (where it was not) legitimated producing a measure of reform that left the wealthy relatively untouched".[109]

In relation to the development of the Married Women's Property Act from 1868 up to 1870, legal reform during Gladstone's first ministry essentially crystallized cultural notions of gendered behaviour among men by placing overwhelming emphasis on class cohesion. The intent set out by Gladstone in his 1868 campaign speech to oversee the "strengthening" of institutions with the aid of the newly-franchised class played out in the Judicature Act of 1873 in a way that allowed notions of gendered to be unconsciously solidified.

Attempting to fuse the numerous existing courts in England by dictating the convergence of Common Law and Equity, the 1873 Act created the unitary Supreme Court of Judicature constituted by the High Court of Justice and the Court of Appeals. Central to Lord Selbourne's proposal of the Bill in February 1873 was a desire to remove the final say on judicial matters from the House of Lords.[110] Gladstone had instructed his Cabinet reform institutions where undue privilege could be found, and to

[109] Griffin. 95.
[110] Stephen Waddams, "Equity in English Contract Law: The Impact of the Judicature Acts (1873–75)," *The Journal of Legal History* 33, no. 185-208 (2012). 188-190.

ensure that efficacy and accessibility became guiding principles. As such, debates in the press praised the shift away from the vested judicial powers of the hereditary chamber, but debates among lawyers and establishment politicians gained Gladstone many enemies. In the same way the Lords were reluctant to give up so much power, both Common Law attorneys and judges in Westminster and their Equity counterparts in Lincoln's Inn did not wish for their positions to be diluted by the convergence of courts. This attempt to remove the vested privilege of the Lords, while overturned by Conservative amendments in 1875, demonstrates a desire on Gladstone's part to align himself more closely with moderately Radical commitments to meritocracy in government and its institutions. Equally, the proposal to have Equity prevail over Common Law in the new Courts constituted an attempt to allow industrial interests an opportunity to access the legal system in more timely and appropriate manner. Being much more in the hands of the Chancery and individual judges, Equity law provided more potential opportunities for legal redress for more people.[111]

Yet the more subversive result of the Judicature Act, in relation to the Married Women's Property Act and the cultural notions of gender it was based on, was the development of a diffusion strategy with regards to class divisions at the altar of gender. The Married Women's Property Act of 1870 was supposed to extend legal relief to women who could not afford expensive Equity proceedings and relied instead on "harsh" common law remedies when it came to property. The Liberal barrister and politician Thomas Headlam noted in 1868 that it was "the poorer classes" which could not afford the flexibility of the Chancery Court and thus "were exposed to the full hardship of the Common Law."[112] As such, class-oriented judgments on normative masculine behaviour were grounded in the mechanics of the legal system. "Distinctions between 'rough' and 'respectable' or labourers and shopkeepers" Ben Griffin

[111]Roger L. Stephens, "Nineteenth Century Equity - a Study in Law Reform - Part I," *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 12, no. 2 (1934). 88-90

[112] "Imperial Parliament - Married Women's Property Bill," *Daily News*, June 11 1868.

argues, “were submerged in a dichotomy which only distinguished between those who could afford marriage settlements and those who could not”.[113] As such, the Judicature Act’s joining up of Common Law and Equity courts extended the work of the Married Women’s Property Act to give the same protection to the poor that the Courts of Equity would only give wealthier women previously. In this way, politicians were able to tout a law that made sharp distinctions among classes as a success in bridging class division.[114] Importantly, these class distinctions were, as we have seen, made almost explicitly in relation to cultural notions of preferred masculine behaviour and with a determined emphasis on the maintenance of male authority over property and family. In this sense, masculinity functioned as a restrictive wedge in the development of legislation idealized to expand access to the nation’s institutions. Gender in this way becomes an essential undercurrent of the late-Victorian “social contract”.

Cultural notions of gender in class-oriented legislation shaped Gladstone’s approach to institutional reform. Nowhere is this clearer than perhaps in the widespread reforms to the Army that took place between 1869 and 1874. With relation to these reforms, as with reforms to the legal system and women’s property rights, it seems that gender continued to operate as a rhetorically exclusive factor in a program that sought to alleviate class division by emphasizing efficiency and merit. Public appetite for a solid conception of preferred masculinity however, appears be the most significant, yet unintended, effect of the Army Reforms. The depth of the rift between the intentions of Gladstone and Cardwell’s visions for the Army respectively, and the attitudes of civil society to the Army and its constituent concepts points to a vivid crisis of self-perception inextricably linked to anxieties relating to evolving conceptions of masculinity during the period.

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[113] Griffin. 85

[114] Paul Johnson, "Class Law in Victorian England," *Past and Present* 11, no. 141 (1993). 166.

Masculinity, Liberalism and National Self-perception: The Cardwell Army Reforms, 1867-1874

The Army Reforms were introduced by the Secretary of State for War and Gladstone's own protégé, Edward Cardwell, in 1869. Throughout the period up to 1874, Cardwell would oversee significant changes to the organization and practices of the Armed Forces including the abolition of peacetime flogging, the establishment of new locally-based regiments and a reduction to the minimum amount of time required of men wishing to join the Forces. It was believed by Cardwell that the abolition of flogging would improve morale and raise the profile of the Army, while organizing regiments in relation to localities as opposed to seniority would integrate the Forces more actively with civil society. In a measure adopted from the Prussian model Cardwell also reduced the amount of minimum service to six years, stipulating conditions that included reduced pay.[115] The intentions behind these reforms were clear and in line with the Liberal approach to institutional reform – Gladstone noted that the Army Reforms "went to reduce to a minimum whatever evil there might be attended with the institution of a standing Army with regard to the temptations to immorality of those who belonged to it,"[116] and Cardwell also emphasized the need for the Army to develop a higher-profile so that it could attract the numbers necessary to make the short service provisions of the reforms work. Gladstone's desire to tackle the perceived existing "immorality" of soldiers and Cardwell's vision of an Army that was attractive for more men to join demonstrates convergence of the political need to adapt existing institutions in an age of mass politics with the constant search for the "respectable" man who would constitute these institutions. The Army Reforms of this period exemplify the trajectory and outcomes of this process.

[115] Edward Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1992). 1-29.
[116] HC Deb 23 July 1872 vol. 212 c1647

The Army Reforms were met with opposition and ambivalence across almost every sector of society. While the abolition of peacetime flogging was welcome by radical newspapers, Army generals and aristocrats saw it as an unnecessary and even dangerous change. The important short service reforms introduced by Cardwell, and supported by Gladstone and the Liberal establishment as a measure for encouraging younger men to join the Army and encourage discipline, were also ruthlessly attacked by commentators at the time. Sir Edward Sullivan accused Cardwell of attempting to "disorganize and emasculate the small force we already possess," lamenting the growing presence of "wretched boys of seventeen to twenty" in the Armed Forces at the time. Sullivan focused at length on the physical limitations of younger recruits, but his emphasis on the "boyhood" of those entering the Army was predicated on the notion that young men were in a period of development and had not yet attained the qualities desired of men in military positions. This critique of non-normative masculinity in the Army was part of class-based assumption about development. Indeed, the short service reforms offered even less pay to potential soldiers, prompting Sullivan to argue that "if we offer the wages of boys we shall get boys and not men".[117] In a society were athleticism was considered a formative part of the privileged education of upper-class men, the conflation of lower class status and physical incapacity served in this case to popularly support the exclusion of poorer young men from participating in the nation's institutions. Indeed famous naturalist Leith Adams went as far as lamenting the "physical degeneration of the soldier" and the "general falling off in the strength and stamina of the population" as indicative of a more critical malaise – the decline "not only of our military renown, but a sign of national decay".[118]

Even the localization of regiments was rejected by most of civil society precisely because the behaviour of the "New Army" soldier was considered disruptive and undesirable. Complaints by farmers

[117] Sir Edward Sullivan, *The Froth and the Dregs* (London, England: Edward Stanford, 1871). 75-80.
[118] A. Leith Adams, "The Recruiting Question, Considered from a Military and a Medical Point of View," *Royal United Services Institution Journal* 18, no. 76 (1874). 56-57.

and rural residents against the rowdy behaviour of soldier during drills and exercises led the government to compensate landowners for damage made to land and communities. This sort of association, low pay and dubious conditions prevented the Army from its goal of attracting the "respectable" working-class men that became increasingly exalted in Victorian discourse during this period. Indeed, the Army largely failed to recruit any men at all from the English and Welsh non-conformists backgrounds that were so closely associated with the "respectable" working class during this period.[119] But how are we to make sense of this rejection of the Army by the legitimated sectors of the working class? As David French argues, a crucial paradox existed in the period following the Cardwell Reforms wherein the regular army continued to be shunned by much of 'respectable' society but the soldier in the abstract became an icon standing for all that was best in British society. This is in line with the criticisms of Leith Adams and Sir Edward Sullivan discussed above, as they demonstrate an anxiety to preserve a "gentlemanly" image in the Army, but it also resonates with the way the press and popular culture – consumer goods, the theatre and literature – constantly exalted the position of the Army and the soldier.[120] Furthermore, public military displays and parades, as well as commemorations of soldiers on trains and other shared spaces, were extremely popular during this period and constituted an essential part of public citizenship. This all points to a need, among the British public, to construct an image of national glory that rested firmly on established conceptions of normative masculinity.

If, as Anne Summers proposes, militarism was indeed an "integral part of the liberal political culture" of late Victorian Britain,[121] then the propensity to imagine its constituents as a source of pride cannot be discounted. Indeed, as David French concludes, the creation of truly localized "regiments" was

[119] Spiers. 49,52.
[120] Scott Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). 143–7.
[121] Ann Summers, "Militarism in Britain before the Great War," *History Workshop* 2, no. 1 (1976). 105.

generally unsuccessful and as such regimental identities and traditions were generally fabricated.[122] Reporting on a banquet held for visiting soldiers in 1872, the *Norwich Mercury* notes that "at all times have they been ready to do all that lay in their power to make their stay amongst us agreeable, and they have proved that though soldiers, they can be and are gentlemen in the strictest sense of the word."[123] Here, the full extent of the imagined and desired qualities of the Army starts to become apparent – the men in question are "gentlemen" *despite* the fact they are also soldiers. The tension between these competing nodes of discourse – i.e. the 'gentleman,' the army, and the 'respectable' working man – demonstrate growing anxieties relating to *national* self-perception precisely because they contain value judgments about *individual* behaviours measured increasingly often against long-established conceptions of entitlement to institutional and political participation. This tension is hugely important because it expresses the importance of masculinity as a significant marker of both personal and national identity during this period.

Changes brought about by the Reform Act of 1867 and, as we shall see, an increasingly industrialized urban environment, incited deep-seated anxieties as to the positionality of different types of men in British society. The abolition of the sale of commissions, which granted titles and privileges of superiority to wealthy men, cost Gladstone and Cardwell the support of the established aristocratic classes in British society. In fact, as Michael Brown notes, the abolition of this much hated aspect of Army bureaucracy was aimed to encourage promotion by merit and undermine the 'gentlemanly' ethos of the officer corps.[124] Here, Gladstone and Cardwell sought to shift the Army away from an apparently rigid preference for the "vast leisured and wealthy class" towards a search for the sort of "respectable" working class men that post-1867 Britain loved to exalt. This meant the government faced significant opposition

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[122] David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People C.1870-2000* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2005). Chapter 9.
[123] *Norwich Mercury*, July 9 1870.
[124] Michael Brown, "Cold Steel, Weak Flesh: Mechanism, Masculinity and the Anxieties of Late Victorian Empire," *Cultural and Social History* 14, no. 2 (2017). 160.

to its program mostly in the Lords but noticeably in the Commons, too. The commander-in-chief of the Army and colonel of the Horse Guards, the Duke of Cambridge, and Queen Victoria herself privately noted their opposition to the reforms and the former actually abstained from the vote in the House of Lords. In line with this, Colin Matthew argues that the reforms appeared "as an attack on the privileges of a caste, without offering, as Gladstone had wanted, the prospect of its reconstruction in the national interest."[125] As such, the abolition of the sale of Army commissions became linked to fears about the impact of industrialization and the increased emphasis on meritocracy on the constituents that formed important national institutions. Captain H. W. L. Hime noted in 1875 that "the more industry spreads, and the greater the number of its prizes, the smaller is the *residuum* from which recruits can be got, and the worse, physically, morally and intellectually does that *residuum* become."[126] With relation to the Army, a clear link had developed in relation to the impact of a changing economic landscape – the established aristocracy had been debilitated, the 'respectable' working classes swallowed up by the promises of early capitalism, leaving only the image of the *residuum* reflected what was increasingly considered the nation's most important institution. Hime continues to make a direct connection between commercialism and effeminacy, thus strengthening the idea that the removal of vested interests from the nation's institutions amounted to an emasculation of its image inevitably tied to shifts in class interests and visibility. As Michael Brown proposes, much of the opposition to Gladstone and Cardwell's reforms in relation to commission purchases points to a growing anxiety that industrialization and commercialization had "enfeebled" Britain, making its institutions unsuited to the demands of empire.[127] These pressing uncertainties as to the position of established "gentlemanly" behaviours was related to the rift between

