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A “NEW” NEW WOMAN: THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE LATE NINETEENTH-EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY NOVEL

by

SAMANTHA L. MOORE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English
Department of Literature and Language

Carolyn Tilghman, Ph.D., Committee Chair

College of Arts and Sciences

The University of Texas at Tyler
May 2012

The University of Texas at Tyler
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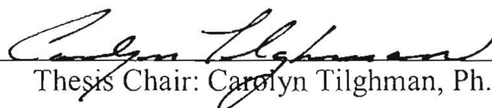

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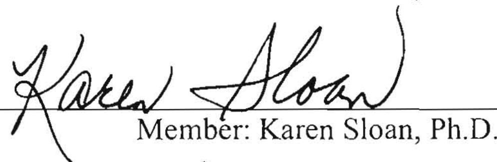

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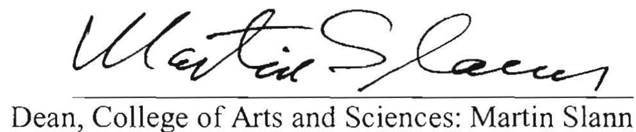

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Abstract

A "NEW" NEW WOMAN: THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE LATE NINETEENTH-EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY NOVEL

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May 2012

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the portrayal and characterization of the New Woman in the late-nineteenth to the early-twentieth century novel. I specifically focus on how the ideal of Victorian womanhood is juxtaposed to the attributed horrors of the New Woman in *Dracula,* and *Howards End.* In *The Convert* and *Votes for Women* I explore how the ideas of and about the New Woman transition into the Suffragette. In *Dracula*, I show how Lucy Westenra is an ideal example of Victorian womanhood, an ideal that is no longer compatible in and of itself in the modernizing world. I therefore argue that Wilhemina Harker (Murray) is Stoker's compromise, a woman who honors Victorian traditional ideas while adopting certain modern characteristics, making her a new ideal. With *Howards End*, I explore how the definition of womanhood has changed by the Edwardian period. Margaret and Helen Schlegel are both modern women, but they both embrace certain traditional values, creating yet another new facet of womanhood that can be admired. Finally, I look at *The Convert* and *Votes for Women*,

examining the character of a young woman that authors like Stoker would classify as a New Woman, a New Woman to be feared. Vida Levering fights not out of rebellion against the patriarchy in general, but out of the awakened awareness that women deserve to have personal and political rights. I examine these female characters's dedication to or transformation into a type of "new" woman that is worthy of praise.

Introduction

During the Victorian and Edwardian Ages, society allowed the idea of separate spheres for men and women to shape the expectations and opportunities for both genders. Women were not content to stay in this prescribed sphere, however. Instead, women slowly challenged society's restrictions and began insisting that they should have equal opportunities with men. Those women who were brave enough to challenge society were rarely received well; in fact, in the Victorian period, a new title was given to identify these women: the "New Woman." These women were also titled "the Odd Woman, the Wild Woman, and the Superfluous Woman in English novels and periodicals of the 1880s and 1890s" as Ann Ardis notes in her book *New Women, New Novels* (1). Additionally, Barbara Caine writes in *English Feminism, 1780-1980*, that "(t)he term 'new woman' burst onto the English literary and journalistic scene in 1894, after several decades during which a series of other terms had been used in an attempt to describe what many regarded as the worrying changes in the behavior, the activities, and the demeanor of women" (134). In the Victorian Era, middle-class daughters were trained to be eye and arm candy, full of accomplishments like singing, playing an instrument, and drawing. They were trained to be virtually silent and invisible, pure, and prepared to be future mothers. Married women were expected to produce children, be dutiful, faithful wives, and generally only participated in society in the presence of either their husbands or other women. Women, however, were not content to stay in this confining domestic box that society, men, and the women who came before them had created or allowed to be created.

New ideas of what it meant to be a woman, what she should be allowed to do, say, think, and desire began to be challenged during the Victorian Era. The "Woman Question" became a heated topic for debate. Both men and women argued for both the continued separation of the spheres of men and women and for the liberation of women, at least in some areas like financial independence and education. By the late 1890's, however, women who had grown tired of waiting for permission to have rights began to claim them in non-traditional ways. This "New Woman" strove to be independent of men, guided by her own thoughts and desires rather than society's. The New Woman wanted the freedom to travel about on her own; respectable women were usually accompanied by a chaperone or companion of some sort, but the New Woman fought this restriction by riding a bicycle, which was considered scandalous for women. Because Queen Victoria had established a ladies college in 1847, the New Woman could get an education. In fact, other colleges for women, like Somerville College (1878/9) and St. Hilda's College (1893), were established later in the century. As a result of this growing opportunity for higher education, women could choose to leave the home-sphere relegated to them and begin vying for jobs previously held only by men. With a job, the New Woman could be financially independent; she did not have to marry for financial security, and she would therefore be enabled to control her life and choices. Some women began to choose to remain single; the stigma of "spinster" was no longer a title to be feared for these New Women. The New Woman felt that if she wanted to get an education and make her own way financially in the world, then finding a husband was not always necessary to make this happen. Also, since society looked the other way when men had mistresses, the New Woman felt she had just as much right to take a lover rather

than a husband. Motherhood was often refused by this New Woman, though not by all, because child-bearing and rearing could be viewed as a means to keep the woman in the home. These characteristics were only some of the qualities and attributes of the Victorian ideal of womanhood and the New Woman, but the carefully crafted mold which women had been shaped to fit was cracking and would soon break altogether.

One of the main problems facing the women classified as New Woman was how they were characterized in fictional accounts. Caine notes that "(p)art of the strategy here involved criticizing or condemning fictional portrayals as false representations of a 'real' New Woman, while pointing rather to the way a new generation joined new activities with an older feminine ideal" (140). This is the heart of the issue that I am exploring in the subsequent chapters. The New Woman is made by authors of the time to appear mostly bad, and while I do not agree with all of the demands that these New Women made, in my chapters on *Dracula* and *Howards End* I show that the women portrayed are in actuality not New Women, but women adapting to the changing definitions of womanhood. In my chapter on *The Convert* and *Votes for Women*, I show how women, especially those that became involved with the Suffrage Movement, were set up by society to be cast as New Women in order to diminish the threat that they posed to the patriarchal order.

While the Victorian ideal of womanhood was beginning to change, the fight for Women's Suffrage was also brewing. When the peaceful tactics of the Suffragists had still not brought about any real change by the early 1900s, the Suffragettes began to take militant action to make their points. Caine notes that "(t)he new methods of campaigning used by militant suffragettes and moderate suffragists alike, with the ever-expanding use

of banners, posters, pageants, plays and marches, ensured that the battle for political rights was accompanied by an equally powerful battle of representations" (131). Such propaganda shows that women were ready to assert their right to be seen and heard, by force if necessary. There are two particular progressive feminist journals that explore many of the issues addressed by and concerning the New Woman and the Suffragists and/or Suffragettes: *Shafts* and *Woman's Signal*[1]. For example, Caine notes that some of the issues that are explored in *Shafts* are "(t)he importance of birth control and of voluntary motherhood, the need for an equal moral standard and for new forms of sexual union or marriage, as well as the need for divorce law reform" (142). These issues are shared concerns for both the New Woman and the Suffragette. That they have many desires in common, such as equality between the genders, same standards and judgment for behavior, financial and social independence from men, and the right to speak for women's needs and desires, is important to remember. In "Is the New Woman a Myth?," C. Morgan-Dockrell writes that:

> (t)he new woman maintains that as the needs and desires of the world are not those of men alone, but are those of men, women, and children, so those needs and desires can only be naturally and effectually provided for by man and woman working harmoniously together for those ends. Not man for man and woman for woman, but man and woman for men and women. (17)

Of course, men had to be willing to work alongside women first, and their reticence to do so led to the rise of both the New Woman and the militant Suffragette. With their common interests forming the transition between the New Woman and the Suffrage Movement, the lines between the fictionally feared New Woman and the militant Suffragette began to blur and disappear.

In the novels and play that I examine, I focus on how most of the women take the

best qualities of the New Woman and combine them with the modern changes happening for women to form a new standard of admirable womanhood. With *Dracula*, I show how Lucy Westenra is an ideal example of Victorian womanhood, an ideal that is no longer compatible in and of itself in the modernizing world. I therefore argue that Wilhemina Harker (Murray) is Stoker's compromise, a woman who honors Victorian traditional ideas while adopting certain modern characteristics, making her a new ideal. With *Howards End*, I explore how the definition of womanhood has changed by the Edwardian period. Margaret and Helen Schlegel are both modern women, but they both embrace certain traditional values, creating yet another new facet of womanhood that can be admired. Finally, I look at *The Convert* and *Votes for Women*, examining the character of a young woman that authors like Stoker would classify as a New Woman, a New Woman to be feared. I argue, however, that while she makes mistakes in her life, Vida Levering, as a New Woman and Suffragette, is fighting not out of rebellion against the patriarchy in general, but out of the awakened awareness that women deserve to have personal and political rights. I show, however, that she is set up as a New Woman to be feared by society because she and the Suffragettes demand their rights in unconventional ways. Vida learns from her mistakes, though, and she joins the fight for Women's Suffrage largely to try and prevent the same misfortunes and/or mistakes from happening to other women. For all of these female characters, I examine their dedication to or transformation into a type of "new" woman that is worthy of praise.

Chapter 1

Falsely Accused: An Examination of Lucy and Wilhemina in *Dracula*

When Bram Stoker published *Dracula* in 1897, the idea of the New Woman was gaining strength and changing the definition of womanhood. Stoker was one of several authors who wrote novels to respond to and put down the New Woman. As this chapter will show, Stoker's perception of the New Woman is a rather narrow one, which equates her desire for independence with sexual promiscuity and aggressiveness. In *English Feminism, 1780-1980*, Barbara Caine notes that "the 'new woman' emerged to state her case for change with the *fin-de-siècle* questioning of so many institutions, assumptions and beliefs, particularly those centering on sexuality, marriage, and family life" (134). These are the very issues that Stoker addresses through Lucy Westenra and Wilhemina Harker (Murray). In the novel, he addresses what he views as the problems in an interesting manner by creating two models of womanhood, one in Lucy Westenra prior to her transformation into a vampire, and the other in Wilhemina (Mina) Harker (Murray). With Lucy, he shapes her character to resemble that ideal of Victorian womanhood, and although she makes some errors in judgment in the novel, those errors serve to humanize her character. With Mina, he shows how a woman could take some of the best attributes of the Victorian ideology for womanhood and combine them with some of the positive changes being made in the role and place of women in late Victorian society. In "Seismic Orgasm: Sexual Intercourse and Narrative Meaning in Mina Loy," Rachel DuPlessis points out that "*Dracula* puts us on notice about the narrative and cultural

pressure point created by the possibility of autonomous female sexual desire (in Lucy) and autonomous female activity (… in Mina) and the relation of both to motherhood" (190). One of the greatest fears attached to the stigmatized New Woman is that she despises motherhood, which could lead to deterioration of the British Empire. Lucy as a vampire does invert the role of the mother, but Mina remains a constant mother-figure throughout the text. Mina was Stoker's attempt to create a compromise, allowing women to embrace some changes while still revering some of the older, traditional ways. Stoker also provides examples of New Women that should be feared, examples that completely revile the older Victorian ideals of womanhood and gender expectations, first in the three vampire women in Dracula's castle, and later especially in the vampire Lucy. Carol Senf writes in "'Dracula': Stoker's Response to the New Woman," that "Stoker's villainesses… radiate sexuality. Responding to the sexual freedom and reversal of roles which were often associated with the New Woman, Stoker uses the ancient superstition of the vampire in *Dracula* to symbolize the evil that can result" (39). As this quote in Senf's article shows, Stoker's perception of the New Woman tends to be negative. Other critics argue that Lucy is not an exemplar of Victorian womanhood, but I will dispute this claim[2]. I also find that Mina's character displays more qualities of an exemplar of Victorian values rather than modern values, but only a few critics recognize that she combines the best of both[3]. In this paper I will argue that Lucy, until she is made a vampire, and Mina, even when she is starting to change into a vampire, are in actuality not New Women; rather, they are ordinary women caught in extraordinary circumstances, circumstances that they both fight against in an effort to remain true to the traditional ideas of womanhood that they respect.