[125] Matthew. 209.
[126] H.W.L. Hime, "Universal Conscription: The Only Answer to the Recruiting Question," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 19, no. 80 (1875). 105.
[127] Brown. 161.

imagined visions of national greatness and realities of rapid socioeconomic change, and found expression in the popularity of public displays of military traditions.[128]

While politicians could claim some success in addressing unacceptable male behaviours in the working family through legal legislation, the Army Reforms demonstrate that popular fears relating to the emasculation of the nation were far more pervasive precisely because of their widespread public value. Perhaps nothing demonstrates the widespread extent of this anxiety better than the fallout following the anonymous publication of *The Battle of Dorking* in 1871 by Lieutenant-Colonel George Chesney. Sparking the genesis of a genre of "invasion literature," *The Battle of Dorking* enjoyed popular success from its appearance in *Blackwood's Magazine* during the end of the Army reform period.[129] Drawing on fears of a Prussian invasion, the novella tells the story of an invasion by a German-speaking "Other Power" which defeats the Royal Navy and institutes a system of high taxation that concludes with the dissolution of the British Empire and civil war in its former colonies. The text specifically addresses the seemingly worsening state of the Army in gendered terms – in describing an initial interaction with his a new brigadier he writes that "he was like a soldier-like man […] but he appeared new to volunteers, and did not seem to know how to deal with gentleman privates."[130] Chesney tied this lack of experience to the misplaced emphasis on commerce, noting that the existing volunteer and reserve forces were left untrained because "calling them out to drill would interfere with the industry of the nation."[131] Thus the unmanly, untrained, poor boys of the English land forces are imagined as a "helpless mob" in the face of "disciplined invaders" who had been in possession of both superior armaments and superior strategy.[132] As such, fears of invasion by a foreign power were linked to class-oriented notions of masculinity and the lack thereof in the Army –

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[128] French. Chapter 9.
[129] A. Michael Matin, "Scrutinizing *the Battle of Dorking:* The Royal United Service Institution and the Mid-Victorian Invasion Controversy," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39, no. 2 (2011). 389.
[130]George Chesney, "The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer," *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1871. 18.
[131] Ibid. 6.
[132] Ibid. 61.

Chesney decries that Army reforms were partisan and not a "national scheme"[133] precisely because the Liberal approach was markedly damaging to the image of strength touted by the Army. The many versions of invasion fiction that followed Chesney's *Battle of Dorking* seem to have arisen out of an appetite for expressing fears over the emasculation of the nation's institutions. This literary phenomenon suggests that Gladstone's ideological commitment to institutional reform to support merit was, as Chesney puts it, "baffling"[134] and overlooked the pervasive importance of gender in popular imaginations of nationhood.

The desire to include the 'respectable' working classes in the institutions of government and to debilitate the stranglehold of aristocracy on national power was distinctive in Gladstone's liberalism during the period of his first ministry. In an important 1872 speech to students at Liverpool College he suggested, despite his record specifically with the 1866 Reform Bill, that he considered the emerging classes of "commerce" virtuous in their own right and that any attempt to turn them into aristocrats should be resisted. "I know not why commerce should in England should not have its old families, rejoicing to be connected with commerce from generation to generation" he asks, hoping that those who had gained status through industry would not "turn their backs upon it, and seem ashamed of it."[135] If Gladstone did not want the emerging industrial classes to enter the aristocracy, he did wish for the aristocracy to practice the principles of thrift and efficiency visible in the middle-class. Matthew cites Gladstone in the aftermath of the commission purchase crisis saying that plutocracy had produced a "bastard aristocracy and aristocracy shows too much disposition, in Parliament especially, to join hands with this bastard."[136] As such, we are face with the unique challenges to which Gladstone's liberalism had assigned its ministerial power to overcome. As he did in 1868 in his to Liverpool voters, the discourse of Army reform sought to co-opt the gendered notions attached to the "respectable" working class man of

[133] Ibid. 6.
[134] Ibid.
[135] William Gladstone, *Address Delivered at the Distribution of Prizes in the Liverpool College - December 21 1872* (London, England: John Murray, 1873). 31.
[136] Quoted in Matthew. 210.

industry to model the nation in his image. Having faced almost unsurmountable opposition from every corner of the country, however, Gladstone was faced with the pervasive power of established conceptions of masculinity in the social consciousness of the people as citizens.

In relation to the guiding principles of Gladstone's liberalism, cultural notions of masculinity found themselves expressed in the creation and reception of legislation and reform. In the case of the Married Women's Property Act and the Judicature Act, assumptions of working-class male behaviour and anxieties from upper-class masculinities converged to deliver legal reform wherein gender subversively legitimized seemingly fair legislation which actually served the patriarchal and economic interests of 'gentlemanly' individuals. Demands for more extensive reform by women activists only served to reaffirm male fears of displacement and commitments to the defence of privileged male authority in Parliament. When the emphasis was on the perceived virtues of working-class masculinities the case was not much different – the Army reforms sought to model the Army in the image of the nation's insurgent class but these "respectable" and "independent" men saw themselves above the roughness of the Armed Forces. In this case, the presence of established 'gentlemanly' masculinities in the Army was defended by those who had an interest in their status, but they were also *demanded* by those who valued the image of Britain as a strong nation and conceived of the *emasculation* of its Army as a significant factor in the devaluation of their citizenship. Expectedly, these two areas of reform and debate were inextricably linked to rapid economic change across the country and the emergence of incentives and social positions which deviated from the earlier norms during the Victorian period. How, then, did Gladstone's ministry seek to manage a changing economy during a period when its importance (both tangible and imagined) dictated both ideological commitments in Parliament and social re/action outside of it? And how did attitudes to emerging class-defined masculinities continue to shape economic reform in a ministry with a Cabinet internally wrought with anxieties over the displacement of 'gentlemanly' behaviour?

Developing the "mid-Victorian Social Contract": Economics and Tax Reform from 1855

Economic management and free trade specifically, represented a crucial element of Gladstone's liberalism and his vision for the British nation. In the same way legal and army reform sought to address seemingly concerning gaps between classes, economic reform sought to address this issue directly. Indeed, from the beginning of Gladstone's prominence in Parliament as Chancellor of the Exchequer through the end of his first ministry a clear commitment to balanced budgets and balanced class relations is visible in his economic vision. As such, in order to understand the characteristics of the economic program pursued from 1868 through to 1874, Gladstone's preceding Budgets must also be considered. Acclaimed as one of the greatest Budgets of the Victorian Era, Gladstone's 1853 Financial Statement set in motion the installation of what he referred to as the "Free Trade factor."[137] The Budget enacted a sweeping reduction in duties on items of general consumption such as tea, sugar and paper – an early attempt at addressing the disproportionate effect of indirect taxation on the working classes. More important was the introduction of a "Legacy Tax" – a new tax to be levied on both real and personal property upon succession. This move sought to seek equality in the balancing of a Budget vastly different from predecessors, but also had the significant impact of demonstrating that the landowning class no longer controlled Parliament and that all forms of property were now subject to taxation. The most important and relevant change enacted in this Budget, however, was a considerable reduction in the Income Tax and a commitment, albeit a soft one, to its complete abolition by 1860. Crucially, Gladstone sold his 1853 Budget as a conciliatory one – he "declined" to "draw any invidious distinctions between class and class" but at the same promised to both a commitment to "diffuse and distribute burden" justly.[138] Yet of course even in this early period, Gladstonian economic principles preferred a conception of self-maintaining masculinity visible across his articulation of different legislative efforts. In justifying

[137] Ibid. 125.
[138] HC Deb 18 April 1853 vol. 125 c1386.

changes to the income tax, Gladstone noted that "the income tax bears upon the whole too hard upon intelligence and skill, and not hard enough upon property as compared with intelligence and skill,"[139] a statement which resonates with the type of distinctions made in Reform and other debates that treated inclusivity where class distinctions were expressed using cultural notions of desirable masculine behaviour, in this case one that values "intelligence" and "skill" as it relates directly to their economic value and consequent social importance.

Gladstone's 1860 Budget continued in the tradition of relieving seemingly unjust burdens on lower social classes but began to have to contend with issues of "balance" more overtly, ensuring that concessions in taxation were not creating an unfair settlement that benefitted workers and low-income earners. As such, the 1860 Budget did not end up abolishing the Income Tax. Gladstone retained the Tax and struck a settlement wherein the Tax was lowered but expanded and indirect taxation was significantly reduced. No further changes were made for tea and sugar, but duties on paper and French wine were significantly reduced, together with many other household goods and foodstuffs. The reduction in duties for wine were important, as they interestingly formed part of Gladstone's plan to deal with country's drinking problem, as it made cheap wine available in cafes that paid rates directly to the government and provided competition towards more independent public houses in urban centres.[140] While this demonstrates a more pervasive way of utilizing the economy to support and discourage certain behaviours, it is important to understand how the Gladstonian economic settlement as a whole made use of cultural notions of acceptable behaviour in order to justify practically exclusionary legislative approaches as conciliatory politics seeking to "unite" seemingly divided social classes.

In 1860 Gladstone ended his Budget speech by assuring the House that by adopting his economic plan, Members were fostering a culture of independence and self-help across society – "you are not

[139] Ibid.
[140] Matthew. 113.

forging mechanical helps for men, nor endeavouring to do that for them which they ought to do for themselves; but you are enlarging their means without narrowing their freedom, you are giving value to their labour, you are appealing to their sense of responsibility, and you are not impairing their sense of honourable self-dependence."[141] Explicitly, Gladstone's Budgets in the mid-Victorian period sought the unity of classes through taxation, but inevitably made crucial distinctions within the working class which excluded certain men. The balancing act represented in the restructuring of taxation and the shift away from indirect to lower and broader direct taxation depicts a crucial tactic in the forging of what H. C. G. Matthew has called "the social contract of the Mid-Victorian state" – in the budgets of 1853 and 1860 "the propertied classes and the working classes confronted each other in the distribution of taxation, and Gladstone as chancellor acted as broker between them".[142] Indeed, Gladstone's closing line in 1853 hoping to "knit the hearts of the various classes of this great nation yet more closely than heretofore to that Throne and to those institutions under which it is their happiness to live"[143] deliberately resonates with his claim in 1860 that that Budget would "win more and more for the Throne and for the institutions of the country the gratitude, the confidence, and the love of an *united* people."[144] In this sense, it would be reasonable to accept Matthew's analysis that these interlocking plans of complex but balanced taxation had been by the late 1860s "presented to the nation as major contributions to the solution of the mid-Victorian problems of social integration and order".[145]

But if Gladstone's earlier economic vision constituted a form of social contract between the propertied and labouring class, with an emphasis on the inclusion of both in the social economy of the nation, then what are we to make of the distinctions drawn by Gladstone as he encouraged MPs to consider the benefits of his budgets against its dangers? Closing in 1860 Gladstone notes that the "wise

[141] HC Deb 10 February 1860 vol. 156 c871.
[142] Matthew. 122-123.
[143] HC Deb 18 April 1853 vol. 125 c1426.
[144] HC Deb 10 February 1860 vol 156 c872.
[145] Matthew. 222.

and prudent laws" he proposed would "not sap in any respect the foundations of duty or of manhood" but instead "strike away the shackles from the arm of industry, which give new incentive and new reward to toil;"[146] and in 1853 he was practically explicit, noting that "while it is open to them all, we know that practically the classes who are in the habit of insuring their lives are just those very classes whom it is your main object to relieve by the reconstruction of the tax namely, the classes of professional men and of persons who are dependent upon their own exertions."[147] Here it becomes clear that the "contract" forged by Gladstone in these early economic reforms rested on crucial notions of behaviour which were attached to work and thus to working men. Gladstone's comments in 1860 show not only that work and self-help were considered fundamental to "manhood," but that this Budget was designed to *free* industry of restrictions and regulations. In parallel to the claims of unity and conciliation made by Gladstone, this language presents the function of evidently gendered language in the formulation of a "social contract" which attempted to totalize class differences but also deepened the social importance of gendered behaviour as it related directly to the social economy. That is to say that these Budgets at the surface level accepted men in all classes as citizens and sought to provide them all equally with benefits that would totalize differences in economic status, but those who did not demonstrate the capacity to work or develop industries – the abject poor, for example, or the *"residuum"* – were not only non-parties to the mid-Victorian "social contract," but were also deprived of their masculinity in the eyes of the State. As Gladstone put it simply in his 1853 Budget, the benefits of the taxation were there for "professional men and persons who are *dependent upon their own exertions*." Beyond a commitment to the principles of self-help deeply entrenched in the 19th Century approach to laissez-faire economics, the emphasis on independent men by the State points to the social value of cultural notions of masculinity and the way these were influenced by an acceptance of the centrality of work to normative conceptions of "manhood".