Lucy Westenra is, first and foremost, the character representative of the older, Victorian ideal of womanhood in the novel. She is made such by Stoker for two reasons: first, to demonstrate a reverence for the past, and second, to show how her definition of womanhood can no longer survive in these changing times. By portraying Lucy as an ideal Victorian lady, with her proper desire to marry, run a household, and have children, Stoker is able to show what he and male-dominated society view as the beautiful and rightly ordered past. However, even Stoker acknowledges that the roles of women are changing. The New Woman is loud and clear about what she wants, deserves, and will have. In order to compromise, therefore, Stoker creates the character of Mina. Stoker imbues Mina with what he sees as the best characteristics of both the old Victorian ideal of womanhood and the New Woman. Lucy, however, as a representative of the old Victorian ideal and belonging exclusively to that mindset, is unable to adapt to the changing definitions of womanhood and therefore dies.

In examining Lucy, there are several areas that must be considered in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of her character. The first area is her family background. Victorian society is a patriarchy; Mrs. Westenra had been raised and Lucy is raised to recognize and follow a male lead in all things. Unfortunately, Mr. Westenra dies when Lucy is still a child, and there is apparently no other male relative to step in as a helper to Mrs. Westenra and as a father figure to Lucy. While Mrs. Westenra adores and takes great pride in Lucy, she is not equipped to fulfill the role of mother and father to Lucy. Stoker does not give Mrs. Westenra the faculties to adapt to her new role. Mrs. Westenra’s greatest deficiency is ignorance; she cannot see or understand the danger Lucy is in when Lucy is being attacked by Dracula, nor does she observe any

reproachable behavior in Lucy's actions with her three male friends and would-be suitors. Mrs. Westenra is herself ill, so in the spirit of chivalry none of the men inform her of the seriousness of Lucy's illness. In *Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change*, Jane Lewis writes that "(t)he complicated nature of women's response to doctors' views about their role also characterised the way in which women dealt with the whole area of sexual difference and its implications for their position in terms of both the separation of spheres and of female dependency within the private sphere of home and family" (87). With this in mind, it is not surprising that Mrs. Westenra does not press for information about Lucy's illness because women are not expected to understand or considered able to comprehend the seriousness or intricacies of illnesses. It would be unseemly for a woman to know too much about sickness, even a sickness relating to her daughter, as well as for a woman to demand knowledge from a male doctor. Mrs. Westenra is also so concerned with her own health that she fails to strictly watch and protect Lucy in their home and society. Because of her mother's ignorance and lack of intent awareness, Lucy makes some minor mistakes for which she is charged as being a New Woman, mistakes for which she is inherently responsible but also makes because she lacks guidance in her home.

Education is the second area of consideration in understanding Lucy's character. As a woman, Mrs. Westenra would have been responsible for certain aspects of Lucy's education and the shaping of her character. In *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*, Joan Burstyn writes that "(w)ith support from their parents, girls were taught how to behave as contenders in the marriage market, and as social hostesses; most were given neither systematic intellectual training, nor instruction in the skills of

housekeeping and childcare" (22). Because Mr. Westenra dies before Lucy is old enough for them to prepare her for marriage, Mrs. Westenra would have been solely responsible for teaching her daughter about the expectations/goals placed on women, especially the importance of securing a suitable match. She would have taught her daughter about the proper behavior for a young woman, what is appropriate both on her part and any would-be suitor's part. She would have taught her daughter to manage a household with a supporting staff, not how to keep it herself. Furthermore, like many young women of at least modest financial means during the Victorian era, Lucy finishes her education at an etiquette school, which is where she meets Wilhemina (Mina). Mina is a combination of things for Lucy; she is Lucy's friend, first and foremost, but she is also a mother figure to Lucy. Lucy, in fact, relies more on Mina for advice and guidance than she does on her own mother because her mother does not involve herself overly much in Lucy's concerns. Lucy is therefore more trained about what is acceptable in society by her school education and a teacher/friend than by her own mother. Mrs. Westenra trusts that Lucy knows what is proper and therefore does not monitor her daughter's actions and behavior as closely as she should. Lucy is at a disadvantage because of her lack of a father figure to guide her, to provide insight into how a woman should behave with a man, and to help her find a suitable match. Having three men pursuing her without her father to interfere and her mother's inability and lack of knowledge make it easy for Lucy to err against societal standards for proper behavior. Lucy, however, manages quite well under these circumstances. In "Tasting the Original Apple: Gender and the Struggle for Narrative Authority in *Dracula*," Alison Case writes that "(i)f Lucy does represent the sexual aspect of the New Woman, that representation explicitly resists late Victorian

feminist efforts to reconceive the mutually exclusive terms in which womanhood was judged. As inspiring angel or as 'voluptuous' vampire-whore, Lucy remains squarely within High Victorian gender categories" (224-5). Case is, in fact, one of the few critics to view Lucy as possessing any New Woman qualities only after she is turned into a vampire. Lucy, like an ideal Victorian young lady, never intentionally implies that she feels more than friendship for either Dr. Seward or Quincey Morris, two of her suitors. In her refusal of Morris's proposal, she does allow him a kiss, which is socially wrong, but she does not do so with malice or the intent to harm. Lucy is certain of which man she loves, and she faithfully focuses her attentions on Arthur Holmwood. Although Lucy does make some minor errors in judgment, her mistakes serve to humanize her and should not be the main focus in the estimation of her character.

Understanding the familial and educational background that Lucy comes from is important especially in considering how she deals with her suitors. Lucy possesses the mindset of a Victorian woman; her desire is to marry well and become a wife and mother. Lucy also does not intentionally toy with the affections of Seward and Morris; her failure to recognize the depth of their feelings goes back to her lack of a father figure and of an aware mother. I am not excusing Lucy for any of her actions; however, I think it is an error in judgment to ignore the weight of her familial and educational background on her thoughts and actions. It is in one of her letters to Mina where Lucy speaks about the three proposals that assumptions are generally based in the interpretations of Lucy's character. However, critics like Carol Senf, Sally Ledger, and Kathleen Spencer consistently fail to acknowledge Lucy's distress and remorse in her rejection of Seward and Morris. The first misinterpretation that many critics make comes from Lucy's

comment: "Here I am, who shall be twenty in September, and yet I never had a proposal till to-day, not a real proposal, and to-day I have had three. Just fancy! THREE proposals in one day! Isn't it awful! I feel sorry, really and truly sorry, for two of the poor fellows" (Stoker 78). At this point in the letter, Lucy is exultant, overjoyed, but also sad. It is true that she is flattered by receiving three proposals, and the fact that they are all from honorable, well-established men makes their proposals even more valued. Two points should be remembered, however, when examining Lucy here. First, most young women, especially a young woman of this late Victorian time period, would have been flattered by receiving three proposals. They might have even felt exultant and proud because of the honor being paid them. Second, Lucy does not stay exultant; in fact, her reaction to receiving three proposals in one day begins to change as the letter progresses. Her first proposal is from Seward, but she tells Mina that "Being proposed to is all very nice and all that sort of thing, but it isn't at all a happy thing when you have to see a poor fellow, whom you know loves you honestly, going away looking all broken-hearted, and to know that, no matter what he may say at the moment, you are passing quite out of his life" (79). She even has to step away from her writing because she becomes overwhelmed by her emotions, both joy and misery. If Lucy is truly a New Woman, then she might have chosen not to accept any of the marriage proposals so that she could maintain her freedom, even though a New Woman, like Lucy, might feel remorse for hurting such honorable, worthy men. Heartlessness is a trait often attributed to the New Woman, and Stoker includes this attribute in his female vampires. While Lucy is human, however, she does not show even a hint of heartlessness, creating a distinct difference between Stoker's ideal of womanhood and the nightmarish New Woman.

The next area upon which Lucy is accused of being a New Woman arises from her manner of dealing with her suitors. Lucy deals with each of her suitors differently. She is like a sponge, absorbing the attitude or disposition of each suitor, so that she responds in the best possible way for each one. Her manner in handling her suitors is further proof of her respect for the older, traditional ideal of womanhood. Again, Lucy is not heartless in her rejection of Seward and Morris; in fact, she tries to soothe their hurt and express her own regret at being the cause. Lucy seems to possess a much attuned sense to the personalities around her, and while adapting her own actions to the situation, she is still very much in control of and aware of who she is and what, or rather who, she wants.

Her first proposal is from Dr. Seward. Her behavior with him is above reproach; when a young man proposed, he would often have a private audience with the young lady. Mrs. Westenra is at home but in another room, so Lucy cannot be faulted on this point. Lucy does not tease, laugh, or toy with Seward; in fact, she starts crying before he even finishes proposing to her because she can see the truth of his affection, an affection which she cannot share. Finally, she is honest with Seward; she is not coy. She does not give him false hope, but admits that she loves someone else. Lucy does not even give him the chance to tell her how unhappy he will be without her; instead, she bursts into tears, actually saving Seward some embarrassment later by declaring so much only to be rejected. This is one example of Lucy's responding as a proper Victorian lady. She is honest and regrets having to hurt Seward, yet she is steadfast in her love for Arthur Holmwood.

Her next suitor is Quincey Morris. Her behavior with him is not completely

appropriate, and critics usually make a point of highlighting her error in judgment and behavior with Morris. He is an American from Texas, and he knows that his use of slang amuses Lucy. He therefore uses slang in his initial proposal to Lucy, and she cannot resist refusing him in a playful manner. On the one hand, her response is flirtatious; she even admits to Mina in the letter that she knows Mina "will think [her] a horrid flirt" (80). On the other hand, even though she is wrong to do so, Lucy, like most young women, cannot help feeling exultant at this point because it is her second proposal, though not nearly so seriously made as Dr. Seward's. That exultation only lasts a moment, however, when Morris proposes to her again in a much more serious manner. With his first proposal, it is easy to laugh him off as merely joking with her; his second proposal causes her to realize just how serious he is, and she is again overwhelmed with remorse for having to break another man's heart.

The second proposal leads to the impassioned outburst which many critics use as the primary evidence for Lucy in actuality being a latent New Woman. In her letter to Mina she exclaims "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it" (80). There are several points which must be considered in order to fully understand Lucy's outburst. First, she is emotionally overwhelmed; in the space of one morning, two very eligible men have proposed to her, and she has to endure witnessing the disappointed hopes of both men. Second, and this is the point that is consistently ignored, Lucy immediately recants her words, recognizing the wrongness of them. She is not actually sincere, in fact, in wishing to marry all three men. She says that because she is upset at having to hurt and disappoint Seward and Morris. Third, she chooses to say "or as many that want her"

rather than as many as she wants, which is what a New Woman might say. Lucy is still fixed on Arthur; he is the one she wants; she has that outburst in expression of her remorse in hurting Seward and Morris, not as a sincere desire. Finally, a New Woman might choose to have all three men as lovers or none at all. The New Woman believes that she has just as much right as a man to have a lover or to not have a man in her life that she has to answer to. Lucy, however, does not want three lovers or no lover at all; she only wants Arthur Holmwood.

There is one moment in particular for which Lucy can be reproached, and that is in granting Morris a kiss. By the standards of a proper Victorian, Lucy, no matter how innocently, is still giving a kiss to a man that she is neither married to nor engaged to, and if it became public knowledge, she would be censured by society. She is labeled a New Woman by some critics for this error in judgment, however[4]. They view this action as a sign of her promiscuity, but they ignore details surrounding the moment, especially that Lucy blushes, signaling her recognition of the impropriety of the moment. Ultimately, Lucy is responsible for her actions, but there is one important point that cannot be ignored here. If Lucy's father had been alive, it would have been his responsibility to reinforce to her good behavior as well as monitor how young men behaved around her. Returning to Lucy's response to that request, however, it is important to note her reaction. She blushes deeply, even over such an innocent kiss. The New Woman is often characterized as sexually aggressive, and by this standard a New Woman would not be embarrassed over a trifling kiss. Lucy, however, has a Victorian mindset, and she blushes because she knows that her action is inappropriate.