[146] HC Deb 10 February 1860 vol 156 c872.
[147] HC Deb 18 April 1853 vol. 125 c1386.

Working-class individuals and reformers also contributed significantly to the development of economic legislation based on discourses of masculinity as it was defined by the social value of labour. As far back as 1858 John Bright's first attempts at popularizing the question of Reform were inextricably linked to the question of taxation and the lack of working-class say on issues of economic policy in the Commons. In one of his famous Birmingham speeches Bright talked of the "great" and "scandalous inequalities" of the Income Tax and noted to his audience that even after the Reform Act of 1832, remaining "rotten boroughs" meant the burden of taxation was placed most heavily on urban workers in town constituencies. He noted that "if the present House of Commons equitably or at all honestly represent[ed] the population of the country" it would more readily recognize the injustice of tax distribution across Britain.[148] This link between a desire for further representation in Parliament and the need for just taxation is important because it ratifies the notion of the "independent" labourer as tied down by the State's burden of taxation and its unwillingness to recognize him as an important voice in the creation of legislation. Keith McClelland has seen these speeches by Bright as a "decisive shift" in the articulation of demands for enfranchisement which now sought to explain that men without the vote were suffering the most excessive forms of taxation on products like tobacco and paper because of the economic mismanagement of an elite gentlemanly class[149] – argument supported by Bright's consistent condemnation of the aristocracy's support for military expenditure and war.[150] In conjuring up the memory of the "Old Corruption," Bright sought once again the key distinction between the deserving working man and the indulgent gentleman. As Miles Taylor put it, the language of Reform came to be defined by distinctions of "industrious versus the idle, the common people versus the upper ten

[148] John Bright, "Mr. Bright at Birmingham: First Speech - October 27 1858," in *Mr. Bright's Speeches, Revised by Himself, at Birmingham, Manchester, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bradford, and Rochdale.* (London, England: Judd and Glass, 1859). 1-11.
[149] McClelland, "'England's Greatness, the Working Man'," in *Redefining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*. 89.
[150] Bright, "Mr. Bright at Birmingham: First Speech - October 27 1858," in *Mr. Bright's Speeches, Revised by Himself, at Birmingham, Manchester, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bradford, and Rochdale.* 3-5.

thousand".[151] Yet, of course, as we have seen, this distinction contributed to the construction of a specific form of masculinity which was to be sanctioned by the State, leaving all others excluded even from the remit of demands made by Reformers themselves. Even later in the period, by 1872, the Gladstonian approach to economics, focusing on reduced indirect taxation and lower, broader income taxation, resonated with popular views of "financial morality" as constituted by "making expenses fall within the limits of a fixed income."[152] As Biagini notes, the assimilation of the management of the country's finances to the balancing of a family budget had become "rational and verifiable." In this sense, this "masculinization" of the economy was developed by early Gladstonian attempts to address apparent class divisions and accepted and reiterated by workers who saw themselves reflected in the qualities of "independence" and "intelligence" valued so highly in the economic discourses of the time. This "masculinization" resonates with the idea set out in Gladstone's 1872 speech in Liverpool where he encouraged pride in the industrious work of the "commercial classes" [153] – his emphasis on the "intelligence and skill" of workers as he sought to end the Income Tax reflected a broader desire for a cautious low-spend and low-tax approach to the economy, a rejection of the indulgence of landed property and the established aristocracy, and a hope for national unity to be found in this reformulated conception of manhood.

Even Budgets and tax measures not devised directly by Gladstone exemplify the way in which cultural notions of masculinity were central to economic policy, both in terms of their content and their conceptual reception. Robert Lowe's stint as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1868 until 1873 presented a complicated extension of the Gladstonian principles of retrenchment established by the 1853 and 1860 Budgets. Much of the opinion on Robert Lowe's successes as chancellor has not been generous and

[151] Taylor. 334-335.
[152] Biagini. 106.
[153] See n135 above.

broadly focused on Gladstone's claim against Lowe in 1873 that he had been "wretchedly deficient" in protecting the nation's finances.[154] John Maloney, however, has argued at length that Lowe's economic preference for a budgetary settlement which split reform "fairly between the rich and poor" suggests he was perhaps even more committed to the idea of uniting society through the economy than Gladstone himself.[155] The popularity of his Budgets in 1869 and 1870 is clear in newspapers from across the country, and is highlighted by both Maloney and Biagini. Yet two areas of tax reform within Lowe's program help illustrate the tendency of the economic "Victorian Social Contract" to become exclusionary in the name of totalizing equality. First is the tax levied on guns and firearms in the 1870 Budget during which he conjured an image of "man-boys" irresponsibly handling firearms and resented that "he carries a deadly weapon of this description about with him while he is drunk, or quarrelling, or bargaining, or doing anything that may rouse his wildest passions, and thus gives himself the power of carrying into effect what they may dictate in a moment of intense excitement."[156] The language here draws on the sort of exclusionary and pejorative rhetoric used against working men perceived as transgressive by the gentlemanly class. This sort of instance contributes to an illustration of the ways in which exclusionary notions of cultural masculinity were still being entrenched in economic policy aimed at *uniting* the nation, as late as 1870.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Lowe's proposed Match Tax in 1871 further demonstrates a tendency to overlook the specific circumstances and behaviours of the working class in favour of the need to balance out Budgets and financial settlements in the name of national unity. The 1871 proposal sought to place duties of 1/2d on each box of 100 matches and 1d on each box of 100 wax

[154] Gladstone to Granville, September 9 1873.
[155] John Maloney, "Gladstone's Gladstone? The Chancellorship of Robert Lowe, 1868-1873.," *Historical Research* 79, no. 205 (2006). 405-408.
[156] HC Deb 11 April 1870 vol. 200 c1624.

matches, and was admittedly a tax to be borne mostly by working-class individuals.[157] Two things, I believe, are important about the Government's handling of this particular episode. Firstly, it is important to note, as both Biagini and Maloney do, that Lowe was becoming increasingly frustrated and feeling more and more under pressure by the need to find money to fund widespread reforms in the Army – reforms to which Gladstone had personally committed himself to as part of the Government's strategy to abolish undue privileges and "plutocracy" in the nation's most important institutions.[158] This is important because it illustrates the priorities of Gladstonian liberalism and specifically of its economic program: it was reasonable and indeed desirable to pay for Army Reforms that would encourage the creation of an Army that reflected the "independence" and "intelligence" of the striving worker with a Tax which inevitably would be wrought from those very working men and their families. In the economist W.S. Jevons' pamphlet studying the benefits of the proposed tax (read and endorsed by Lowe) he easily argues away criticisms of increased unemployment and economic hardship among the working classes, noting that the numbers affected would not be "worth" the revenue that could be raised with the tax.[159] On a most fundamental level, the Match Tax demonstrates the antipathy of the government towards the lives of the working-classes and their behaviours of consumption, but on a political and social level it illustrates the priorities of a political program which sought to uphold certain principles it found desirable in workers while at the same time proposing a measure of taxation so out of touch with the economic realities of that class. Secondly, it is also important to note that the government reaction was indeed to withdraw the *entire* Budget after facing fierce opposition on these terms both within and outside Parliament – the *Times* and others described the "solemn" scene of "thousands of working girls and working boys" walking up to

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[157] Eugenio F. Biagini, "Popular Liberals, Gladstonian Finance, and the Debate on Taxation, 1860-1874," in *Currents of Radicalism : Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour, and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914*, ed. Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press). 91.
[158] Maloney. 416.; Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone 1860-1880*. 108.
[159] W. Stanley Javons, *The Match Tax: A Problem in Finance* (London, England: Edward Stanford, 1871). 35-36.

Parliament and standing as the Liberal ministers arrived.[160] Biagini questions whether the peaceful demonstrations of 1871 against the Match tax would have solely brought down the Budget had there not been fierce opposition among Members also, but it is important to recognize that the Government could not possibly retain an image of unpopularity among this class of people. It was from precisely this type of worker that the Government drew much of its inspiration for legislation and it would have been counterproductive to retain an image of official disdain against *peaceful* demonstrators. As we shall see, passiveness in protest was something the Government would value highly during this period, but in this case it is specifically the notion that the Government could just dismiss the grievances of these "independent" working boys that was unacceptable at the time.

The Match Tax debacle demonstrates two things about economic settlements and discourses during this period. Firstly, it shows that the Government was prepared to value expenditure in projects that advanced the Gladstonian preference for "independent," frugal and non-threatening masculinities (Army) over those that provided relief in acknowledgement of the specific circumstances of those workers and their families. Yes, heavy reductions to duties on commonplace household goods do characterize this period, but we see that the driving force here for Gladstone was the unification of a country that increasingly seemed to be divided by class. In line with this, the second characteristic of the function of economic discourses during this period that the Match Tax sheds a light on is the need to establish the *appearance* of social and class unity, and the importance of images of public demonstration in the cultural psyche of the period. The withdrawal of a Budget is a serious matter, and one that could easily result in the end of a Government. The image of "respectable" factory workers shaming Liberal ministers as they showed up to Westminster on the morning of April 20 1871, together with the scathing rebukes by matchmakers Bryant and May all over the papers, presented a threat to the Government's stated aim of

[160] "The Government and the Matchmakers," *The Times*, April 21 1871.

creating a country where classes were united and "respectable" protest and work was valued at the highest level.

In considering the economic vision of Gladstonian finances during this period it becomes crucial to consider the 1874 budget proposal by Gladstone as his first Government became impotent and dissolution was announced. In a series of speeches and letters produced in January 1874, Gladstone spelled out a final, decisive promise to the electorate – the complete abolition of the Income Tax. If the Budgets of 1853 and 1860 were aimed at propelling great Governments led by decisive economic visions, the budget of 1874 sought to enshrine the achievements of one that had enjoyed much fiscal prosperity. Yet opinion remains divided on the success of this particular Budget proposal and, since Gladstone had replaced Lowe as Chancellor in 1873, some have used it to indict Gladstone's economic sense during this particular period. Colin Matthew notes that actually the Budget provided reform only in "the two areas of principal concern to the propertied classes, income tax and local rates" and that therefore the Budget "lacked the wide social vision which had distinguished the great budgets of 1853 and 1870."[161] In fact, Matthew goes on to condemn Gladstone's emphasis on these two forms of taxation as crucial in bringing "to a much earlier burial [the Liberal Party's] attempt at the creation of a non-class-based popular party".[162] Conversely, however, Biagini has come to disagree with Matthew's assessment, calling it "ungenerous" and arguing that the 1874 program "included a number of reforms which were very important for the working classes".[163]

It is indeed true that concessions were made in this Budget towards the reduction of indirect taxations, with Gladstone noting that "it is manifest that we ought not to aid the rates, and remove the Income Tax, without giving to the general consumer, and giving him simultaneously, some marked relief

[161] Matthew. 224
[162] Ibid. 225.
[163]Biagini, "Popular Liberals, Gladstonian Finance, and the Debate on Taxation, 1860-1874," in *Currents of Radicalism : Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour, and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914*. 158.

in the class of articles of consumption."[164] Yet even in this case, the case of the male worker is considered only in terms of his consumption and *within* the context of the abolition of the Income Tax – a rehash of older arguments that understood working-class men only in the context of their ability to produce and consume within the economy.[165] Both Biagini and Matthew's contribution to the study of the impact and reception of Gladstone's finances support the idea that the "Victorian Social Contract" was built on a foundation of exclusionary notions of accepted masculinity which, because of their pervasiveness during this period, provided justification for what appeared to be a non-class-based political vision. Matthew's argument that the central tenets of the 1874 proposal did not include working men is correct – local rates affected mostly the property of middle-class interests in towns and the income tax had always been the cushion of reductions of indirect taxation which did mostly affect working-class individuals. Direct relief for working-class individuals was not going to be a priority in this Budget. Even Biagini's more generous assessment of the 1874 Budget proposals, which he acknowledges "intended to ensure retrenchment without upsetting class relationships", concludes that the abolition of the Income Tax without the imposition of new forms of direct taxation on wealthier classes amounted to asking working-class electors to "sign a blank cheque".[166] Even considering Biagini's main argument that a reform to local rates necessitated the sort of local government reform that radical reformers were asking for during this period, this must be understood in terms of Gladstone's commitment to upholding values of frugality and efficiency in government, in relation to how he saw them as valuable in the ethic of working-class men.[167] Even though these two historians disagree on the extent to which the 1874 proposals constituted an acknowledgment of working-class demands during this period, it is clear that those men who did not

[164] "Dissolution of Parliament," *The Times*, January 24 1874.
[165] Bright, "Mr. Bright at Birmingham: First Speech - October 27 1858," in *Mr. Bright's Speeches, Revised by Himself, at Birmingham, Manchester, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bradford, and Rochdale.* 46.
[166] Biagini, "Popular Liberals, Gladstonian Finance, and the Debate on Taxation, 1860-1874," in *Currents of Radicalism : Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour, and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914*. 157.
[167] See Gladstone, *Address Delivered at the Distribution of Prizes in the Liverpool College - December 21 1872*.

readily conform to the values of work, appearance and behaviour upheld in the Gladstonian outlook were once again left behind by them. As Matthew argues, the 1874 proposal feels very much like a desperate grab for the solid middle-class Liberal vote during a time of turbulence for an embattled government.[168] It is in this context perhaps that we must understand the moral economy of this period – in attempting to reconcile a cautious desire to include working-class men in the political vision of a staunchly middle and upper-class Party, the Gladstonian Budgets and economic policies of this period constantly distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable individuals in the working class using socially-articulated cultural notions of masculinity. This acted as an important barrier.