Her final suitor is Arthur Holmwood, but there is little description of his proposal.

Lucy is too overwhelmed, both from the emotional turmoil caused by the previous two proposals and her inexpressible joy that the one she loves is finally asking her to marry him. She steadfastly waits for Holmwood to propose, refusing both Seward and Morris when she has no promise of a proposal from Holmwood. She not only expresses sincere regret, remorse, and sympathy for the two men whom she refuses, but she also expresses true joy and thankfulness that she is to marry the man that she loves. Her words "I must only try in the future to show that I am not ungrateful for all His goodness to me in sending to me such a lover, such a husband, and such a friend" (81). This brings up another point in Lucy's character; she appears to be devoted to her faith. This is evidenced first by her recognition of the heresy in her previous exclamation and the second by her wish to ever be thankful to "Him," Him being God. Lucy remains conscientious of her words even in her heightened emotional state, another area in which the New Woman, as portrayed by her detractors, would not have been concerned. The New Woman is also often assumed to be irreverent, and by that standard she would certainly not acknowledge either the heresy in her words or her gratitude to God for His blessings. Lucy does recognize and acknowledge both, which further serves to heighten the apparent differences between Lucy and the New Woman.

Another area to examine in regard to Lucy is the issue surrounding her sleepwalking. Carol A. Senf, in her article "*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman", argues that Lucy's "latent sexuality" reveals that "Lucy is unhappy with her social role, [and] that she is torn between the need to conform and the desire to rebel" (42). She views Lucy's sleepwalking as a sign that confirms Lucy's underlying desire to break free of society's constraints, claiming that "[b]y day Lucy remains an acquiescent

and loving Victorian girl. By night the other side of her character gains control; and Mina describes her as restless and impatient to get out. It is this restlessness which ultimately leads her to Dracula and to emancipation from her society's restraints" (42). There is, in fact, no evidence to indicate that Lucy is unhappy with her place in society. Even though Lucy is not rich, she is comfortable despite not being a ranked member of the ton. Lucy is in fact quite content with her place in society, especially after she becomes engaged to Arthur Holmwood. As a young woman of nineteen, Lucy is surprisingly mature. Lucy could have rebelled against society and her mother, yet she does not. If Lucy had been consciously restless, Senf's point would be well made. Lucy is not consciously restless, however. Kathleen L. Spencer, in her article "Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis", also notes that sleepwalking is "a habit traditionally associated with sexual looseness" (210). I find, however, that because Lucy is, first of all, unconscious of her actions, and secondly, because she inherits her sleepwalking trait from her father, that their interpretations are incorrect. An additional critic who agrees with Senf and Spencer is Sally Ledger. In *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle*, Ledger claims that "Lucy's sexuality reveals itself powerfully as she continually tries to escape her bedroom at night for a series of sexually charged encounters with Count Dracula… In wanting to marry three men and in escaping at midnight to seek the dubious attentions of Count Dracula, Lucy… transgresses the boundaries laid down by Victorian gender codes" (101). Ledger clearly believes that Lucy possesses a powerful latent sexuality before she is turned into a vampire, but Ledger also fails to acknowledge that Lucy is always in an unconscious state when Dracula gets to her. Lucy cannot help that she

walks in her sleep, so she should not be blamed for something that she cannot consciously control, nor should the fact that Dracula can control his victims to a point when they are in an unconscious state be overlooked. Lucy never consciously welcomes Dracula's attacks, yet Spencer also uses the word "indulges" (210) when referring to Lucy's sleepwalking, giving the impression that Lucy consciously chooses to sleepwalk when in fact she has no control over it. Also, if Lucy had been trying to break free of her society's constraints, she would not have cared that she was only in her nightdress when Mina discovers her in the graveyard. Modesty is one the first thing that concerns Lucy as soon as she is cognizant that she is outside and in a public place. Modesty is a key concern for Lucy even as a late Victorian young woman. Lucy tries to pull the neckline of her nightdress closed both unconsciously in an attempt to cover the bite and consciously in an effort to preserve her modesty in public. Women's clothing covered most of their bodies during this time. Changes in clothing are, in fact, one of the "sins" of the New Woman as some women began wearing different styles, like the cycling outfits with two legs which would make cycling easier. Such clothing is considered less or completely unfeminine, and certainly immodest. Lucy's concern for her state of dress, though it may seem to be a minor detail, is yet further proof of her connection to the older Victorian ideal of womanhood.

Instead of being discontent with her life and place in society, Lucy leads a quiet, typical life with her mother. They are comfortably enough situated financially so that they can vacation in Whitby, but they are able to spend at least some time in London. They make house calls together, attend concerts, and go to other social events. Lucy never expresses a discontent with her life. She is never described as a flirt, nor is there

any evidence that she intentionally leads any men, other than Arthur, to believe that she feels more than friendship for them. Even towards Arthur, as her letters to Mina portray, Lucy's actions are appropriately reserved, waiting for him to declare his love before making her own declaration. In a letter to Mina, Lucy is at first reserved in her introduction of the subject of Arthur, despite the fact that Mina is her best friend. She eventually breaks down and tells Mina her heart, but her revelation is not made lightly. She emphasizes the secrecy of it, showing a proper reserve. She is reluctant to even mention her love for Arthur because he has not made a declaration. This reluctance is not the mark of a "New Woman." If Lucy had been a "New Woman," she might have shouted her regard for Arthur from the rooftops, blatantly making her feelings known to not only him, but also to the rest of the world. She does not even reveal who it is she cares for to her other two suitors, protecting both their feelings and her reputation as well as maintaining a proper reserve because Arthur has not spoken yet. She is waiting for him to make the first move, but a "New Woman" might not have hesitated to initiate a more intimate relationship with one or all of her suitors. Lucy's reputation is almost too perfect, in fact, and she is held by all three suitors, even the rejected Seward and Morris, and later by Dr. Van Helsing, to be a woman of upright virtue and morality, casting her not as a New Woman to be feared but a woman who cherishes and upholds the older, Victorian tradition of womanhood.

Until the moment when Dracula first bites her, Lucy is preparing to fulfill her ultimate goal: to become a wife and someday a mother. Lucy is excited about the new life she is about to begin, content in love with nothing but happiness to look forward to, or so she thinks. The sleep-walking habit that she inherits from her father, however,

eventually allows Dracula to get to her. Dracula sees her from a distance and chooses her as his victim, not just to satiate his appetite for blood, but also to possess her in her un-dead state. Lucy never consciously invites Dracula into her home, nor does she welcome his attack on her in the graveyard. It is important to note that Lucy is always in her sleep-walking state, asleep, or hypnotized by Dracula each time he gets to her. The first time he bites her, she sleep-walks to the graveyard, unconscious of her actions. She goes to the spot where she and Mina sat earlier that day, and although she is in a church graveyard, and therefore on sanctified ground, she and Mina had sat on the bench next to the one piece of unsanctified ground in the cemetery: the grave of a suicide. That is the reason Dracula can bite her in the graveyard; she is exposed and alone on unsanctified ground, which is an implied though unconscious invitation to Dracula. She can neither consciously fight him nor resist him because she has no idea what is happening to her. When Mina finds her, wakes her up, and covers her up, Lucy is surprised that she is so far from home and horrified at her state of undress in public, especially in a church graveyard. In "The New Woman," Ouida writes that "(m)odesty is no doubt a thing of education or prejudice, a conventionally artificiality stimulated ; but it is an exquisite grace, and womanhood without it loses its most subtle charm… True modesty shrinks from the curious gaze of other women as from the coarser gaze of man" (617). Lucy is not only horrified at her state of undress in a public place, but also because she is embarrassed that Mina finds her in that state. A less modest woman might not be concerned about being in a rather unclad state; in fact, where Mina and Lucy take care to avoid crossing the path of anyone, the "New Woman" might want to purposely encounter someone, just to cause dissension.

In the subsequent attacks from Dracula in her home, Lucy again does not consciously invite him in or allow him to bite her. Dracula takes several forms in his efforts to get to Lucy, including appearing as a bat, a wolf, and as dust. To get into Lucy's room at night, he would, usually as a bat, tap at the window with his wings. Lucy, in her sleep-walking state, would then open the window, thereby inviting him in. It is important to remember that most people possess the automatic, conscious instinct to open the door, or in this case the window, if there is a knock or a tap on it. Now, in the conscious mind, the instinct to see who is at the door before opening it is also usually present. Lucy, however, is not in a conscious state; she hears the tap in her sleep, and her natural reaction is to open the window as though it is a door. Because she is unconscious of her actions, she does not possess the capability to look to see if it is safe to open the door/window, and that is how Dracula is able to get to her.

As Lucy grows weaker because of Dracula's attacks, Holmwood asks Dr. Seward to check on her, not knowing what is happening to his fiancée. It is Dr. Seward who summons Van Helsing, and Van Helsing, realizing what is happening, takes action to try and save Lucy. Lucy listens to whatever Van Helsing tells her, willingly following his patriarchal lead. Lucy, as an ideal Victorian woman looks up to men, and she views Van Helsing in a paternal manner. An example of her unquestioning obedience to a male authority occurs when Van Helsing gives her a garlic flower wreath and instructs her to wear it and to not take it off for any reason. She does not question him; she just obeys him. It is through the ignorance of her mother that Dracula is able to get into Lucy's room after Van Helsing has finally made some progress towards saving Lucy. In the article "Nonstandard Language and the Cultural Stakes of Stoker's *Dracula*," Christine

Ferguson writes that "[Dracula's] successes in England are the result not of evil omnipotence but of the ignorance of his victim's protectors… giving access to the vampire who would otherwise be held at bay" (230). Because Drs. Van Helsing and Seward are trying to protect Mrs. Westenra from the seriousness of Lucy's condition because of Mrs. Westenra's own failing health, Mrs. Westenra then also inadvertently invites Dracula in. Ferguson is one of the few scholars to view Lucy as not inviting her fate, but as a victim of her circumstances.

Lucy also does not depend on herself alone for strength. On the night that she receives the final bite from Dracula, she writes in her diary that she wishes that "Dr. Seward was in the next room" (156), showing that she depends on and recognizes a need for male protection and support. A typical New Woman would not acknowledge the need for male assistance or protection, nor would she call out for support and help to anyone in the house as Lucy does. A New Woman would depend upon herself and her own strength to save her, but Lucy knows that she cannot save herself from whatever is taking her life. Her implicit, unquestioning trust of the men, especially Van Helsing, is further proof of her reverence for and mindset of the Victorian ideal of womanhood.

John Allen Stevenson argues that Lucy gets her wish about being allowed to marry three men. In the article, "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of *Dracula*," Stevenson addresses the issue of foreign vs. familiar; he emphasizes that Van Helsing, Seward, Morris, and Holmwood are trying to save Lucy from not only the foreigner, Dracula, but from the foreign change happening to her. The infusion of the blood of the four men into Lucy binds them all to her and her to them, opening the door to the perception that they have all in a sense been "married" to Lucy. Stevenson writes that

"Van Helsing recognizes that these transfusions they give Lucy are sexual and that they imply a kind of promiscuity in Lucy…Lucy's promiscuity, her 'polyandry,'…is forgivable, because finally her loyalty to her own kinds is more vital than her absolute chastity" (144). I find this claim flawed, again because Lucy does not consciously choose to be Dracula's victim, and she does not make the choice to have the blood transfusions from the men. Jean Lorrah, in "Dracula Meets the New Woman," finds it:

> odd to see Lucy… labeled a New Woman on the basis of her line about women being allowed to have more than one husband and on her sexual aggressiveness after she has become a vampire… consider the possibility that Lucy's character as a vampire is not her normal self—that without Dracula's intervention she would not act with wanton voluptuousness… Notice how the idea of three husbands… actually distorts the concept: the independent intellectual New Woman lives alone, not with *three* men to cater to! (33)

Lorrah's point reinforces my own view of Lucy in this regard; her point too that an "independent intellectual New Woman" wants freedom, not numerous males which will likely assert their right to dominance, is also an invaluable point. Like Lorrah, I only views Lucy as exhibiting signs attributed to New Women after she is made a vampire. There is no conscious promiscuity in Lucy, but Stevenson's idea that Van Helsing and the others are combating the foreign domination of one of their own is valid argument.

When Lucy receives the final bite from Dracula, she has just suffered the death of her mother and the stark reality that she is alone and unprotected. She recognizes that something beyond her understanding is about to happen, so she writes down what has happened to her mother and the drugged servants, as well as her observations about the strangeness of the room. She writes "[t]he air seems full of specks, floating and circling in the draught from the window, and the lights burn blue and dim…I shall hide this paper in my breast, where they shall find it…God help me!" (Stoker 158). Her final invocation

for God's protection shows not only her faith but also that her trust is placed beyond herself. Although Van Helsing and the other men try to save her, Dracula succeeds in killing Lucy and making her a vampire. At this point, the negative characteristics that Stoker attributes to the New Woman begin to appear in Lucy. In her final moments before her first death, she slips in and out of her actual mind, the Victorian mind that she controls. In the other moments, the poison making her a vampire manifests itself, and the human Lucy cannot control it. It manifests when she is in an unconscious state, as Stoker shows when he writes "[i]n a sort of sleep-walking, vague, unconscious way she opened her eyes, which were now dull and hard at once, and said in a soft, voluptuous voice, such as I had never heard from her lips: -- "Arthur! Oh, my love, I am so glad you have come! Kiss me!" (173). An interesting fact is that Lucy, even under the unconscious influence of Dracula, only tries to appeal to Arthur; she does not try to seduce the other men. Even in her changing and later fully changed vampire state, she still remains faithful to Arthur. Lucy does not know what she is becoming, but she knows that she does not want to be whatever it is. In "'Kiss Me With Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," Christopher Craft writes that "the vampiric kiss excites a sexuality so mobile, so insistent, that it threatens to overwhelm the distinctions of gender, and the exuberant energy with which Van Helsing and the Crew of Light counter Dracula's influence represents the text's anxious defense against the very desire it also seeks to liberate" (50). As a vampire, Lucy therefore represents an extreme danger that must be dealt with, and that danger had to be dealt with by Van Helsing and the other men. Of course no woman would likely choose to be a vampire, even with the promise of immortality, and Lucy is no exception. She fights to stay alive, dedicated to her

mother, fiancée, and her friends, but it is too late. Lucy realizes that she is losing the battle, and she asks Van Helsing to "give [her] peace" (173). Lucy is not choosing to become a vampire. It is true that she does not know what she is becoming, but she still fights against it because she instinctively knows that she does not want to change.

Lucy dies to her moral, controlled, and conscious Victorian self, and awakens as a sexually promiscuous vampire. After her transformation, she exudes sexuality, using her body, beauty, and charms in an effort to lure Arthur in so that she can then drink his blood. In "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," Phyllis Roth comments that "(o)nly when Lucy becomes a vampire is she allowed to be 'voluptuous,' yet she must have been so long before, judging from her effect on men and from Mina's descriptions of her" (6). Although Roth views Lucy as possessing a latent sexuality, the point that she is making is that Stoker does not make Lucy overtly voluptuous until after she becomes a vampire, a quality that Stoker attributes to the New Woman. After becoming a vampire, Lucy initiates the sexual invitation to Arthur, inverting the societal rule that men are to lead. In "Time is of the Essence: Temporality, Gender, and the New Woman," Patricia Murphy writes that "(p)art of the reason that the New Woman's critics feared her deleterious effects on marriage was the widespread perception that she was highly sexualized, eager to experiment outside the bounds of wedlock to satisfy unwomanly needs—despite the celibacy of many New Woman characters" (8). Lucy as a vampire is not only sexually aggressive, but she also subverts the ideas of motherhood. She preys on children, inverting the Victorian idea of motherhood and embracing the New Woman's alleged lack of having any maternal instinct or interest. Her focus becomes survival by whatever means necessary, but she is no longer in conscious control

of herself. The men must kill her un-dead body to save her soul and restore her to her human purity.

In her final death, Lucy is restored to her former self; in fact, the men must murder the sexually threatening Lucy to restore order and the status quo. The narrator describes her in that moment after they kill her un-dead form as "[they] had last seen her in her life, with her face of unequaled sweetness and purity. True that there were there…traces of care and pain and waste; but these were all dear to us…One and all we felt the holy calm that lay like sunshine over the wasted face and form was only an earthly token and symbol of the calm that was to reign for ever" (224). The New Woman that Lucy becomes after she is turned into a vampire is defeated, and in its place a pure, sweet innocence returns to the ideally Victorian Lucy. In the final analysis, Lucy, when she lives as a woman, not a vampire, never becomes the New Woman, which critics like Spencer and Senf, claim; she instead retains her morality when she can control her actions, making her a victim as Case and Ferguson agree. Lucy is just an ordinary girl who in life strives to be an ideal Victorian woman, and in death returns to that ideal state.

Lucy is indeed a literal ideal representative of Victorian womanhood, but she is also a figurative representation. Dracula, by contrast, is a figurative representation of the New Woman. He also represents the threat of the foreign. Stevenson also notes in "A Vampire in the Mirror…" that "(t)he distinction between the moral excellence of the insiders and the physical peculiarity of the foreigner underlines the outsider's inherit danger… The familiar is the image of the good, while foreignness merges with monstrosity" (142). The New Woman is a threat to society because she is trying to overthrow the structure of gender politics, particularly in regards to marriage and

children. The threat of the foreign is equally threatening, however, because the foreign endangers the purity of the "insider." Considering Dracula as the figurative representation of the New Woman, Lucy, as the figurative representative of Victorian womanhood, grows more and more restless and disturbed the closer that Dracula gets to England. His progress towards England represents the progress that the New Woman is making in society. Lucy, as the ideal Victorian, is threatened by the ideas, attitudes, and actions of the New Woman. The stages of her transformation into a vampire represent the struggles of the older Victorian ideals being overcome by the New Woman. How Dr. Van Helsing, Seward, Morris, and Holmwood all fight to save her from being transformed into a vampire represents the struggle of men to preserve both the patriarchal societal order and what they view as the proper, desirable place of women in that patriarchal society. In "*Dracula* and the Doctors: Bad Blood, Menstrual Taboo and the New Woman," Marie Mulvey-Roberts writes that:

> The greatest threat to the dominant culture was perceived as coming from the burgeoning feminist movement in the form of the New Woman… Doctors… were ready to nail down any shifting differentiation, so that they could clamp the coffin lid shut on the threatening uncertainties of sexual ambivalence, which dared to challenge traditional gender roles. (92)

Lucy has to be killed to restore gender roles back to patriarchal leadership and to restore Lucy to her ideal state. Lucy fights that changing definition of womanhood that the New Woman represents, though, whenever she is consciously in control of herself. Stoker, recognizing that the definition of womanhood is changing regardless of what anyone does or may wish, makes Lucy die, but he resurrects her as the horrifying example of the most negative characteristics of the New Woman. To acknowledge the changing definition of womanhood and maintain some of the most valued characteristics of the ideal Victorian

woman, Stoker creates Mina. Mina is thus a combination of the changing definitions of womanhood and of the ideal Victorian, possessing some of the better characteristics of each, but Mina cannot be labeled a New Woman.

Whereas Lucy clearly belongs to that Victorian-dominated mindset of womanhood, Mina is forced from that solely Victorian mindset into adopting certain modern characteristics which at first glance make her appear to be a New Woman. In "The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890's," Linda Dowling writes that "critics feared the New Woman, in her hypermodernity, her ambitious attempt to transcend established notions of sexual consciousness and behavior, would irreversibly unfit herself for her essential role as wife and mother—that, in short, she would follow the decadent down the road to personal and, ultimately, racial extinction" (446). Mina does not exhibit these behaviors mentioned by Dowling, however. Mina is an orphan, and her family does not leave her money that she can live on. Mina has to work, or she will not be able to survive. Her orphaned state, having to work for her living, and being virtually independent because she is alone in the world set Mina up to become a New Woman. In fact, critic Jean Lorrah views Mina as an ideal type of New Woman, writing that "Mina, the noble New Woman, fights off [Dracula's] oppression, hampered only by the well-meant efforts of the men to 'protect' her" (32). Lorrah see Mina's education and profession as signs that she is a New Woman, albeit an ideal one, but I believe that Mina works and gets an education so that she could survive, not because she simply wants independence as the New Woman does. She has opportunities, albeit not by choice, that many women wanted, yet she strives towards the Victorian ideal of womanhood rather than embracing the New Woman's mentality. In *The Femme Fatale in Victorian*

Literature, Jennifer Hedgecock writes that "(a)s a single, educated woman, the femme fatale—having escaped the polar definitions of domestic or fallen women—is a threat to bourgeois ideology in that she threatens to destroy the structure of the family and obscure the definitions assigned to domestic women" (3). On the one hand, then, Mina fulfills this definition; she is single and educated, qualities also associated with the New Woman. On the other hand, however, her mindset clearly demonstrates that she has already chosen marriage and has the hope of a family, which firmly separates Mina from both the New Woman and the Femme Fatale.

One of the few jobs considered appropriate for a lady is to serve as a governess or a teacher of some sort, and this is what Mina does. She is an assistant schoolmistress. In *Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism*, Carol Senf writes "that [Mina] appears to resent her job, which she describes as 'trying' (71), and seems eager to improve her condition by learning new skills, such as typing and shorthand, connects her to more modern women, those who wish to see all the professions opened to women" (54). Senf bases her assumption that Mina is unhappy on Mina's use of the word "trying" and assumes that she learns more skills for herself. However, whether or not she is unhappy with her work, she learns more job skills in order to help her husband, not make herself more marketable in the workplace. Ann Ardis, in *New Women, New Novels*, writes that "(w)hat distinguished 'Independent Women' from New Women, then, was the former's endorsement of traditional sex, gender, and class distinctions. In entering the public sector, in dealing, on a professional basis, with men and women of other social classes, 'Independent Women' preserved their social class standing as 'ladies'" (16). By Ardis definition, Mina is simply an "Independent Woman," working because she must but still

retaining her Victorian mindset. A New Woman would pursue a more ambitious career, some male dominated profession with no intention to stop her job for marriage. However, Mina works out of necessity rather than desire, so this characteristic is "Independent" but still Victorian. Mina is well educated, or she would never be able to teach. The pursuit of education is both Victorian and Modern, yet Mina does not pursue a college education. She gets a sufficient education to allow her to perform her job as an assistant school mistress. The New Woman demands equal access to education with men, but Mina only requires enough to allow her to work. In regard to her family, Mina is an orphan who never knew her parents, yet Lucy feels free to form a lasting friendship with her; Mina may or may not be from a "good" family, so Lucy's decision to continue associating with Mina speaks to Mina's reputation as a lady rather than to her social status. Family connections are still important in the 1890s, and Lucy, as a young woman belonging to the middle class, would be raised with the mentality of whom it is appropriate to associate with and whom one should not associate with. Because Mina is an orphan without independent means, she is not able to socialize as Lucy does, but she is welcome in the society to which Lucy belongs. All of this combined shows that Mina embraces some modern characteristics of womanhood, like working for her living and having more education, but she never behaves like a New Woman. It is my belief, in fact, that she at no time can be truly called a New Woman.