We have seen throughout this chapter the way in which the many legislative attempts of Gladstone's first government made use of gender, and masculinity specifically, as a way of advancing a vision of a classless society where individuals were united through loosely-articulated claims to a common citizenship. Much as in legal and army legislation, this was the case in the economic vision of the first Gladstonian government. Abolishing forms of indirect taxation and lowering the Income Tax was an extremely popular way of developing a sense of social cohesion based on class integration. Yet coded into the language of these lofty proposals I have found consistent and constant references to the "independent" and "intelligent" worker. This language, as I have discussed, is inextricably linked to specific notions of masculinity built on class-based values of family and personal independence and duty. As a result, those men who did not seem to confirm to these qualities – the abject poor, lodgers and bachelors, miners, etc. – were not welcome as part of these liberals' program for social integration.

The impact of this language and its pervasiveness is significant. In the area of legal reform we understood how legislation could be built on exclusionary perceptions of working-class male behaviour, resulting in the codification of these notions into the legal system itself. With respect to the Army, it

[168] Matthew. 225.

became clear how specific notions of masculinity were *required* by society to be projected on certain state institutions. Yet if my analysis in these areas concludes that the desire for specific masculinities dictated the shape, function and content of institutions, our analysis of the economic settlements of this period demonstrate a much more enduring and significant effect – the elevation of socially valued forms of masculinity as a *guiding principle* of Gladstonian liberalism's vision of and for British society during this period.

CHAPTER III

Masculinity, Reform and Working Class Politics

The liberal impetus and motivation of Gladstone's first government had, as I have shown, delivered with varied success reforms that sought to expand working-class access to government and its institutions. In doing this, Gladstone's ministry employed contractarian principles to deliver a settlement which included newly-enfranchised individuals as well as aspiring working, or "artisan", men. The result of this approach was a demarked emphasis on the importance of labour as a marker of acceptable gendered behaviours. The "independence" and "intelligence" of the men invited into the limits of the constitution by the Gladstonian settlement was consistently articulated by reformers in Parliament and then reiterated by working men outside of it. For both parties gender had become a certain way to delineate new boundaries in this rapidly-changing environment which imagined a more inclusive society but was still visibly hamstrung by particularly Victorian principles of character and morality.

In line with this, an important step in developing an understanding of this liberalism's use of gender in its development of a contractarian settlement must be an analysis of the ways in which policy was affected and articulated from outside the walls of Parliament. How did the claims of reformers in civil society challenge or reiterate a gendered approach to political and social inclusivity? Did other areas of reform amount to exceptions to the Gladstonian belief in a society led by laisse-faire principles? Who really stood to benefit from these proposed reforms? Beginning with the agitation and outcomes of the Education Act of 1870 and then considering legislation around trade union activity and the demands of the temperance movement, I will argue that Victorian conceptions of normative masculine behaviour was deeply entrenched in all claims for reform. Focusing particularly on the languages commonly associated with the contemporary preference for highly-skilled workers and orderly working-class behaviour, I will demonstrate that reform demanded by working-class individuals continued to exclude

and define individuals using gendered attitudes, and specifically cultural notions of masculinity, as a requisite for qualified citizenship within the mid to late-Victorian constitution.

Producing Independence: Labour, Political Power and the Education Act of 1870

The National Education League, founded in 1869 and led centrally by Joseph Chamberlain, undertook the task from early on in Gladstone's government to promote the notion of free elementary education for children in Britain. At its first meeting in Birmingham, it declared its aim and methods as follows –

> "Object
> The establishment of a system which shall secure the education of every child in the country.
> Means
> 1. Local authorities shall be compelled by law to see that sufficient school accommodation is provided for every child in their district.
> 2. The cost of founding, and maintaining such schools as may be required shall be provided out of local rates, supplemented by government grants.
> 3. All schools aided by local rates shall be under the management of local authorities and subject to government inspection.
> 4. All schools aided by local rates shall be unsectarian.
> 5. To all schools aided by local rates admission shall be free.
> 6. School accommodation being provided, the state or the local authorities shall have power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age not otherwise receiving education."[169]

Much like the more conservative National Education Union, the National Education League formed part of a growing movement to secure educational opportunities for children in Britain. The National Education League, however, can be understood more as a descendant of the radical claims for education made in the 1830s and 1840s by followers of Robert Owen, the cooperative movement and the Rational Religionist movement.[170] Claims for an accessible education, however, were still influenced by the gendered discourses of labour and moral values which had become crystallized in the Reform Act

[169] Samuel Edwin Maltby, *Manchester and the Movement for National Elementary Education, 1800-1870* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1918). 110.
[170] W.A.C. Stewart and W.P. McCann, *The Educational Innovators 1750-1880* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1967). 74-98.

of 1867. It was clear, from the widespread trade union involvement in both the Union and the League, that the newly-enfranchised worker was demanding a specific type of education which could address his and his children's hopes for the future, and one over which they could claim control from within their communities. They lauded the type of schools emergent in the United States of America, where all children were about to learn "a more correct knowledge of the duties belonging to them as men: a higher estimate of the dignity and rights of labour."[171] Here, radicals articulated the need for a specific type of education that was in line with their class status as artisans of the aspiring working class.

Called in to a meeting of the parliamentary Select Committee on Scientific Instruction, gun maker Charles Hibbs reiterated the need for this sort of specialized education, acknowledging that for scientific instruction to be "successful" the "principles of science" must be taught first. On this score, Hibbs criticized the newly-established Midland Institute as "too general for its purposes," claiming that "if an artisan wanted to learn what he required specially in his own trade, he would have to wade through a good deal of what he did not want to know."[172] Even Robert Applegarth, in his analysis of the educational system in Switzerland, showed a preference for an education system which focused on the need for specialized instruction which could directly benefit those wishing to enter the trades – he notes that in Switzerland, "the great majority [of students] applied themselves studiously to such courses as would best fit them for some special duty in life after leaving the *Polytechnicum.*"[173] In the parts of Britain where the economy relied heavily on the trades and specifically on the labour of children, assistant commissioners noted that "time for school attendance is spared only with a view to its being preparation for work," [174] suggesting that those parents who indeed chose to send their children to

[171] "The New Labour Movement," *Beehive*, January 13 1866.
[172] House of Commons. Select Committee on Scientific Instruction. *Minutes of Evidence.* London, UK. June 22 1868. 6527-6529.
[173] Robert Applegarth, "Education in Switzerland," *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, February 1-8 1870.
[174] *Report of the R.C. on the State of Education in England* (*Newcastle Report)*, Parliamentary Papers 1861, XXI, C. 87.

school, did not do so in an attempt to subscribe to contemporary middle-class norms of discipline and order, but "only as a means of acquiring reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing and knitting, as a preparation for the main business of life – earning a living."[175] It is clear that the claims and intentions of reformers and parents interested in widened access to education during this period were deeply concerned with the ways in which a new system might specifically address the maintenance of class status. In constantly articulating work as a *duty* "belonging" specifically to men, however, the push for educational reform converged cultural notions of labour and gender. This is particularly important in this period because the power and position of the artisan class was still malleable – to suggest that education could improve a man's ability to do carry out his trade was to suggest that their position in society reflected more boldly the principles of responsibility, independence and thrift which the constitution considered worthy of electoral citizenship since 1867. Reforms in education, therefore, cannot be considered to substitute the emphasis on labour which came to define the increasingly-fragmented class system of the mid-Victorian era. Instead, the reforms were to reflect it. Indeed, even by 1870, the prevailing institutional thought was that "*independence is of more importance than education*; and if the wages of the child's labour are necessary, either to keep the parents from the poor rates, or to relieve the pressure of severe and bitter poverty, it is far better that it should go to work at the earliest age at which it can bear the physical exertion rather than it should remain in school."[176] If to be dependent on the state deprived men of their masculinity when they were unemployed, then education gave them an opportunity to solidify it in the eyes of the state when they were employed. Indeed, having had established the notion of "independence" as a criterion applied directly to working men in their position as the drivers of economic growth during this period, the gendered nature of the education reforms becomes clearer – schools, and the desired accessible educational system, had to

[175] J.S. Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1979). 31.
[176] Ibid. 36.

reflect and emphasize the socioeconomic need for labour as a key component of contemporary cultural notions of normative masculinity.

The emphasis on a preferred working-class masculinity in discussions and applications of educational reform demonstrates how the behaviour and intellect of working men was closely monitored, precisely because it was to be expounded onto the constitution of the nation and reflect key values of citizenship that aligned with the economic and political priorities of the time. The use of education by reformers and working class individuals as a way of emphasizing the value of labour as a virtue at the heart of a masculine conception of citizenship is as a result clear in attitudes towards girls in education during this period. As J.S. Hurt's statistical analyses points out, while the numbers of girls in education by the early 1870s does not differ hugely from that of boys, it is clear that "in all academic subjects, except reading, girls were the losers."[177] Indeed, educational commissioner reports from Newcastle during this period show that most girls studied needlework in school or where involved in other types of work anticipatory of a domestic role in later womanhood.[178] The content of education after the passage of the Education Act of 1870 also sought to promote specific ideas about the role of gender and sex in the society of the time. While both sexes were pushed to value their future role in the labour force, Anna Davin has found "hidden gender messages" in the school curriculum which presented women as intended to work in the home or domestic services, while boys were encouraged to assert virtues that made them productive and loyal labourers. Role models in books for boys, however, included industrialists George Stephenson and Richard Arkwright.[179] In this sense, it is clear that the new education system was born out of and responded directly to existing cultural notions of gender as articulated by middle-class assumptions about class and the sexual division of labour. Insofar as girls

[177] Ibid. 29.
[178] *Newcastle Report,* P.P. 1861, XXI, B. 223.
[179] Anna Davin, ""Mind That You Do as You Are Told": Reading Books for Board School Girls 1870-1902," *Feminist Review* 3 (1979). 89-98.

were encouraged to undertake education paths suitable to their future functions within the domestic space, men were told to model themselves on the drivers of economic growth and industry.

The values and virtues of labour to reformers and working class individuals was at the centre of discussions about education, but with the growing influence of the National Education League, so was the question of compulsion. Conservative commentators and those in the National Education Union sought to dismiss compulsion as "un-English" and, as stipulated by the Lord Bishop of Manchester in 1870, on the basis that it would have an undue impact on the working classes, who often could not afford to even clothe their children to attend school.[180] Yet supporters of the National Education League and radical working-class men seeking to expand access to education saw compulsion as central to the effectiveness of any Education Bill. Applegarth explained the evidence from countries such as Switzerland and the United States proved that compulsion did indeed work, but he expanded his argument to explain that artisans were "fast learning that they have duties to discharge" and that, as such, they were "fully prepared to submit to a law that which, if it prescribes their personal liberty, will prove a wholesome check on their vices, and confer a blessing on posterity." Here, the distinctions within the working class that were visible during the Reform debates re-emerge – Applegarth urges his "artisan," middle-lower class audience to "demand compulsion for the poorest portion of their fellow countrymen," thus conflating the prevalence of unchecked "vice" and the implicit lack of regard for education with the lower working class.[181] The distinction was made across the board – the Rev. H. R. Sanford from Staffordshire noted that "the voluntary system… just reaches those who want to improve themselves, this respectable class of collier – but if we are to reach the class who do not seek education of the own accord […] we must have more efficient compulsion than we have at present,"[182] and gun

[180] *Authorized Report of the General Meeting of Friends of Religious Education Held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, April 25 1870* (London, UK: National Education Union, 1870). 8-10.
[181] Applegarth. Feb. 8. 181870.
[182] Hurt. 51.

maker Charles Hibbs also described the need for compulsion in moralistic terms, noting that "when a man is himself ignorant, he does not see the want of education for his children, which it appears to me creates a necessity for what I would call violent action on the part of the government."[183] These distinctions are important to our study because they place moral judgments on individuals from the lower sections of the working class which use notions of respectability and independence as markers of normative or desired masculine behaviour. Indeed, Applegarth ends his advocacy for compulsory education in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* with a deeply moralistic understanding of education as being necessary in showing working men that "there is something even better than an educated workman – that education will do more than make them clever 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' – that to be '*complete men,*' and to enjoy life in its most enlightened form, is what even workmen may attain to do."[184] Applegarth's vision of a "complete man" is indicative of the widespread conception of the uneducated, poorer working-class man as incomplete and further illuminates the intersection between class, gender and citizenship. In attempting to expand access to education as means of strengthening the clout of working class as a whole, it was necessary for these hopeful reformers to attach vice, disrespectability and ignorance to the "residuum," that lowest part of the social stratum; and in doing so, reformers were simultaneously creating and enforcing gendered discourses which valued the working-class only the basis that it may adhere to the Victorian values of respectable character, industrious independence and the ability to support the household as a father who may be able to secure an appropriate education and future for his children.