Even with having to work for her living, Mina still possesses the desire to marry well and have a family. Her engagement to Jonathan Harker attests to that fact. Harker also has to work for a living, and he is not bothered by the fact that Mina also works. Both he and Mina have the mentality that after they are married, Mina will stay in the

home, the place of a proper, Victorian lady. Joan Burstyn also notes that "(s)ince women wished to marry, it was clear that their professional ambitions would be short lived. Married women were not expected to work if their husbands could support them; hence, even if women completed training for an occupation, they would leave their employment as soon as they had the opportunity to marry" (50). Mina does not have professional ambitions, and the moment she marries Jonathan, there is no more mention of a job for her. A New Woman would not likely accept being virtually confined to the home; a New Woman would want to work and would need an independent income to go and do as she pleases. Mina, however, is content with her prescribed place and role in society, clearly maintaining a Victorian mindset.

In addition to working as an assistant schoolmistress, Mina tells Lucy in her first letter of the novel that:

> I have been working very hard lately, because I want to keep up with Jonathan's studies, and I have been practising shorthand very assiduously. When we are married I shall be able to be useful to Jonathan, and if I can stenograph well enough I can take down what he wants to say in this way and write it out for him on the typewriter, at which I am also practising very hard" (Stoker 76).

Mina is accomplishing two things here. First, she is preparing herself to be Jonathan's wife, learning parts of his trade so that she may exceed the typically ideal wife by being able to make his work easier. Second, she is acting as an unconscious example to Lucy. Lucy is from the leisured middle-class, so there are different expectations on Lucy than are on Mina. Even still, Mina is demonstrating to Lucy that a wife must make herself appealing to her husband, be it through understanding his work or by simply managing his home. Stoker in fact makes Mina into a new ideal wife, acknowledging that he believes a woman can have an education and use it to help her husband in his profession

while still remaining in the home and allowing her husband to be the exclusive breadwinner.

The next area in which Mina must be examined is during her time with Lucy at Whitby. One of the things that Mina does whilst staying with Lucy is faithfully keeping a journal, just as Jonathan is doing on his travels. Although Lucy does not acquire this habit while Mina is staying with her, she learns from Mina's example and begins to write some of her observations and thoughts down during the time that Dracula is changing her into a vampire. It is a small matter, but it is through Mina's example that Lucy thinks to write down what she is going through and witnessing. Through Lucy's writings and based on their own observations, Dr. Van Helsing, Seward, Morris, and Holmwood are eventually able to restore Lucy to eternal rest. Her writings also provide these men with information that in turn helps them to defeat Dracula. This is yet another area in which Mina is a good example to Lucy.

There is a particular passage that might be viewed as evidence that Mina is at the least sympathetic towards the New Woman. In Chapter 8, Mina writes that "(s)ome of the 'New Women' writers will some day start an idea that men and women should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting. But I suppose the New Woman won't condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it too!" (109). However, this passage of writing must be examined in the context of Mina's journal as a whole. One critic who interprets this passage of Mina's journal as literal and as a revelation of her true opinions is Jean Lorrah. Lorrah views Mina as a New Woman, and she writes that "even if Mina were sarcastic, ironic, or ambivalent at that point, the line is foreshadowing" (32). It is my

opinion, however, that Mina is neither completely serious in her comments on the New Woman, nor that her subsequent actions, like traveling alone to tend to Jonathan, are evidence of her being a New Woman. Whether she is a New Woman or not, though, she clearly does not place herself among their ranks. She "others" New Women, asserting her separateness from them while humorously, in a sense, wishing them well. While Mina does possess some characteristics in common with the New Woman, she is not intentionally thinking or acting like one.

Another point in which Mina is accused of not acting with complete Victorian decorum is that once she learns of Harker's whereabouts and that he is ill, she travels alone to be there with him and nurse him. Burstyn also notes in her book *Victorian Education…* that "(u)nmarried women of the upper and middle classes were accompanied in public by males escorts or chaperons of older women" (21). Mina does not have anyone, male or female, who can serve in that capacity for her, and so she does what she must. She cannot be labeled a New Woman simply because she has the courage to travel alone. She also goes with the understanding that she will likely wed Harker while she is there with him. Both she and Harker do have someone that looks out for them: Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Hawkins is Harker's boss and friend, but he is also a father figure to both Harker and Mina. Mr. Hawkins seems to be the one responsible for planning out Mina's trip to reach Harker, so Mina is also not acting on her own here but has a man in a position of authority helping her. A New Woman who wants the freedom to travel alone does not need or want a man to dictate how or when she may go. Mina, however, is grateful for what Mr. Hawkins does, and although she is traveling alone, she is doing so for a specific purpose.

The remainder of Mina's character must be evaluated after she is married to Harker. At their wedding, she and Harker promise never to open his journal again unless it is absolutely necessary. It becomes necessary for Mina to open and read it, however, when Harker sees Dracula in London and suffers another shock. Harker knew that Dracula wanted to get to London, and he knew that Dracula had purchased real estate near London; the shock results from seeing that Dracula has grown younger and that Dracula is now a threat to London, a threat that Harker himself aided. While worrying about Harker's health, Mina also learns of Lucy's death, and then receives a letter from Dr. Van Helsing asking to meet with her. Here again Mina shows that she does not depend upon herself but on men for help. After answering Van Helsing's questions, she later offers their journals to him and begs Van Helsing for help concerning Harker. The journals aid Van Helsing in both confirming his suspicions about Lucy being a vampire, and in proving that Dracula is in England and must be stopped. This is the beginning of the fight against Dracula, and the novel's gender politics particularly come into play once the Harkers join forces with Van Helsing and the other three men to combat Dracula.

Mina is viewed as the paragon of virtue by all of the men. She is, in fact, credited by Van Helsing, as having a "man's brain—a brain that a man should have were he much gifted—and woman's heart. The good God fashioned her for a purpose, believe me, when He made that so good combination" (240). During the late Victorian period, women were considered inferior to men on several bases, one of which was that their brains were smaller and weighed less than men's. Burstyn notes that "(t)he brains of men and women varied sufficiently in respect to size and structure to suggest that women were innately less intelligent than men. The male brain was heavier than the female, both

overall and in each of its parts" (78). The assumption is since men have larger brains, they are smarter. Van Helsing, however, recognizes that Mina has a surprisingly equal mental capacity to men. Even recognizing this capacity in her, however, he still views her as inferior in a sense. Van Helsing maintains that women need chivalrous men, and Mina is worth protecting. In *Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change*, Jane Lewis writes that "(t)he other main strand in nineteenth-century feminism accepted the idea of women as the natural guardians of the moral order. It stressed the importance of women's domestic role and sought to expand it" (89). Lewis is pointing out that the ideology of the time believes that it is Mina's job to be the moral center in the domestic sphere, and it is the job of the men to protect and shelter her from the evils of the world. Mina is a worthy object for the men to fight for. Consequently, Van Helsing tells her that she will be excluded from their (the men's) future plan making and discussions. Alison Case argues in "Tasting the Original Apple…" that "(t)he decision to exclude Mina from further plotting is cast explicitly as a reassertion of disrupted gender roles and a reappropriation of narrative authority" (232). On the one hand, Case is right; the men have allowed Mina to be a part of something that a woman would normally be excluded from. On the other hand, though, I argue that while excluding Mina may be partially due to the men's efforts to reestablish sole male control, I think their decision is grounded in a true desire to protect her, not repress her. In *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood*, Joseph Valente writes that "Mina… occupies a minoritized and yet *idealized* social margin, that of *properly* feminine fragility, dependency, non-self-sufficiency, heteronomy in sum, which came to attract increasingly intense cultural investments with the fin de siècle emergence of its antitype,

the New Woman" (124). Valente's quote shows how Mina is set up by Stoker almost as an idol for these men; they idolize the idealized goodness and innocence that Mina embodies because they worship the past. Mina also reveres the past, so she does not fight them on their decision to exclude her in the future, though inwardly she struggles with it. She writes in her journal that "All the men, even Jonathan, seemed relieved; but it did not seem to me good that they should brave danger and, perhaps, lessen their safety—strength being the safety—through care of me; but their minds were made up, and, though it was a bitter pill for me to swallow, I could say nothing, save to accept their chivalrous care of me" (247). The entry is further evidence that Mina still possesses more of the Victorian mindset than any modern one; her intellect and intellectual capacity are acknowledged, yet she is still viewed and treated as a delicate, Victorian woman. Sally Ledger also notes that "Stoker, like so many writers and novelists at the *fin de siècle*, wanted to terminate the career of the sexualised New Woman and to reinstate in her place a modernised version of the 'angel in the house'—in this case Mina Harker" (106). This is basically what Van Helsing accomplishes by having the men all agree to exclude Mina with the intent to protect her. Mina's help to the men thus far exceeds the bounds of what most ideal Victorian wives would do, which modernizes some of her actions, but these actions do not make her a New Woman. In almost every situation, Mina willingly defers to the leadership of men. For a Victorian woman, men are the leaders; they make all of the final decisions. She is, once they decide to exclude her from their future plans, restored as a compromising figure, a modern 'angel in the house' as Ledger notes. A New Woman might be prevented from being involved, but she would not accept her exclusion meekly or view it as necessary. Mina is not a true New Woman

because she has too much respect for the patriarchy and the female mindset that follows the patriarchal lead.

Mina is not simply a paragon of virtue to the men, the angel they must protect. She also becomes a mother figure, sister, and friend to them all. One of the most negative choices that the New Woman is credited with making is that she often flouted motherhood. In *Bram Stoker: A Literary Life*, Lisa Hopkins writes that "(t)he opposition in Stoker's work between the New Woman and the maternal woman is figured not only by difference but by reaction, a reaction which leaves even the apparent sanctity of motherhood radically fissured by an ambivalence…" (37). As Mina embraces motherhood, or at least hopes for motherhood, she is in a position to be that bridge between older Victorian ideals and modernity. She is therefore set up not only as a paragon of virtue, but also as a woman who desires and is preparing for motherhood. A large part of Mina's character is seen through various maternal actions, first in her care of and concern for Lucy, and later in her care of Harker and the other men. In speaking to Holmwood (Lord Godalming), he breaks down in hysterical tears, and Mina comforts him as a mother would a child. She writes that "women have something of the mother in us that makes us rise above small matters when the mother-spirit is invoked; I felt this big, sorrowing man's head resting on me, as though it were that of the baby that some day may lie on my bosom, and I stroked his hair as though he were my own child. I never thought at the time how strange it all was" (236). Although it is not entirely appropriate for Mina, married or not, to comfort a man other than her husband in such a way, she does so with no other intention but comfort. Her final comment on the strangeness of it testifies to her awareness of social mores, yet even Morris when he sees

her moments later comments that "Ah, I see you have been comforting him. Poor old fellow! he needs it. No one but a woman can help a man when he is in trouble of the heart; and he had no one to comfort him" (236). This scene reinforces Mina's value both as a friend and support for all these men; she is, albeit unconventionally, fulfilling the "angel of the house" ideal, making the asylum a place of safety and comfort.

The error in judgment that allows Dracula access to Mina, however, is through no fault of hers. Because the men exclude her from their plans and talks in an effort to protect her, Mina is left alone and vulnerable. Renfield tries to warn the men, but because of Dracula's ability to influence his victims, Renfield is unable to satisfactorily explain to Seward about the danger to Mina. Renfield cannot help inviting Dracula into the asylum, giving him access to Mina, though he sacrifices his life in an effort to stop Dracula. Spencer also notes in "Purity and Danger…" that "(s)olitude is a danger to [Mina] as it was to Jonathan and while Mina has presumably had little personal experience of sexual desire, she has, we must remember, read Jonathan's journal in the process of transcribing it… In Victorian theory, it is sexual desire rather than sexual activity that is the true source of danger" (217). Mina does not at first comprehend what is happening to her, and it takes Renfield's death to make the men realize what is happening. When they find Dracula forcing Mina to drink his blood, they are horrified. Everything in the description of the seen implies that Dracula is forcing Mina to do this; she is not able to fight him. Once he has been invited in, Dracula's victim no longer has the ability to resist him. Mina even comments that under Dracula's influence she "was bewildered, and, strangely enough, [she] did not want to hinder him. [She supposes] it is a part of the horrible curse that such is, when his touch is on his victim" (Stoker 287).