The importance of labour and compulsion were central to discussions over reforms to education the 1870s certainly, but the so-called "religious difficulty" inevitably faced in the attempt to imagine a national education system dominated meetings of both the National Education Union and the National

[183] House of Commons. Select Committee on Scientific Instruction. *Minutes of Evidence.* London, UK. June 22 1868. 6569.
[184] Applegarth. Feb. 7 1870.

Education League. Inflamed by the ongoing disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland and discussions surrounding church endowment in the rest of Britain, the question of whether the state should fund religious education using local rates sparked debates over the purpose of education and the role of the state in determining its content. By June of 1870 an initial Bill which sought to balance decentralization with the notion of "keeping the Bible open" in proposed schools had been met with enough opposition from the National Education League to force a change. The amended Bill separated denominational schools from the board school system and allowed locally-elected school boards to choose whether the new rate-supported education would be non-denominational or completely secular. The government continued to fund denominational schools using a direct Treasury grant, however, and the infamous 'Clause 25' of the Bill allowed school boards to "fund denominational schools by paying the school fees of needy children."[185] In this climate, advocates for a religious education thus fervently opposed the passage of a Bill which funded only non-denominational or secular schools, and radicals in the National Education League contended that the "teaching of the religion of some with the money raised by the taxation of all" would be objectionable.[186]

Despite Applegarth's assertion that the "religious difficulty" had "been created for and not by the working classes,"[187] it is important to fairly evaluate the strength of feeling surrounding the matter of religion in education during this period. As most schools were controlled and run by the Anglican Church, Dissenters and those who opposed the Anglican stranglehold on national institutions hoped that the establishment of a national and truly non-denominational educational system would not only reduce the Church's wealth but also the extent of its power and presence around the country. Yet when individuals, and particularly the clergy, articulated their feelings about the place of religion in schools it becomes clear that their concern had more to do with control over the structure of education and its

[185] Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone 1860-1880*. 203.
[186] "National Education," *Beehive*, March 19 1870.
[187] Hurt. 38.

effect on the working class than the ongoing debates over the separation of church and state *per se.* Sources from both the League and the Union illustrate the reasons why religious officials desired or rejected the teaching of religion in the new schools, but they converge specifically on their articulation of the necessity of education for the creation of respectable and independent working men. For the Lord Bishop of Manchester, a key figure in the National Education Union, the question was whether children "were so very dutiful and so very tractable, and such models of obedience, and every moral virtue, that they could fairly dispense with and disregard the influence of religious motives in their training."[188] He notes that to all the working men of his congregation he put this question to, the answer was "no". This mode of rhetoric, used in a speech to open a crucial meeting of the Union at the height of discussion on the Education Bill, points to the perceived need for an education that taught morality but morality as it befit the working class. The plan was to use education to assimilate workers and the lower-working class into the constitution – "the simple aim of the teachers and clergy is to make the children grow up dutiful to their parents, loyal to their Queen, obedient to the law of the land, penetrated by the spirit of the Gospel."[189] This was the positive side of the moral utility of a religious education, one that explicitly set out moral principles as the basis of a social structure. But if this message could resonate with the respectable artisan classes who already had made great strides in adopting middle-class norms valued by the liberalism of the period, the purpose of religion was to force the families of "out-door pauper children" to moralize through national education. As Union activist Romaine Callendar put it, the new schools must prioritise "not the respectable classes, but the children of a lower grade, whose parents were idle, dissolute, careless, and indifferent to their responsibilities" since it was these people for whom because "of the very circumstance of their ignorance, it was most important they should be

[188] *Authorized Report of the General Meeting of Friends of Religious Education Held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, April 25 1870*. 9.
[189] Ibid. 10.

taught the great truths of religion."[190] It is clear that the function of religion here is moral in a particularly social sense, as the ideals of duty to Queen and country were juxtaposed against the visible vice and decay of the social "residuum" for an audience filled with working men in a city and venue closely associated with the power of industry and working-class identity.

But reformers who opposed religious education in school articulated their opinions along the same lines. For them, the purpose of education was to enlighten the individual but more specifically to provide workers with the skills they needed to survive and thrive in the contemporary economy. Rev. H. W. Crosskey proposed directly that supporters of religious education were "pauperising the community by their system of free-tickets to be distributed here and there, instead of supporting the manly independence of the country, by opening free schools, into which every man shall have the right to send his children by virtue of his citizenship in England."[191] Here, poverty and reliance on religious education is set against the principle of "manly independence" as awarded by English "citizenship". For these reformers, efficiency could not be reconciled with religion but it is clear that their aims were the same – the independence of the working poor and the inculcation of principles of morality. Rev. Crosskey goes on to criticize Lord Shaftesbury for his support of the Education Bill's 'Conscience Clause,' calling this amendment to the Bill "the charter of the poor man's dependence, for he depends for his religion upon the gift of the parson – the curate of the priest. It is certainly not a charter of independence."[192] Naturally, as was the case with the National Education Union, the emphasis on independence and moral character was ultimately underwritten by the pressing social importance of labour. Rev. Crosskey goes on to warn that "there are questions touching land and the arrangements of labour which are of wonderful importance to the future of England, but believe me, working men, an educated class will

[190] Hurt. 45.
[191] *Report of a Meeting of the National Education League Held at Bolton, March 4, 1872* (Bolton, UK: Cornish Brothers, 1872). 12.
[192] Ibid.

master you."[193] As such, it becomes clear that the stakes of masculinity were at play in the search for education simply because of its importance in developing perceived moral behaviours which, during this particular period, had everything to do with labour and family as markers of appropriate character.

The role of religion in education, in the context of articulations of support and opposition, comes to us as space where reformers negotiated the attainment of power for the working classes. This power, as has been suggested by Hunt and Biagini, was primarily political and was intended to "fill the gaps" perceived to have been left by the Reform Act in 1867. Indeed, the popularity of Sunday Schools during this period was not only driven by the fact they were able to reach most poor children but also by their management by local laypeople. They were largely considered substantially independent from the Establishment, "local, even neighbourhood organizations, in which a distant authority could only play a minimal role."[194] During this period, it is clear that artisans and the skilled sections of the working class had been driven by the Reform Act to pursue self-government in other areas of daily life. As such, religion was a clear point of contention – to have independent, non-denominational or even secular education was to wrestle the power of the established Church over the industrious classes. As Biagini asserts, the crucial issue of education and religion revolved "not so much around government intervention, as *who* would control and administer those institutions which affected working-class life-styles". By July, the government had made a crucial concession and opened up the school boards proposed in the 1870 Bill to direct election, the specific terms set out in the amendment made the boards "the most democratic local representative assemblies in the country at the time". This demand had been made increasingly in the months of discussion over the Bill by working men, namely that "all ratepayers and heads of families should have the power of voting in the election of such boards." The decline in demands for further educational reform in the years following the establishment of

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[193] Ibid. 11.
[194] Thomas W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools & Working Class Culture, 1780-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976). 89.

democratic school boards suggests local democracy helped diffuse the "religious difficulty" because it provided upper-working class individuals to exercise the control they desired over their local institutions. Much like with that Act, however, educational reformers made the case for inclusion using veiled exclusionary rhetorics based on cultural notions of gender as it applied to the lower sections of the working class. Both Hibbs and Applegarth recognized the need to separate the working class into separate groups when it came to education – for Hibbs the "lower deep within the lowest" had to be distinguished from the skilled craftsmen and imperfectly educated workmen, and Applegarth designated as "the better class of working man" the "intelligent and industrious" worker as opposed to the "idle and the vicious."[195] It is clear that these reformers made class distinctions which presented poor, uneducated labourers as deficient masculinities, but it is important to realise that it was the feeling of both of these men that the intelligent artisan would articulate demands for more accessible education on behalf of the *entire* working class. As such, the process of legislating educational reform and compelling the uneducated to acknowledge the importance of education was simultaneously a reinforcement of cultural notions of normative masculinity as shaped by the necessities of labour and political priorities towards industrial growth during this period. Using the language of sanctioned exclusion against the "residuum" set out by the 1867 Reform Act, working-class education reformers used the same gendered descriptions of the uneducated poor, this time to gain for them access to an education that would empower them to be more efficient in their trade and thus legitimate their citizenship as men in the eyes of society and the state.

It is clear that compulsion, specialized education and religion had become spatial ideas where power was contested by working-class reformers to compel the "residuum" to adopt norms and behaviours which would strengthen their identity as men in relation to labour and emerging forms of

[195] W.P. McCann, "Trade Unionists, Artisans and the 1870 Education Act," *British Journal od Educational Studies* 18, no. 2 (1970). 147.

political liberalism. This was an essential part of the emerging social contract wrought by Gladstone's liberalism. Gordon Baker proposed that the framers of the Education Act of 1870 practiced a unique form of "romantic idealism" where they combined a romanticism of the potential for social reform with the contemporary opportunities for political radicalism.[196] The social romanticism of the educational reformers in Parliament had been born out of witnessing the extreme poverty in the cities of England, with some like Forster him arguing that "the principle of freedom of trade – of selling goods in the highest market, and buying them in the lowest, - was a mockery, an insult, a bitter lie to the man whose goods was his labour and whose best market was the poor-house."[197] In this sense, as Baker argues, the framers of the Act believed in a wholly organic social contract where, as opposed to the elimination of class, they sought an impartial middle where class cohesion could drive a unified organic state. Hardly democrats, Forster, Bruce and de Grey strongly believed that the expansion of the franchise and access to education would both "emancipate and placate the working man, simultaneously preserving the national heritage."[198] For these men, the role of religion was indeed important, in the ways that I have set out above, in the forging of a nation where working men could be part of the social arrangements in a new society – religion was central to an idealistic-romantic vision of a society where *laissez-faire* economics came second to human morality, and one where the value of human community was constantly reinforced.

As such, the final settlement offered by the Education Act of 1870 allows us to draw a parallel Between the relationship between the National Education Union and League in 1870 and the Reform Union and League in 1867-68. While the 1870 Act offered some concessions to Dissenters and proponents of a secular education, the Church maintained its control over much of the education in the

[196] Gordon Baker, "The Romantic and Radical Nature of the 1870 Education Act," *History of Education* 30, no. 3 (2001). 215.
[197] *Bradford Observer,* October 10 1848.
[198] Baker. 231.

country in following years. Local boards continued to fund denominational schools because of the extra opportunities for funding and independence. It becomes clear that the social contract proposed by the conservative Union, underwritten by the moral reassurances of religion, was largely preferred to the non-religious proposal of the Union. Concessions in the form of democratic boards were important of course but, as we have seen, religion promised a particular form of masculine morality which was necessary to *all* reformers who wished to drive the industrious characters of the lower-working class. W. P. McCann accepts this as a "retreat" from radical claims to accessible education as potentially transformative of society as a whole on an increasingly classless basis.[199] Much as the radical aims of the Reform League for manhood suffrage were swallowed up by a Union more concerned with imposing moral restrictions to the franchise, the radical aims of the National Education League – non-denominational education for all – eventually fell victim to the moralizing preference of Victorian reformers who saw a need for the moralization the lower-working class. Invariably, the content of this "morality" was for both camps based on cultural visions of normative masculinity as it related to labour and thus was articulated not only in terms of the "independence" of the aspiring working-class but also in hopes of class cohesion and conciliation through a social contract which appeared to provide impartial equality throughout society.

An exclusionary social contract model, based on the reaffirmation of culturally-defined notions of normative masculinity, is visible in the conception of the Education Act of 1870 but it is also tangible in the effects of the Act and its enforcement. Wendy Robinson's study of the experiences of boys and girls in the school board era concluded that "the cultivation of domestic subjects in the elementary school curriculum was a middle-class response to the belief that poverty and immorality could be cured by the stabilizing of family life"[200] and cites the work of other social historians who have found evidence

[199] McCann. 149.
[200] Wendy Robinson, "Different and Unequal: Elementary School Experiences in the School Board Era," *History of Education Society Bulletin* 49 (1991). 40.

in the era's inspection reports and curricula that supports the idea that an Education Act aimed at "filling in the gaps" of working-class activity in institutional Britain following the 1867 Reform Act supported normative masculinity as a guard against social degradation. In an 1873 school inspection report, Reverend Capel Sewel noted that:

> "thrift, labourious thrift, industry, intelligence and thoroughness in house affairs are no mean qualities in any woman; they are indispensable to the wives of working men if they are to have well-ordered homes"[201]

A clear link here is made between the importance of labour, the mentality and status of the working man, and the content of education that might be hoped for in schools. The language of "intelligence" and "order" is used in a way that evokes gender roles perceived as normative by the Victorian social mind-set. Yet the exclusion and separation of women from the sort of education intentionally directed at boys extended to the structural management of education. As compulsion became the norm and School Attendance Officers (SAOs) became central to the new educational settlement, middle-class women were excluded from this new area of organized state reform and working-class mothers were blamed for the alleged moral decline of the children they did not send to school. Sascha Auerbach here argues that middle-working class men actively excluded middle-class women from these jobs in an attempt to secure social status as paternalistic agents of change. Crucially, Auerbach argues middle-working class men's "public efforts to establish their class status and masculinity in relation to public duty and the alleged moral process of English society were central to their broader effort to define themselves and their social position in Victorian society."[202] A parallel may be drawn here between what McClelland refers to as the "masculinization" of the Reform movement after 1865 its attempts to more aggressively link householder status and manly "independence" to the right to vote, and the masculinization of the educational system after the Education Act of 1870. As far as political education

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[201] *Annual Report of the Committee of Council on Education* (1873). 186-187.
[202] Sascha Auerbach, ""A Right Sort of Man": Gender, Class, Identity and Social Reform in Late-Victorian Britain," *The Journal of Policy History* 22, no. 1 (2010). 67.

was concerned, the 1867 Act was a spark but the fuel was provided by a new educational settlement which from 1870 would continue to reaffirm cultural notions of normative masculinity as steeped in the importance of labour, independence and family. As such, it becomes clearer just how the Victorian social contract equated working-class masculinity with the values of labour and retrenchment it used at the basis for a conciliation of class interests. The exclusionary aspects of this contract can then be summarized in one broad stroke – the reaffirmation of the undesirable and unacceptable qualities of those who did not adhere to these preferred notions of masculinity, namely women and the "*residuum".*

Male Respectability and the Temperance Movement: the Licensing Act of 1872

The struggle to reconcile legislation that addressed the social ills of the mid-nineteenth century with widespread political, social and economic commitments to *laissez faire* conceptions of government action can be seen in a number of other areas of reform during Gladstone's first ministry. Important is the rise of the United Kingdom Temperance Alliance by the late 1860s, and its eventual success in forcing the government to pass a Licensing Act in 1872. As was the case with the Education Act, arguments for restrictions on the sale of alcohol became part of the broader aim of the upper echelons of the skilled working class to secure political power on the basis of notions of respectability as they applied to normative masculine behaviour. Yet even among the lower sections of the working-class arguments which decried the role of alcohol in corrupting the individual were reiterated, likely because of the space for political participation the Temperance movement seemed to offer those who were still largely disenfranchised by this period, i.e. the abject poor and women – James Nicholls has suggested that teetotalism in particular, a far more radical demand than moderate prohibitionists preferred, spoke directly to that class of people whose exclusion from the mainstream political process had been in place since the Reform Act of 1832, offering them "among other things, a stake and a role in social change."[203]

[203] James Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2013). 103.

For skilled artisans, however, the promise of the temperance movement and moderate prohibitionism was based on its ability to validate their status as "independent" and orderly citizens of society. As such, the contract between the established interests of middle-class religious temperance activists and the upper working class was developed on the notion of respectability – in 1859 the Alliance proclaimed 'let there be any extension of the franchise that shall make the registration spoon dip low enough to take up the cream of the working classes, and we shall sweep all before us in the House of Commons."[204] Working-class leaders responded to the excitement of the temperance movement, with George Howell and other prominent union leaders proclaiming their support for the Alliance's aims. Harrison notes that the Reform League had by 1867 "used the temperance societies as a one way of contacting the right type of working man"[205] which, as I have established, by that period had been decided as being preferably "independent" and orderly. Both Nicholls and Harrison note the great links in reciprocal funding between the Alliance and the Reform League by the mid-1860s.

It was primarily the language of respectability and the promise of decentralized control of drinking spaces and norms which drove support for a Licensing Act in 1872. In assessing the rise of temperance societies by 1865, *The Economist* has noted that the numerical strengths of the temperance movement came primarily from "upper class workmen, the humblest of the middle classes, and, generally speaking, persons below the class of gentlemen."[206] Noting that class loyalties cannot fully explain working-class support for the Alliance as Harrison argues, it is clear that the need to establish a "respectable" identity was crucial for working-class leaders seeking further reform on the basis of compromise with middle-class Liberals. As such, while opposition to the 1872 Licensing Act did indeed turn violent in London in the immediate aftermath of the Bill's passage, it is clear that opposition was

[204] *Alliance News*, October 21 1871. 667.
[205] Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* (London, UK: Faber and Faber, 1971). 205.
[206] Ibid. 204.

not unanimous. In the north of the country, mainly in aspiring industrializing towns, support for the Act was strong on the basis that it already supported the principles on which trade unions and skilled working-class communities had sought to base themselves.[207] Working-class parliamentary candidates by 1873 had embraced the principles of the 1872 Act and the Alliance's 1871 Permissive Bill as part of their own political programs, proclaiming their success as measures of social and moral reforms. Even opposition to the 1872 Act in London and the south was based on loose Libertarian principles which rejected the intervention of government in the lives of the working classes but retained their concern about the demoralizing power of alcohol. Southern working-class radicals maintained that "education will bring temperance: the book will edge the bottle off the table" and that in fact it was "ignorance and poverty [which] lead the unhappy human creature to the forgetfulness of sorrow which is the drunkard's great pleasure."[208] In evoking the power of education, the moral aspect of legislation which aimed to reduce the hours during which pubs could remain open was upheld, even if these southern Liberals resented the centralized way in which the first proposals of the 1872 Act sought to do this. Furthermore, the emphasis on ignorance and poverty as the "real" causes of the Victorian alcohol problem functioned to make distinctions among the working class which inevitably elevated the character of those who were able to enjoy "Sunday's beer" without falling victim to "uncivilized' behaviour. As such, we see an implicit widespread consent for the moralizing aspects of the 1872 Act, which essentially sought to stamp out undesirable behaviour by upholding notions of respectability as they applied to the working class.

The notion of respectability thus functioned within debates over potential regulation of alcohol to maintain gendered discourses of masculinity as they applied directly to the working class. Middle-class Liberals attracted to the notion of a measure that could drive social integration frequently equating

[207] "The Licensing Bill," *Beehive*, May 6 1871.
[208] "Sunday's Beer," *Lloyd's Weekly*, April 13 1868.

the resistance of temptation to drink with "moral strength" among the working classes. William Harcourt in 1872 praised the value of denying "indulgences" in drinking as a way of cultivating "manly self-control."[209] In 1857, the influential Alliance essayist Dr. Frederic Lees laid out the foundations of the temperance movement as moralizing in his *Argument for the Legislative Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic.* There, Lees set out the "arts of the Publican" as a "rival to the family in his claims to the purse of the customer" and decries the "nature of narcotic stimulants to generate a tendency to excess, by increasing appetite and lessening moral control."[210] The proposition of the pub and alcohol as the enemy of the family home and as an agent of corruption for the householder father is compounded by the demoralizing power of alcohol – the function of this type of discourse was to demonstrate the dangers of drinking to the position of the worker in his capacity as male breadwinner and model citizen. In closing his argument, Lees notes of the working class specifically –

> "Their rights, as labourers and citizens, can never be secured until they *are* men – temperate, self-respecting, enlightened; and therefore united and powerful. 'Strikes' will never aid them, for they fight capital with unequal weapons; political agitation is still more feeble when arrayed against the privileged classes, who if they were willing, dare not, in fact, trust the labourer with the franchise. *The working men must help themselves first of all,* and then their friends in other ranks will be able to help them too; until that first step be taken, the second is impossible"[211]

Here, the link between gender and self-control is made in direct relation to temperance but is importantly deployed in the context of potentially productive political alliances with middle-class Liberals. The notion of male, working-class respectability, as upheld and prescribed by the temperance movement, drew on the existing idea that the working-class had to adhere to certain behavioural norms in order to elicit support from middle-class Liberals in their push for further reform. As such, Harrison's assertion that the temperance movement "flourished on the genuine desire for respectability and self-

[209] *The Times*, December 31 1872.
[210] Frederic Richard Lees, *An Argument for the Legislative Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic* (Manchester, UK: United Kingdom Alliance, 1857). 45, 125-128.
[211] Ibid. 305.

reliance which prevailed within the working-class"[212] must be understood also in the context of the importance of such "respectability" to the political ambitions and aspirations of working-class leaders. Notions of normative gender thus become extremely important and central in the political vision of working-class reformers.

Lees' allusion to the importance of "unity" among the working class and the notion that working men should "help" each other resist the evils of alcohol importantly points to temperance legislation as invested more in *convincing* individuals of the dangers of drinking than prescribing teetotalism from a legislative perspective. Henry Yeomans supports this argument, noting that the permanence of the notion of "establishing rules more amenable to improving the 'intelligence and morality' of the population" set by the 1872 Act "demonstrates the vitality of the suasionist message and an enduring social legacy for the British temperance movement."[213] Indeed, beyond directly dictating or restricting the sale of alcohol on a substantial scale, the Licensing Act of 1872 merely sought to restrict the opening hours of public houses. As the Liberal candidate for the Preston by-election of 1872 noted, the Licensing Act was effective because "the hour between 11 and 12 was the hour of temptation, when very often the seeds of bad habits grew."[214] Even Home Secretary Bruce admitted in 1872 that he himself had "no faith in any remedy for intemperance but the improved intelligence and morality of the people,"[215] and the main sponsor of the Licensing Act in the House of Lords also stressed the needs to persuade people into sobriety as opposed to legislating for it.[216] As such, it becomes clear that the 1872 Act sought not to remove the possibility of drinking but rather to encourage "intelligent" and "moral" individuals to exercise self-control in their drinking habits. The notion of self-control went hand in hand with the

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[212] Harrison. 210.
[213] Henry Yeomans, "What Did the British Temperance Movement Accomplish? Attitudes to Alcohol, the Law and Moral Regulation," *Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2011). 5.
[214] *Preston Guardian*, September 7 1872.
[215] Harrison. 263.
[216] *Birmingham Daily Post*, May 13 1872.

persuasive philosophy of the Act. Working men were encouraged to "give the cold-shoulder to any of their fellow-workmen who were addicted to drinking heavily" as a way of internalizing the moral message of the temperance movement horizontally within class boundaries.[217] This anxiety to convince working men to be temperate concerned itself deeply with the public house as a place of drinking and public space of community, as James Kneale has argued. In his *Argument for the Legislative Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic,* Lees made it clear that he opposed the "public legalized trade for dispensing drink, not the private use of it."[218] As such, Kneale has argued that the desire to control alcoholic consumption within public houses was connected to the perceived corruptive force of alcohol in a place closely associated with public and thus political identity. Lees connects the "dethroning of reason" by alcohol with being "smitten" by an "irresistible love" over which drunk men have no control, leading Kneale to argue that the desire to control the public house amounted to a desire to warn against the "loss of masculine self-control" and thus the dangers of "masculine desires" as awakened by alcohol. The emphasis on control as it related to respectability thus can be seen to extend to the character of the working man through the space of the public house.[219] This struggle for political and definitional control in turn was expressed politically in terms of a desire for working-class power of local institutions.