Spencer, however, claims that "Mina herself makes clear, she experiences desire under Dracula's influence" (217), yet Spencer ignores Mina's words about the "horrible curse." Mina, under Dracula's touch, may not be physically or mentally able to resist him, but that does not mean that she actually experiences a true desire. In fact, from the moment Mina realizes that she may become a vampire, she fights against the transformation in whatever ways that she can. Again, Mina does not completely belong to the Victorian mindset as Lucy does, yet she too is a figurative representative of the older ideals of womanhood. Dracula is again the figurative representative of the New Woman, and Mina, though embracing some modern changes for women, still prefers the older ideals to the New Woman's. Unlike Lucy, though, Mina is strong enough to last out against Dracula, not only because she wants to conquer this evil, but also because she has the men to help her. Mina refuses to embrace the change, and like Lucy, she would rather die than be changed.

Mina again proves herself to be more of a Victorian minded woman in her efforts to help the men find and defeat Dracula. Even though the vampiric poison is already in her blood, contaminating her, her first thoughts and natural instincts are to help her family, Harker and the other men. Mina continues to act as the angel in the house, providing encouragement, support, and comfort. Although she speaks only to Jonathan, all the men are present when she comments that "I know you must fight … but it is not the work of hate. That poor soul… is the saddest case of all. Just think what will be his joy when he too is destroyed in his worser part that his better part may have spiritual immortality. You must be pitiful to him too, though it may not hold your hands from his destruction" (306). Here, she shows compassion towards Dracula, seeing him not as evil

by choice, but like Lucy, evil by chance. She is being the spiritual guide in the home, encouraging the men not to embrace hatred as their guiding emotion, but pity and determination to save his soul. This is yet another characteristic of her Victorian mindedness rather than thinking as a New Woman.

There are two final mental images of the novel. The first is of Mina as a mother. Mina not only manages to survive and overcome the vampiric sickness, but she also completes the Victorian ideal by becoming a mother. Motherhood is one of the most revered characteristics of the Victorian ideal of womanhood, and now Mina is the perfect combination of older Victorian ideals and modern sensibilities. The second is that Mina is worth fighting for, an example of the weaker sex that needs to be saved and protected by men. Stoker may have compromised in his creation of Mina's character, allowing her to have a "man's brain" and a "woman's heart" (240), but the final images clearly assert that men value the "angel in the house" mentality. Senf also notes in "'Dracula': Stoker's Response…" that:

> By emphasizing Mina's intelligence, her ability to function on her own, and her economic independence before marriage, Stoker stresses certain aspects of the New Woman; but by negating her sexuality, having her adopt a more traditional feminine role, and by showing her decision to abide by the group's will instead of making an individual decision, he also reveals that she is not a New Woman… As a result, he tries to show that modern women can combine the best of the traditional and the new when he creates the heroine of *Dracula*—Mina Harker. (48-9)

Mina possesses some modern capabilities, yet she only uses those modern capabilities to better serve her husband and the other men. Stoker's point in the creation and characterization of Mina is that a compromise can be reached between the old and new values. Both Mina and Lucy clearly revere the past ideals of womanhood over the modernizing ideals, and neither woman, in her true, human state, can be called a New

Woman. Even in extraordinary circumstances, these ordinary young women both remain true to their ideals, each representing idealistic pictures of womanhood. Stoker uses Lucy's death to remind readers of the beautiful past, yet her death also acknowledges that times are changing, and the beautiful past will change with it. With Mina, Stoker shows how women can retain many of the older values of that beautiful past while using their new access into the world to eventually better serve their husbands. Mina represents a new type of New Woman, one that can embrace the best of the new with the best of the old.

Chapter 2

Something Old and Something New: A New 'New Woman' in *Howards End*

When E.M. Forster's *Howards End* was published in Edwardian 1910, the Victorian ideal of womanhood was a fading idea, and the ideas of what it meant to be a New Woman, or simply a woman with modern ideas, were gaining in power. Barbara Caine notes in *English Feminism, 1780-1980*, that "the 'new woman' emerged to state her case for change with the *fin-de-siècle* questioning of so many institutions, assumptions and beliefs, particularly those centering on sexuality, marriage, and family life" (134). These same issues had not yet been resolved by the Edwardian period. The Edwardian idea of womanhood represents the struggle of more traditional values at war with a modernizing view of women's place and rights. In *New Women, New Novels*, Ann Ardis writes that "twentieth-century writers did not always invoke the same legacy as they produced new riffs on the theme of the New Woman" (169), meaning that the attributes applied to the New Woman also changed as time progressed. For example, a woman who worked was no longer necessarily viewed as a threat, so long as she was not trying to do the same job as a man. That is not to say that many Victorian expectations are not still in place, but Forster's depiction of women in *Howards End* addresses the middle ground between the changing extremes of Victorian womanhood and modernizing womanhood, changes provoked by the New Woman. Forster, in particular, uses Mrs. Ruth Wilcox and Margaret and Helen Schlegel to exemplify the changing definition of womanhood. Mrs. Wilcox is portrayed as belonging to the past, and she is shaped by

Forster to represent the dying gasp of Victorian womanhood. In *Forster's Women: Eternal Differences*, Bonnie Finkelstein writes that "Forster's heroes [the Schlegel sisters] go beyond the superiority or inferiority of one sex or class; they strive to reach the *personal*, where each person is only an individual and can therefore connect with any other individual" (89). The ideas of equality and personal relationships are important to the sisters, and the importance that they place on these ideas situates the Schlegel sisters very much in their modernizing time. While some of their behaviors and attitudes at first give the impression that the sisters are New Women, upon closer examination I find that they are not. In fact, there is not an example of a true New Woman in *Howards End*; instead, Forster creates a compromise between the Victorian ideal and the New Woman in the characters of the sisters, Margaret especially. While there are undeniably some facets of the New Woman in the Schlegel sisters, I will show through an examination of their specific characteristics and attitudes, actions and reactions, and particular situations throughout the novel that Margaret and Helen are in actuality a combination of the traditional Victorian ideal of womanhood and the New Woman.

One of the first characters represented in detail in the novel is Mrs. Wilcox. Helen is writing to Margaret about her stay with the Wilcoxes in the opening pages of the novel. Mrs. Wilcox's personality is initially described by Helen as "quieter than in Germany… sweeter than ever, and [Helen] never saw anything like her steady unselfishness, and the best part of it is that the others do not take advantage of her" (6). Mrs. Wilcox possesses that almost silent nature so desirable in a Victorian woman, and she is the perfect hostess. She is later described in such a way that "she seemed not to belong to the young people and their motor, but to the house, and to the tree that

overshadowed it. One knew that she worshipped the past, and that instinctive wisdom the past can alone bestow had descended upon her" (18). In *Mothering Modernity*, Marylu Hill describes Mrs. Wilcox as "a mother figure [who] possesses many positive virtues; in particular, she represents a potent yet inarticulate philosophy of personal relations, domestic and personal history, non-linear time, and both/and perception" (27). Her connection to the past gives her an uncanny ability to understand situations she is not directly informed about. For example, she somehow knows that Helen and Paul have had a tryst and resulting misunderstanding, and she is ready to step in and smooth out the problem. She is a moderator and peacemaker in her family, a quality highly valued by the Victorians. She also strives to be a friend and an indirect mother figure to Margaret. She senses something in Margaret that leads her to not only try to guide the motherless, younger woman, but to also instill in her some of the more tempered characteristics of femininity. One of the most important areas in which Mrs. Wilcox helps to temper Margaret's character is in teaching her by example to think more carefully before she acts. Margaret, like Helen, tends to be impulsive and go wherever the moment leads her. Mrs. Wilcox is more reflective, and once Margaret learns to reflect more before acting, she is better able to influence situations around her, especially after Margaret marries Mr. Wilcox. Mrs. Wilcox's influence on Margaret is extremely subtle, but it is Mrs. Wilcox's subtlety that makes her so admirable. Mrs. Wilcox is also selfless; her family is her world. Helen notes that the other Wilcoxes "do not take advantage of her," but they actually do. The other Wilcoxes wish to live in London, so Mrs. Wilcox goes to London. Her health begins to fail her in London, but it is more than just an illness. Mrs. Wilcox belongs to the category of Victorian womanhood that can no longer survive in London.

The older, more traditional values are being overwhelmed and extinguished by the changing perception of acceptable womanhood, and Mrs. Wilcox, clinging to those older, traditional ideals, cannot adapt. Mrs. Wilcox is too obedient, too quiet, and too selfless for the changing definition of womanhood; she accepts too much and expects too little. Her death is therefore representative of the dying strains of Victorian womanhood.

Mrs. Wilcox's death reveals the lingering expectations and value system that English men still cling to. Henry Wilcox reminisces about his wife after her death, remembering that she had "unvarying virtue, that seemed to him a woman's noblest quality… as bride and mother, she had been the same, he had always trusted her. Her tenderness! Her innocence! The wonderful innocence was hers by the gift of God" (67). She is not perfect, but as for being a nearly ideal representative of the model Victorian wife and mother, the only fault her husband can attribute to her is her failure to tell him of her illness. Her reply to him is telling. She responds that "[she] didn't want to… [she] might have been wrong—and everyone hates illnesses" (67). Mr. Wilcox is not a person, even amongst his family, who accepts weakness of any kind. Mrs. Wilcox tries to be both selfless and respectful of his wishes because she neither wants to raise concern nor be an annoyance or burden. The only other minor difficulty that they have in their marriage is that Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox come from different religious backgrounds. However, she obediently attends her husband's church, but she struggles with its different approaches for some time. Even in this, Mrs. Wilcox internalizes her own struggles and willingly molds herself into her husband's preferences. For example, when Mr. Wilcox wants to turn the old barn at Howards End into a garage, Mrs. Wilcox allows him to do so. She desires to keep Howards End the same, preventing any modernization, yet even

in this she concedes to her husband's wishes, and she sacrifices a part of herself in the process.

Whereas Mrs. Wilcox clearly belongs to the past, older ideal of Victorian womanhood, Margaret and Helen are caught in an invisible struggle of self-identity between modern and more traditional values. Margaret and Helen are neither an ideal Victorian nor a modern New Woman. Instead, they both possess characteristics of both extremes. As Margaret matures throughout the novel, she comes to possess a balanced combination of the more traditional womanhood and the New Woman. One of the most significant disadvantages that the sisters have in the shaping of their identities is that their parents died when they were younger. Margaret has the benefit of her mother until she is thirteen, but Helen is only five and their brother Tibby a newborn, placing Margaret, very early, in a maternal position. Their father survives for another five years, but then the Schlegel children are left on their own. When their mother dies, her sister, Mrs. Munt, offers to come and live with them, but given the choice, Margaret refuses. She politely refuses again when her father dies, but that places Margaret with even more responsibility and without a maternal guide.

The lack of a solid, maternal role model is one of the most important aspects for examining both Margaret's and Helen's characters. Margaret's relationship with Mrs. Wilcox is therefore very important in the shaping of Margaret's later character. Mrs. Wilcox, though not consciously on the part of either woman, becomes that mother-figure to Margaret. In her exploration of the relationship between Mrs. Wilcox and Margaret, Marylu Hill notes in *Mothering Modernity* that "[Mrs. Wilcox] is ineffectual in herself, rendered passive and helpless by her own adherence to the stereotypical gender role of

woman as accessory to man… Mrs. Wilcox seeks fulfillment in an heir who will complete her. Margaret achieves this by linking Mrs. Wilcox's virtues to her own skills of language and action—skills shaped by her father" (27). Hill highlights an important point in regards to both women; for Mrs. Wilcox, her ties to the past prevent her from being able to affect any change or resistance in the future. Margaret, however, possesses an ability to communicate and to act when she feels led to do so, traits instilled in and developed by her father. Mrs. Wilcox and Margaret therefore need each other, Margaret to learn temperance and control in her life while still being able to take action, and Mrs. Wilcox to pass along her wisdom which can strengthen Margaret's ability to be effectual. Margaret's nature may have been shaped by a man, but her father clearly believes that women should have the ability to make their own decisions and to speak for themselves because both Margaret and Helen are very independent women.