Similar to the case of education, it becomes clear that the end-game of working-class reformers with potential licensing reforms was to secure for the upper-working class power on a local level, which further reified their position as citizens who would be trusted to manage their own political affairs as they affected their localities. On an ideological level, the principle of decentralization was crucial for Gladstone himself, with the Prime Minister noting in 1868 that he was disposed "to let in the principle of

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[217] *Reynolds's Newspaper*, September 8 1872.
[218] Lees. 11.
[219] Elaine Hadley extends the notion of spatial control as related to the establishment of behavioural norms through her study of the significance of the Ballot Act of 1872 and the instalment of the private polling booth, noting that "the body housed in the balloting booth is decidedly not this sort of sensualized being; it remains a manly body but an *abstracted* (not sexualized) embodiment of manliness, suffused with cognitive practices of abstract and disinterested political thought that are coded as masculine." In Hadley. 209.

local option wherever it is likely to be found satisfactory" and agreeing to "as much restraint in the liquor traffic as the public will bear without offensive distinction between classes."[220] Affinity for local control over drinking spaces and liquor traffic was drawn on by radical prohibitionists with Sir Wilfrid Lawson and G. O. Trevelyan declaring the Liberal Party "a temperance party" and noting that the "key-note of all Liberalism" was "the paramount and unlimited authority of popular control."[221] As Harrison has noted, it was significant that such a direct link was being drawn between the Liberal Party and the Alliance by the late 1860s, but it is particularly important that it was done in relation to the concept of localized control of regulatory decisions since this was at the heart of working-class demands for reform during the period. Biagini notes the centrality of localized power to the temperance debate among working-class leaders by noting that the only two Lib-lab MPs – Burt and McDonald – "stressed the importance of workers being able to keep the situation under their own control" with both stressing the need for "confidence in and […] respect for the working men."[222] In fact, it is possible to argue that it was the Licensing Act of 1872's only partial embodiment of the local principles that incited much of the opposition against it – Harrison notes that the extensive local powers of the Alliance's Permissive Bill formed the basis of its promise; "its decentralizing element would educate citizens in political decision-making, and its puritanism would curb that urban extravagance and material self-indulgence which seemed to threaten the citizen's self-dependence and integrity."[223] The emphasis on localization and working-class power can then be understood as part of the wider social contract developed in the second half of the 19th century – the promise of expansive political powers for the working class were coupled with moralizing legislative efforts aimed at constructing and limiting working-class identity. A central clause to this contract continued to be idea of respectability and independence as it applied

[220] "Gladstone," *Alliance News*, October 17 1868.
[221] Harrison. 249.
[222] Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone 1860-1880*. 178.
[223] Harrison. 288.

directly to working men – without these qualities, no concessions could be made on the part of middle-class Liberals already anxious about popular pressures on the constitution.

"Woe to England's Manhood": The Trade Union and Criminal Law Amendment Acts of 1871

Exclusionary approaches to working-class organization and coalition building was driven in many ways by developments in trade unionism during this period. As Sonya O. Rose has pointed out, assertions of the function of labour as a legitimizing force in defining masculinity in terms of "independence" and respectability played a significant role in the way working men approached labour disputes. Gladstone's first government developed crucial legislation in this area, namely the Trade Unions Act in 1871, and worked alongside unionist and other working-class leaders to consider the shortcomings and opportunities in legislation relating to the workplace. Even here, however, it is easy to witness the cautious approach to appeasement taken by the government with regards to trade unions – the 1871 Act was in many ways the recognition of an existing social fact, but the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (CLAA) on the same day suggests the permanence of middle-class fear towards disorderly masculine behaviour and its potential effect on the economic priorities of the nation. Insofar as governmental action expressed suspicion and distrust of trade union elements, working-class leaders themselves continued to make sharp distinctions within the lower classes as a way of forging alliances with middle-class liberals on the basis of universal cultural notions of respectability, often directly applied to gender.

At face value, the strides taken in the Trade Union Act of 1871 were very significant indeed. Most importantly, the Act legally recognized the ability of unions to organize and take action that many be deemed in "restraint of trade" without being legally penalized. Subsequent clauses of the Act included provisions to ensure courts could not directly interfere with union affairs. On the whole, while the Act did not fully establish or clarify the legal rights of Unions, it went a long way to award the legal

recognition necessary for union as established following the first Trade Union Congress meetings in Manchester and Birmingham. Within Whitehall, a Bill such as this was a promising step in the project to develop a social contract based on contributions to economic growth and not class status and conflict. For Godfrey Lushington, Home Office counsel in 1871, legal recognition for Unions meant their "heroic struggles for the good of their order" would be recognized and the rest of British society would be able to reap the benefits of the strength of united workers.[224] This hope in the effects of the Trade Union Bill, however, clearly continued to draw on gendered assumptions about working-class "heroism" in work and male solidarity in labour. When Lushington referred to the new trade union movement after 1871 as potentially "serviceable" to the rest of society, he demonstrates a particularly middle-class view of the labour of working men as an instrument for the advancement of society. The maintenance of this "order" among working men was central to middle-class liberal hopes of class cohesion, and underpins Lushington's praise of the "public-spiritedness" and "mutuality" of union members. For Gladstone, questions of trade union legislation were merely political and, as Colin Matthew points out, his preference for the liberal trade unions who pushed the Minority Report on which the 1871 Act was based rested on the perceived opportunity of garnering working-class allegiance to his economic order for a mostly free trade-based society – "working class movements that buttressed that economic order Gladstone encouraged, those that challenged it he disparaged."[225] As we shall see, it was crucially important for working-class leaders to play into these narratives which invoked the "responsibility" of the working classes to contribute to the new liberalism of the nation. Indeed, the lib-lab alliance formed in the years after the Reform Act of 1867 was comprised of a largely apathetic rank-and-file led by a tiny group of unionist who had "seen class collaboration as the best policy" during the struggle for

[224] Mark Curthoys, *Governments, Labour, and the Law in Mid-Victorian Britain: The Trade Union Legislation of the 1870s* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004). 144.
[225] Matthew. 133.

recognition in 1871 but as far back as during the Chartist movement,[226] thus maintaining Gladstone's trust.

Mark Curthoys argues in his extensive study of labour law in mid-Victorian Britain that the Trade Union Act of 1871 "accounted a highly effective instalment of Gladstone's administration's programme of emancipatory reform."[227] While we can consider the Trade Union Act as a significant step in the recognition of the rights of labour, it is not possible to dismiss its shortcomings or the way in which the development of the act and its partner, the CLAA, constituted a reiteration of exclusionary discourses of class and gender under the veil of "classless" legislation. The lawyer and active working-class campaigner William P. Roberts noted in an important letter to the *Beehive* offices in March 1871 that the Unions and the working classes should not accept the Trade Union Bill as theirs, because it contained several clauses that would leave workers disadvantaged. In this letter from a veteran supporter of working-class interests and former Chartist, there is a recognition of the government's attempt to make this a Bill made *for and by* the working-classes – he warns of "a strong tendency to regard the proposed Bill as one specially demanded by workmen themselves – as if it had been prepared in their interest; and this belief should not, perhaps, be permitted to grow into permanency."[228] William A. Hunter reiterates this suspicion of the government's aims with the Trade Union Act in June 1871, arguing that its failure to repeal in substantial form the Master and Servant Act of 1867 showed the "utter want of sympathy and the indifference of the House of Commons to the question of working men". In a speech in London he argues that the Master and Servant Act continued to allow justices too much power to determine what constituted a breach of contract, "handing the workman over to the tender mercies and acute legal discrimination of the justices."[229] It is indeed important to realize that

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[226] W. Hamish Fraser, *Trade Unionism and Society: The Struggle for Acceptance 1850-1880* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1974). 218.
[227] Curthoys. 140.
[228] W. P. Roberts, *Trade Union Bill, 1871: A Letter* (Bristol, UK: University of Bristol Library, 1871). 1.
[229] W.A. Hunter, "The Criminal Laws Specially Affecting the Working Classes," *The Examiner*, June 21 1873.

the Master and Servant Act of 1867 applied almost exclusively to the working class, with opening sections citing the "servant, the workman, artificer, labourer, apprentice, or other person."[230] By failing to repeal the Master and Servant Act of 1867 the Trade Union Act of 1871 was in practice deficient, leaving strikes and other Union action vulnerable to legal action by the state if it is deemed to be in "breach of contract" as broadly defined in the Act. For both of these commentators, who had enjoyed popularity as radical advocates for the working classes, the dangers of the Trade Union Bill could only be overcome with working-class solidarity and a united opposition to the proposals. Hunter encouraged working men to "show their strength" at the next general election,[231] and Roberts also encourages a more comprehensive and collective look at the realities behind the Bill.[232]

The most important line of opposition against the Trade Union Act of 1871 however, was the joint passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act on the same day. This Act, in amending existing criminal statutes, sought to illegalize the practice of picketing. Commentators sympathetic with the cause of unions decried the Act's lack of clarity in setting out what exactly constituted an offence. Beyond that, it was difficult to explain why the government had chosen to develop additional legislation to deal with issues of violence in union activity instead of letting existing criminal statutes apply to offenders. The criminal sanctions were originally included in the Trade Union Act itself. Yet as workers and unions began to openly oppose a Bill which "presupposes criminal intentions or tendencies on the part of English workmen as a class,"[233] Home Secretary Henry Bruce moved to separate the criminal clauses into a separate Bill to allow for more debate. The Bill passed, and even though Bruce and others at the Home Office hoped the separation of criminal offences would define them more fully and actually protect workers, the move faced a large wave of opposition from workers and unionists.

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[230] Master and Servant Act 1867, *30&31 Vict. c 141*.
[231] Hunter.
[232] Roberts. 8.
[233] "Repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act," *The Morning Post*, April 24 1873.

Opposition to the CLAA was largely based on the idea that it sought to link working-class behaviour, but particularly trade union activity, with a propensity for violence. Hunter argued in his speech that the CLAA sought to keep "the workman in a state of semi-serfdom" by controlling the nature of his dealings with other union members.[234] Equally, Roberts noted in his letter to the *Beehive* that "it is only by working men getting together and reasoning on the considerations which belong to their trade, its locality and special circumstances, that they can have a chance of persuading each other to act together for their mutual protection." Here, the proposition that the CLAA goes against the principle of the assembly of men for the purposes of bargaining draws on images of orderly behaviour among trade unionist members. As such, Roberts tells workers to "deny as loudly as you are permitted the assertion that working men require more than the ordinary restraints from crime and wrong" precisely because, in principle, the CLAA was diametrically opposed to the self-representation of unionist working men as respectable and orderly artisans.[235] Hunter echoes this sentiment, arguing that "so long as it [the CLAA] exists, he [the working man] will be turned into a criminal in spite of himself." Even the notion of the Old Corruption was evoked in relation to the association of working trade unionist with violence, with Hunter arguing that "under the pretext of shielding the workmen from illegal violence of their fellow-workmen, these gentlemen invented a new set of crimes for the express molestation of trade unionists," drawing specifically on a conception of middle-class "wily gentlemen" of the governing class who were "too removed from the hives of industry to understand the character of our working population."[236]

As such, the CLAA was proposed as a direct attack on the character of working men as orderly and able to carry out actions independent of special "class-legislation," commentators at the time were ready to interpret the CLAA as an attempt to delegitimize the position of working-class men within

[234] Hunter.
[235] Roberts. 7.
[236] Hunter.

society – they maintained that "to an honest working man – and of such are the mass of the population – there is no fate more terrible than the loss of character implied by criminal punishment."[237] Campaigners and newspapers across the political spectrum continuously resented the "insult" caused by the CLAA and viewed the Act as "derogatory to the character of trade unionists" and insulting to "the whole industrial order."[238] Working men had come to understand the CLAA as an attack on their character, with George Howell decrying its "great unfairness" in 1873. A banner at a London Trades Council rally in 1873 made a direct connection between the Act and the emasculation of working men, proclaiming "Woe to England's Manhood if it submits to clerical prosecution of workmen's wives and children to protest against the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and other class-made laws which favour employers and punish workmen."[239] The arrest and prosecution of the wives of working men who engaged in union action across the country from 1871 up to 1873 posed a further threat to working men's perception of their status as independent citizens based on their ability to maintain their household *and* protect his dependents.

While the architects of the CLAA seem to have intended a piece of legislation that would codify and limit legal action in potential industrial disputes, the Act was widely seen as an unnecessary complication of working-class recognition under the law. Under its definition of the actions punishable under the new provisions, it was established that the CLAA could be used against a workman "if he hide any tools, clothes, or other property owned or used by such person, or deprive him of or hinder him the use thereof." This sort of pointed and specific prescription of working-class behaviour in the workplace founded the basis of the offense taken by those who were pushing for the rights of labour during this period. Furthermore, as even the *Pall Mall Gazette* points out, the vagueness of the CLAA's clauses against "molesting or obstructing" was intended "as to forbid in legal language what were popularly

[237] Ibid.
[238] Curthoys. 164.
[239] *Beehive*, June 7 1873.

called picketing and racketing."[240] While Curthoys argues that the CLAA presented a real attempt by civil servants and ministers to address gaps in the English criminal law relating to threats of violence and various types of social annoyance,[241] the CLAA undoubtedly represented a violation of the principles on which working-class men had built a functioning identity by this period – order, independence and equal citizenship in the eyes of the state. As such, it is difficult not to interpret the CLAA as a reflection of the government's fear of working-class unity and action around issues of labour – by setting out offences that only affected working men as such, the CLAA undermined the conciliatory intentions of the Trade Union Act and simply set back the agenda of Liberals such as Gladstone and Forster who had hoped to drive working-class reforms as a way of preventing popular agitation based on assumptions of class character.

The peculiarity of workers opposition to the CLAA stems mainly from the fact no concerted effort was actually made to push for its immediate repeal. Furthermore, as commentators and unionists voiced their opposition to the Act, they used language which assumed the CLAA was undermining the ability of men to fulfil their masculine identities in labour. As the issue of potential for violence became involved in debates over trade union recognition, leaders more fervently asserted the status of skilled workmen as respectable and independent in opposition to the unskilled lower working classes. As such, reactions to the CLAA demonstrate the exclusion of lower-working class men from the benefits of the identity of labour and the collective scope of trade unionism as a way of securing the support of middle-class liberals in the struggle for recognition and the solidification of "artisan" identity.

Understanding that both government and working-class leaders were in the business of reiterating the importance of a normative masculinity based on independence and orderliness helps explain the alliances forged in this political climate as part of the currency held by conceptions of

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[240] "The Law of Conspiracy," *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 24 1872.
[241] Curthoys. 164-165.

character for the state. This point is particularly relevant in a discussion of Trade Unions precisely because they were at the forefront of defining acceptable and unacceptable forms of working-class masculine behaviour. As Samuel Smiles pointed out in 1861, unions were "exclusive bodies" which protected those in the skilled trades and sought "especially to shut out the poor and unskilled from participating in their peculiar advantages."[242] Trade union leaders such as John Malcolm Ludlow, Thomas Harrison and Frederic Hughes regularly associated unionism with a much superior form of working man that was skilled and able to conform to the principles of independence and order valued by the state. In 1867, noting his travels to Barnsley, Ludlow noted that "there is a very decided improvement, both physical, moral, economic, and social in the whole Yorkshire district where union prevails. But when there is no union discipline, we have dogfights and manfights, riots and manslaughters at every stage."[243] The editor of the working-class *Beehive* newspaper made the same distinction in 1870, depicting a unionist "with good wages, good clothing, good feeding, good homes and good deal of intelligence" but a non-unionized unskilled worker as "a miserable, puny, half-starved creature, hovering, with all dependent upon him, upon the verge of pauperism."[244]

These distinctions formed the basis for a compromise between working-class leaders and Liberals on the basis of the "impartial" value of respectability. The CLAA remained through Gladstone's ministry through the beginning of Disraeli's precisely because working-class leaders had excluded the "non-respectable" sections of the working class out of the unwritten contract developed in the early 1870s for trade union recognition. As Hamish Fraser has noted, Liberals in parliament had grasped at these distinctions made by unionists for unionists, with "Morley, Mundella, the Kells, Thomas Brassey

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[242] Samuel Smiles, *Workmen's Earnings, Srikes and Savings* (London, UK: 1861). 147.
[243] John Ludlow and Lloys Jones, *Progress of the Working Class, 1837-1867* (London, UK: A. Strahan, 1867). 221-222.
[244] Contemporary review XIV 409-10 1870 George Potter, "The Trade Societies of England: From the Workman's Point of View," *Contemporary Review*, no. XIV (1870). 409-410.

and others learning the disciplining power of unions over their membership in industry"[245] and Liberal economic interests lobbying for more restrictive clauses in the Trade Union Act by supporting the CLAA on the basis that it "more effectually protects the workmen in their individual independence."[246] The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, established in 1851, by the 1870s has come to exemplify the "new model" of union that was to be preferred and valued not only by employers but by Liberals with aspirations of class cohesion – a highly organized structure which valued prudence, combined with an ideological rejection of Chartism, gave the ASE an air of respectability which in turn was attained by its members, who enjoyed considerable representation by sympathetic Liberals in Parliament. As such, the story of unionism and Liberalism by 1870 can be explained by a desire from a section of the working-class to be accepted socially by engaging with existing systems, and a middle-class ready to accept the working class into the boundaries of the constitution by incorporating its favourable aspects within it. As Fraser notes, "when the working-class leaders found they could be accepted by the middle class if they were respectable, then it encouraged them to intensify their efforts to exude respectability."[247]

The compromise made between working-class leaders and middle-class Liberals is exemplified by George Howell's attempts a conciliatory Bill in 1870 to deal with the fallout from the CLAA. Apparently having become sure of the unlikelihood of total repeal, Howell drafted a Bill with Commons Liberals which merely rearranged words in clauses and, according to Fred M. Leventhal, intended to "reimpose virtually all the objectionable provisions of the existing law."[248] The Bill, as well as Howell himself, faced extensive opposition from radical Positivists and working-class organizations from across the country and the measure was eventually dropped and forgotten after a second reading, with Bruce and Gladstone both settling that no further reform to the Act would be considered. As such the

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[245] Fraser. 217.
[246] *Half-Yearly Report* (Birmingham, UK: Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, 1871). 4.
[247] Fraser. 223.
[248] F. M. Leventhal, *Respectable Radical: George Howell and Victorian Working Class Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971). 160.

importance of self-perception and respectability becomes visible in considering the ways in which working-class men navigated their political identities. For Howell, it was important to both protect the character of his workers but also to secure existing alliances with middle-class Liberals and he was aware that this could only be done by adhering to the *principle* of the CLAA – the assumption that there was indeed a section of the working class that was prone to violence and they deserved to be actively excluded from the body politic and society itself. The non-repeal of the CLAA can thus be read in relation to prevailing conceptions of respectable working-class behaviour as based on notions of normative masculinity attached centrally to the character of working men. The exclusive discourse of "independence" and "intelligence" drew boundaries within the working class, and while the CLAA gave workers the impression that such boundaries were closing in, a reiteration of the importance of orderliness and respectability among union members and leaders helped them secure their "artisan" identity despite the message behind the CLAA.

CONCLUSION

An important product of this project might be a stark warning against speaking of the "working-class" as a cohesive unitary group in the second half of the 19th century. My analysis of the ways in which both politicians and working-class reformers themselves sought to distinguish between different parts of this section of society should direct us to speak more aptly of the "working classes" as a heterogeneous groups, often with distinctly opposed self-conceptions. In a history that considers the formation of class identity during a period of great economic, social and political change, it is gender that arises as the central criterion on which these distinctions within classes are made. It becomes increasingly clear as Gladstonian Liberalism became a solid and cohesive political program, that upper working-class leaders needed to distinguish themselves and their ilk from the 'roughs' of the *residuum* in order to develop a contractual agreement with the middle classes, wherein additional political inclusion was coupled with moralizing legislative efforts aimed at maintaining particularly Victorian conceptions of "character" as they were valued by established sociopolitical and economic structures.

In the debates which began to lay out the ground for franchise reform the language of exclusionary masculinity is immediate visible. It took the form of distinguishing beyond those propertied workers enfranchised by the 1832 Act and those seen as destitute in the eyes of the state – those who seemed to have no stake in civil society, and thus did not need or deserve the vote. Yet as the theme of class representation as proposed by the Chartists was eclipsed by the need to garner political acceptance by an increasingly solid Liberal alliance of landed interests, economic radicalism and middle-class influence, it became necessary to find new ways of defining the working-class individual who did deserve the vote and inclusion within the boundaries of the state. The 1867 Reform Act crystalized the basis on which these distinctions would be made, overlaying upon the idea of propertied claims to the vote the moral importance of labour and the maintenance of the family home. Of course, the 1867 Act

ended up being hugely inclusive by accident and probably to the despair of its engineers, yet the debates which led to its formation in parliament demonstrated that working-class reformers were ready to abandon universal ambitions of manhood suffrage for a compromise on an inclusive *household* suffrage. By doing so, the political situation legitimized those who were able to maintain their dependents and enjoy the fruits of their labour as social boons with the privilege of recognition by the state.

When it came to legislation, the discourses of "independence" and self-help as they applied to working men was essential to the way in which policy was formulated and debated. As I have shown, this was the case not only with regards to economic and taxation reform but extended particularly to social legislation aimed at being inclusive on the basis of merit as opposed to class privilege. In was precisely in this attempt to forge a nation no longer daunted by entrenched class divisions that gender, and specifically notions of normative masculinity, was hugely significant. These had the function of developing pointedly exclusionary conceptions of what it meant to be a working-class man deserving of the benefits of full citizenship as far as the state was concerned. In this sense, the Victorian social contract had become inextricably linked with enduring moralizing attitudes of public behaviour as well as nascent ideas of the social value of labour and its indispensable place in an industrializing society.

The moralizing impetus of the legislation passed during Gladstone's first ministry does not find its origin in any one particular class. As this project has shown, the upper working classes had an interest in being accepted socially and politically as men, and middle-class Liberals were invested in extending the benefits of citizenship to those who adhered to acceptable norms of character. Among others, my discussion of educational reform establishes this point by highlighting the significance of the stakes in attempt to create a truly *national* education system. For legislators and skilled workmen, this presented an invaluable opportunity to change the course of English society. Religion, of course, was hugely significant in this attempt, as it down the foundations on which debates over independence and social

necessity were to take place. But the religious dimensions of the mid-to-late Victorian era, as I have presented them, are not fully constrained to middle-class Liberal or Radical working-class attempts at securing political and social power only. A more exhaustive study of the role of masculinity in popular politics during this period would focus particularly on the function and significance of religion across the period in the social vision of individuals during this period. Focusing perhaps on the enduring significance of texts such as Thomas Hughes *Tom Brown's Schoolboys*, significant links could be drawn as to the effects and endurance of "muscular Christianity" in the development of political ideologies and groupings later on in the 19th Century.

In the same way religion may represent a relatively unexplored aspect of the way in which masculinity functioned to regulate attempts at liberal reform during this period, Britain's imperial status holds valuable opportunities for extending our discussion. In my discussion of the Army reforms, I establish that it was increasingly important for British individuals to conceive of their Army as strong and stable as a reflection of the national ethos of an imperial, industrializing country. But matters of self-perception as related to gender and nationality necessitate a more complete discussion of the ways in which Britain's imperial ambitions and attitudes formulated and reiterated discourses of masculinity in its different forms. The debates between Disraeli and Gladstone over the Bulgarian Atrocities in 1876, and the Conservative Party's novel approach to foreign policy during Disraeli's first ministry, prove fertile ground for analysis of the language of masculinity as it applied specifically to imperial matters and its intersection with national and religious identity.

If Britain's imperial character provides opportunities for a broader study of masculinity in the development of political and national ideologies, the Irish Question represents a more important and relevant area of study in the same regard. Joseph Valente has commented extensively on the role of manliness and its idealized status in the development of Irish Nationalism during the push for Home Rule. His analysis posits the "myth of manliness" and both a prerequisite and promise of national identity for

the Irish, and argues that such a conception did much to hold back different strands of nationalism during the period.[249] But an analysis of the ways in which legislation towards Ireland was articulated in Westminster by the same actors who were engaged in reiterating discourses of masculinity in domestic legislation would provide this project with a more expansive understanding of the function of gender in colonial terms, and help illuminate more broadly intersections with geographical and religious identity as they concerned masculinity.

Looking forward, the era of One-Nation Conservatism and Disraeli's own performative style of government offer ample opportunity for the expansion of this projects scope. Indeed, Conservatives had been formulating their own, distinct, approach to popular politics during this same period, and their conception of working-class *conservative* masculinities differed from that of working-class radical leaders and their followers. Importantly, the development of "One Nation Conservatism" and Tory Democracy during Disraeli's first ministry present an obvious opportunity to explore the ways in which the "mid-Victorian social contract" wrought through Gladstone's Budgets, maintained through legislation, and reiterated by skilled workers, was upheld and modified through the later part of the century. Did distinctions within the working-class based solely on the social capital of labour withstand the totalizing efforts of a Conservatism that highly valued monarchy and empire as unifying symbols of identity?

The many opportunities for further research in this regard have been highlighted by this projects foundational step in attempting to illuminate the function of masculinity, as sociopolitical discourse, in the development of specific domestic legislation. Identifying the palpable anxieties among different classes in relation to the rapid change that defined the mid-to-late Victorian period, it is clear that a normative conception of manhood as independent, hard-working and orderly provided refuge to those

[249] Joseph Valente, *Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922.* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

seeking to make sense of a society increasingly challenged by the revolutionizing effects of industrialization.

As an angle of study, the notions that lie behind specific constructions and employments of masculinity is incredibly important for our understanding of the way in which gender relations come to be and how they have tangible effects on the development of social discourse and legislation. In a world where feminist scholars and activists have highlighted the crippling effects of patriarchal impulses on assumed principle of equality and liberty in the 20th and 21st century, the study of masculinity must be considered central to an understanding of gender construction and relations. Particularly in a contemporary context where the mass and social media have come to dominate individuals' conceptions of the self and its representation, it is important to be able to trace the influence of exclusionary and "toxic" masculine behaviours which often go unchallenged because of their socioeconomic and political value at large. This project sets out some ways of conceiving and interpreting the effect of normative masculine behaviour in the 19th century in Britain, but if gender is to be understood as a fluid and relative marker of identity, this thesis also amounts to a call for further study of the forms and effects which masculinity can take throughout our lives.

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