Margaret does, however, possess an uncanny ability to relinquish her independence when she is being courted by and marries Henry Wilcox. She allows Henry to lead, choosing to be a more traditional-minded woman like Mrs. Wilcox in her relationship with him. Margaret usually and Mrs. Wilcox always chooses to ignore Henry's faults, but Margaret actually challenges Henry when Mrs. Wilcox never would dare to do so. For example, when Henry refuses to forgive Helen for her indiscretion with Leonard Bast, Margaret reminds him of his own sin with Jacky Bast, which is exactly the same as Helen's. Mrs. Wilcox, whether or not she knew about his affair, would never have let on that she even knows about it, let alone actually using it to challenge him. Although Margaret is not as sweet and traditional as Mrs. Wilcox, Mrs. Wilcox's example of being a wife and mother do unconsciously affect Margaret. In the

chaos at the end of the novel with Leonard Bast's death and Charles Wilcox's arrest, Margaret settles the situation down, just as Mrs. Wilcox did when Helen and Paul's tryst almost turns into a feud between their families. Before meeting and interacting with Mrs. Wilcox, Margaret would have been unlikely to marry a man like Henry Wilcox; she is too self-sufficient, thinking and acting for herself. She is also financially independent and does not concern herself with money overmuch. She expresses sympathies for both the Suffragists and the Fabian Socialists, societies which Henry Wilcox would ridicule. Even still, Margaret unconsciously learns or acquires some of Mrs. Wilcox's deference towards men like Henry Wilcox; she is able to allow him his opinions while not being shaken in hers, so she never loses herself. As Jeane N. Olson notes in "E.M. Forster's Prophetic Vision of the Modern Family in *Howards End*," "Margaret never really subordinates her beliefs to her husband's. At first she makes compromises in an effort to humor her husband's ingrained attitudes, so different from hers, yet she never relinquishes her principles" (353). Margaret possesses a strength of character that allows her to mold herself into the type of woman Henry Wilcox expects without sacrificing who she is. In *Writing a Woman's Life*, Carolyn Heilburn states that "(m)arriage… is a bargain, like buying a house or entering a profession. One chooses it knowing that… one is abnegating other possibilities. In choosing companionship over passion, women… made a bargain; their marriages worked because they did not regret their bargains, or blame their husbands for not being something else—dashing lovers, for example" (92). This is exactly the mentality that Margaret has; she is pragmatic about her relationship with Mr. Wilcox, and she knows who and what she is getting when she marries him. Even still, because she knows what to expect, Margaret knows that any sacrifices she makes will be

her choice; she is still an individual person with a separate identity. Mrs. Wilcox, however, is not able to maintain a self-identity. Her entire identity is wrapped up in her husband and children, but Margaret manages to maintain inward control of herself while appearing on the surface to change. Both women are drawn to the other because of their mutual gifts: wisdom on Mrs. Wilcox's part and action on Margaret's. While Margaret is not an ideal Victorian or a New Woman, she possesses a mixture of the two ideas that enable her to effect change, especially in regards to a woman's rights in the home. Mrs. Wilcox is too old fashioned to effect any change herself, but with her guidance, Margaret unconsciously becomes more effectual through her subtlety.

In regard to Helen's affair with Paul, however, Margaret expresses ideas on love that are not Victorian or traditional in the slightest. She feels that "if she herself should ever fall in love with a man, she, like Helen, would proclaim it from the house-tops… [so she felt that Helen] must be assured that it is not a criminal offence to love at first sight" (9-10). In this regard, both Margaret and Helen are acting outside of what the Victorian standard would consider acceptable. A woman is expected to either not have or to suppress her sexual desire; love and/or physical desire is not a matter of relevance for the Victorians, particularly for women. In *Women's Choices, Women's Realities*, the point that "Victorian attitudes about sexuality… dichotomize women into the 'good' woman (virgin-like) and the 'bad' (whore-like) one. The good woman had no sexual desire but complied to satisfy her husband's needs and to have children. The sexual woman was viewed as sick and dangerous" (Hunter 112). Duty, faithfulness, and respect are the desired components in a marital relationship, and the admittance of desire being expressed by women like Helen and Margaret would be viewed as highly improper.

While the sisters obviously do not adhere to such a strict view on women's sexuality, Margaret's feelings on the subject are, however, moderated by the clear expression of the place within which those feelings can be expressed. Though Helen gives her only a line in her letter announcing that she is in love with Paul, Margaret, in discussing the matter over with her visiting aunt, is clearly under the assumption that Helen and Paul are engaged. Margaret firmly believes in the place of love and desire in a relationship, but her viewpoint is grounded on the promise of a marriage soon to follow. Later, Margaret turns out to be very reserved in her own unusual courtship with Henry Wilcox, but she is still fairly certain that he will propose to her when he summons her to London. Margaret and Helen are both idealistic in the moment, like in wanting to feel attraction and desire for their lover, but it is Margaret who turns out to be more practical. Her courtship is very reserved and passionless, but Margaret is satisfied with that. Her attitude is therefore neither entirely traditional nor modern, but rather a combination of the two.

Another characteristic of Margaret's character is that while she is "impulsive" (11), she still respects male authority. This is a particularly surprising virtue to be found in her given the unchecked upbringing she has. Her father does not appear to have tempered or inhibited her personality at all; in fact, he even allows Margaret, as a child, to interject her thoughts in a conversation, embarrassing the other participants because of the ridiculous nature of the comments. Instead of chastising her, her father seems to take her part. In *Character and Consciousness: George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence (Phenomenological, Ecological, and Ethical Readings)*, Gregory Tague claims that "Margaret is complex and wavers through the recognition of her own

character, which she does not admire. She does, eventually, strive for a greater, metaphysical consciousness, slow to emerge and that is encouraged by Helen and her inviolable character" (145). I disagree, however; I think that Margaret is very aware of and comfortable with whom she is, but she does change throughout the course of the novel, both from her own experiences and the influences of Mrs. Wilcox and Helen. Even with her relatively free upbringing, though, Margaret acquires deference for male authority, at least when male authority is asserted. This is seen in her responses to her brother. Even though Tibby is not a dominant male figure, one worthy of or expecting respect like Mr. Wilcox, Margaret still shows deference to him. Margaret's clear deference to male authority is especially proven through her interaction with Henry Wilcox before and after they are married. One important instance, in which Margaret and Helen both seek his opinion to compare to their own, is in the case of Leonard Bast. In this case, they are not necessarily seeking his advice in order to guide their own decision; they are, however, trying to gain another perspective, a male perspective. Mr. Wilcox is a man of business, meaning he has more exposure, access, and knowledge of the working world than either Margaret or Helen. Although women are slowly gaining access to the working world during this time, the Schlegel sisters neither have to work nor are they really interested in the working world. The fact that they take Henry Wilcox's viewpoint to heart and rush to share it with Mr. Bast also demonstrates the weight of a man's word, even to women as liberated as the Schlegel sisters. The habit of depending on men to take the lead in society and business is still too deeply ingrained in Margaret and Helen for them not to be influenced by Mr. Wilcox. Their lack of desire in acquiring knowledge of the working world is therefore another piece of evidence that they are not

New Women, and it in fact places them closer to a Victorian woman because they have to rely on a man for their information into the business world.

The next area in which Margaret shows that she still holds respect for male authority and the mentality of at least outwardly pretending to defer to a man is seen in her courtship with Mr. Wilcox. When she is alone or with her sister, Margaret maintains an air of freedom and independence; however, when she is in the presence of a man who expects to lead, she seems to willingly slip into the more traditional role of womanhood. When Evie invites Margaret to lunch, Margaret later realizes, without rancor, that Mr. Wilcox orchestrates her invitation. In his company, she does not insist on making her own decisions in areas as simple as which meal to order, but allows him to do it for her. The fact that Mr. Wilcox does not invite Margaret out to lunch alone but insists that Evie do it for him also reinforces their mutual respect for more traditional values. Margaret is still a single woman and is therefore generally expected to have a chaperone of some sort with her. Evie and her fiancée fulfill this role. Margaret, as an Edwardian woman, may have much more freedom and knowledge than a traditional woman, but she still allows her conversation and actions to be guided/curtailed by a man.

The final example of Margaret's deference to male authority and of her comfort with her subtle courtship prior to her engagement with Henry Wilcox occurs when he summons her to London to look at a house. He essentially orders her to come to London from Swanage, where she is visiting with her aunt. Instead of being perturbed at the order to come however, she is actually annoyed by the unclear meaning. The fact that Margaret focuses on the message rather than the tone shows how she is slipping into a more Victorian mindset. It also reveals her deeply embedded desire to marry; if she is a

New Woman, she might have taken a lover or just resolved by choice not to marry even if she is asked. Margaret does neither of these, however. In *Sisters in Literature: Female Sexuality in* Antigone, Middlemarch, Howards End, *and* Women in Love," Masako Hirai points out that:

> (i)t was generally accepted that for women failure to marry represented an unfulfilled life. While a 'chance' of marriage might be a brilliant one, any 'chance' was better than none. Margaret is hardly conventional, but she is practical and instinctively values the physical and emotional satisfaction and the stability which seems to support her life upon its foundation (while closing off some of its opportunities, which, ironically, she is not aware of at this moment). (90)

Through her thought process it is clear that she is very aware that she is in an unconventional, though undeclared, courtship with Henry Wilcox. Furthermore, their courtship is extremely practical; it is not focused on romance. They are drawn to each other more out of loneliness than attraction. Margaret is aware of Mr. Wilcox's faults, the greatest of which, in her opinion, is that he seems incapable of introspection. Mr. Wilcox is only superficially aware of Margaret's faults; in fact, he excuses most of them as simply female traits. He fails to recognize the depth to which Margaret feels and can express herself when something more personal, like Helen's pregnancy, touches her life. Even still, Margaret and Henry recognize that they are compatible, and do not need flowery words to prove their growing affection to each other. Margaret's returning to London at the emphatic request in the letter from Mr. Wilcox shows both her willingness to marry him if he asks her and her dependence on him to help her and her siblings find a new place to live. Margaret turns to the only strong male that she knows; her brother Tibby is focused on his own concerns and is used to being taken care of rather than being the one responsible for taking care of others.

Margaret clearly demonstrates a respect for male authority; however, it is in many ways superficial. She is conscientious about her place in society and knows the role she is supposed to play. In "Beyond Necessity: The Consumption of Class, the Production of Status, and the Persistence of Inequality," Sharon O'Dair writes that "inequality is not only a matter of class… but also a matter of status, of prestige… in terms of one's lifestyle or culture… [she adds that] status acquisition is linked closely to material conditions of life… [and that] status acquisition requires a certain freedom from economic necessity" (338). While Margaret is not as concerned with her status or prestige as O'Dair's quote implies that those of Margaret's class usually are, she is used to and expects some personal freedoms. She is smart enough to recognize later in the novel that a marriage with Henry Wilcox will maintain and safeguard her status. After their marriage, Margaret chooses the issues she will battle Mr. Wilcox on carefully; she is incredibly intuitive in that she knows when she should push and when she should give way. She does not always let Mr. Wilcox change or reshape her ideas; instead, she chooses silence, letting him think she agrees or acquiesces. Hirai also states that "[Margaret's] basic belief is humanist: the individual 'human being', whether German or English, rich or poor, romantic or realistic, is worth more than any 'organization', be it nation, class, or ideology… her humanism does allow a space where different individuals with different ideas can be included and connected" (87). One of the primary messages in the book is "(o)nly connect" (Forster 134), and even though Margaret allows Henry to think he is fully in control, she ultimately works towards making Henry, or rather enabling him, to connect.

Margaret, particularly after she marries Henry, learns how to subtly manipulate

him. As Karlyn Kohrs Campbell notes in "Inventing Women: From Amaterasu to Virginia Woolf," women like Margaret have "great skill in exploiting available rhetorical resources" (112). Margaret knows what to say and in what manner so that Mr. Wilcox will do what she wants. Margaret learns a lot of her subtlety from Mrs. Wilcox, but unlike Mrs. Wilcox, Margaret uses it to her own advantage. For the most part, she simply lets him have his own way and opinion, keeping her own thoughts to herself. The limit to Margaret's deference comes, however, when Henry will not let her handle the situation with Helen in her own way, especially after they learn Helen is pregnant with Leonard Bast's child. Henry also refuses to give Margaret and Helen permission to stay overnight at Howards End. When Margaret learns of Henry's infidelity to Mrs. Wilcox, she not only forgives him but said she will not mention it again. She breaks this promise when Henry begins judging Helen for her own indiscretion. Margaret cannot see past this fault; Henry condemns Helen when he himself is guilty of the same offense. Henry's double standard is an attitude shared by society. Men are not held to the same standard of morality as women, and Henry, though he knows he is wrong in taking a lover, did not consider his offense as great as Helen's because she is a woman. For Margaret, this is inexcusable. She will not let Henry influence or control her or Helen in this matter; in fact, because he will not extend the same grace he has been shown, Margaret plans to leave him.

Two facts are revealed in Margaret's character through this incident. First, her deference to men, particularly to Henry, extends to matters essentially concerning only herself. As long as her silence and acquiescence are her decision and do not directly affect her family, she is an excellent wife by traditional standards. Second, although she

truly loves Henry, her blood family comes first. Henry believes that he has the right to control Helen because of his marriage to Margaret. Margaret wishes for his help, not for him to take over the situation. Margaret's intention to leave Henry would not have even been a considerable option to a traditional woman; Margaret's decisions are also based on her love for and desire to protect her sister. Her choice asserts both her independence and her modern upbringing. She is not dependent on her husband for survival as she has money of her own. She allows him to lead their married life, but she is tenacious when it comes to her family. Margaret's ability to leave Henry is a result of the growing freedom being given to women, but this decision does not make her a New Woman. Instead, her decision to leave quietly with Helen and to move to Germany expresses the mixture of old and new ideals in Margaret's life and choices.

Margaret's plan is to make Helen's situation as unstressed as possible, and she will brook no interference. Margaret not only refuses to allow Henry to control the situation with Helen, but she also disobeys his decree that she and Helen not stay at Howards End. When Charles comes the next day to remove the Schlegels, it is at Mr. Wilcox's direction. When Leonard Bast shows up, Charles's impetuous, rash nature leads to Leonard's death. This is the turning point in the novel for Henry Wilcox. The situation completely breaks down Henry's ability to maintain his façade. Henry keeps walls around his emotions; he does not express his feelings well or even for the most part acknowledge them. When Charles is arrested, Henry can no longer pretend that he feels nothing; his emotions absolutely overwhelm him. Margaret and Helen are not able to leave as planned because of the inquest into Leonard's death, but when Charles is convicted of manslaughter, everything changes. Henry does not apologize for his

behavior to either Margaret or Helen, but he throws himself, in his despair, on Margaret's mercy and pity. Henry's breakdown allows a shift of power in the novel, and Margaret becomes the leader in the marriage. She is now the one in charge, the one who controls events and makes decisions for their blended families.

By this time in the novel, Margaret has connected to Howards End. It has the same siren call to her that it has for Mrs. Wilcox before her, and it is here that healing and peace are brought about. Howards End resolves the past with the present; the breach between Henry and Margaret is healed, and Helen and Margaret are reunited. When Henry places himself in Margaret's hands, he is admitting his need for reconciliation. Margaret is therefore able to bring Henry, Helen, and herself together at Howards End where they are all able to live in harmony. Helen again learns to respect and admire Mr. Wilcox, and he makes no further point out of her indiscretion. Henry and Margaret are able to live happily as husband and wife, though in a quieter, less controlled partnership than before, and Margaret and Helen return to their companionable, co-dependent friendship, though it is now more mature. In fact, their relationship only continues to mature as Margaret helps Henry reconcile his own family and Helen becomes a mother herself.

The depth of the familial relationship that Margaret and Helen share is extremely important. They rarely do anything without the other, from going on tours through Germany to visiting friends in the country. The beginning of the change in their relationship starts with Helen's visit to the Wilcoxes. The Wilcoxes, starting with Helen's lapse of judgment with Paul, drives an invisible wedge between the two sisters. When the Wilcoxes happen to move into an apartment across from the Schlegels, Helen

goes to Germany. Because of her absence, Margaret is able to develop a relationship with Mrs. Wilcox that would have been otherwise impossible. Mrs. Wilcox imprints, at first, unnoticeable traces of herself onto Margaret, and these traces alter Margaret's approach to many situations, like the situation of Leonard Bast after he changes jobs and can barely survive on the much lower salary. Margaret grows out of the majority of her impulsiveness; she matures. Helen, however, does not mature until much later, and she struggles with Margaret's inability to connect with her in the same way that she used to. As a result of Margaret's maturation and after Mrs. Wilcox's death, her courtship and impending marriage to Henry Wilcox, the sisters inevitably drift apart. Helen notices the changes in Margaret's personality, but because of Helen's bias against the Wilcoxes, Margaret will not hear Helen's objections. As Kenneth Graham writes in " The Indirect Style of *Howards End*" that "Helen seems to be simply reiterating her position against the Wilcoxes, and above all against Margaret marrying into them: in so doing, a Schlegel would, and will, lose much" (434). Helen is afraid that Margaret will lose herself completely under the influence of a Wilcox, but this again demonstrates Helen's immaturity. Helen is so wrapped up in herself that she fails to truly understand her sister; she does not see that Margaret is strong enough, secure enough in her own beliefs, to keep from being changed by the Wilcoxes, and as a result, Helen closes herself off even more from Margaret. Helen, in her immaturity, can no longer relate to her sister. She therefore feels, after her affair with Leonard, that she can no longer trust and depend on Margaret. Margaret, although she tries to give Helen the same freedom she was given as she grew up, is still a maternal figure to Helen. She cannot help but be disturbed by Helen's secrecy and her refusal to see any member of her family. When Helen has been

gone for several months, still refusing to see any of them, Margaret, out of an overwhelming concern, agrees to trick Helen so that she can see her and ascertain whether or not she is truly well. Again, Helen's immaturity is displayed by her angry and injured attitude to Margaret's ruse. Margaret may have misled her sister, but her reasons for doing so are excusable.

The depth of their connection as sisters goes beyond even her attachment and love for Henry. Margaret does not want a doctor present when she sees Helen, but as she asks for her husband's help, she cannot ask him not to accompany her to Howards End. Margaret, however, absolutely refuses to allow the men anywhere near Helen or the house once she understands Helen's situation. When Margaret sees that all the men around Howards End will try to converge and force her to give up Helen, she fights back. She feels "(a) new feeling [come] over her; she was fighting for women against men. She did not care about rights, but if men came into Howards End, it should be over her body" (206). Margaret has a strong, traditional sense of family; her family is the most important thing to her, even more than her marriage to Henry. Margaret will protect her family at all costs, even that of her own personal happiness. Her refusal to obey Henry here is also important; it shows the progress which has been made towards women's ability to speak and defend themselves by the Edwardian period. In the past, a woman would not have been heeded in the least; Henry and the doctor, in fact, try to shrug Margaret's sudden vehemence off as a mental breakdown of sorts. Margaret is usually a more traditional, docile, and obedient wife, but she will have her way in this regard because it directly touches her family, and Mr. Wilcox and the doctor finally accept that. Margaret does try to pacify Henry, however, by promising to consult with him later. She

is demonstrating yet again how she has a combination of the two opposing ideas about womanhood in her personality.

In a very un-Victorian vein, Margaret makes her dislike of children very clear. It is ironic, therefore, how she ends up as a maternal figure again at the end of the novel. Henry is completely dependent on her, just like a child, and Helen too with her baby. Margaret does not become a mother in the natural sense of the word; instead, she, like Mrs. Wilcox, becomes the glue that reconnects the Wilcoxes and Schlegels into a family. Helen exclaims to Margaret that "you picked up the pieces, and made us a home. Can't it strike you—even for a moment—that you life has been heroic? Can't you remember the two months after Charles's arrest, when you began to act, and did all?" (240). Helen's point is that Margaret stepped into the role of wife and mother, taking care of both Helen and Henry while they are ill, making Howards End their home. Margaret is now essentially the leader in the home rather than Henry. Margaret transforms throughout the course of the novel into a new kind of woman, a woman still valuing some older, Victorian traditions as well as embracing some New Woman ideas, but Margaret takes the better qualities of both types and embodies a combination of the two.

Helen is a quite different story. Tague also notes in *Character and Consciousness…* that Helen "has a character that… is marked by challenge, not acceptance" (112). This is very true; Helen basically does whatever she wants. From the beginning of the novel until almost the end, Helen is impetuous, immature, virtually thoughtless of how her actions affect others, and selfish. She is also unbridled and passionate, but she, unlike Margaret, does not seem to have the inclination to mend her ways or the desire to control the emotions that run so deeply through her character.

Finkelstein also notes that "(o)ne must not allow oneself to be defined by expected role stereotypes, for individual differences matter more than role differences, class differences, or sex differences; and personal intercourse, in both its senses, must be allowed to reflect this individuality" (89), and these ideas very clearly fall into Helen's mindset. Helen gives herself over to her emotions rather than thinking situations through. The first example of her unchecked behavior is seen in her moonlight tryst with Paul. Her behavior is highly inappropriate on two levels. First, she is a guest of the Wilcoxes, and her dalliance with Paul is both secretive and not chaperoned. Second, she claims to have fallen in love with Paul just days after they meet. She does not know him or anything about him before she decides in the heat of the moment that she is in love with him. Helen has not been raised to stop and think before she leaps; Margaret is given a fairly free reign to do as she pleases as she is growing up, and it appears that she, the only real mother figure Helen has known, allows Helen that same freedom to shape her own character. Because Margaret refuses to allow Mrs. Munt to come and help her raise Helen and Tibby, Margaret is largely responsible for Helen's actions because she is the mother figure in their family. Ultimately, Helen is responsible for her choices, but Margaret has allowed Helen all her life to develop her bad habits, like her impulsiveness, and Margaret is therefore partially responsible for Helen's behavior.

An important facet of Helen's almost instantaneous attachment to Paul stems from her deeply imbedded, unconscious desire for a family dynamic like that of the Wilcoxes. Helen is not unhappy with her family; she loves Margaret and Tibby, but the Wilcoxes are a complete family: father, mother, sons, and daughter. The depth of Helen's desire for the family dynamic is revealed through how easily she allows Mr.

Wilcox to barrel over her ideas. Somehow Helen also acquires that Victorian notion of showing deference to male authority in spite of the freedom with which she is brought up. Mr. Wilcox is very opinionated, but so is Helen. She tells Margaret that "I had just picked up the notion that equality is good from some book—probably poetry, or you. Anyhow, it's been knocked into pieces, and, like all people who are really strong, Mr. Wilcox did it without hurting me" (7). Helen is unbothered by his correction; in fact, she relishes it because it comes from a paternal figure. Tibby does nothing to check either Margaret or Helen at home, not only because of his youth but also his immaturity; it is easier for Tibby to ignore them or simply drown them out, so the girls have always been able to hear and form their own opinions about topics like women's suffrage. Henry Wilcox is not like either their father or their brother. He is their polar opposite; he still clings to the older, Victorian ideals of masculinity and femininity, and as such he immediately sets about trying to suppress and correct Helen's, in his opinion, erroneous conclusions. The fact that Helen allows him to influence her is one of the first proofs that she is not a New Woman.

Helen does not rebel against Mr. Wilcox and his family until her experience with Paul sours her towards them all. Helen does not possess the maturity to move past her negative experience; now that she has been hurt, and in a sense, refused welcome into the heart of the complete family dynamic she desires, she can no longer tolerate the Wilcoxes. Her immaturity is further displayed when the Wilcoxes take an apartment, completely by chance, across the street from the Schlegels. Helen claims to Margaret that she is not bothered by their living so near, yet she jumps at the chance to get out of England when her cousin asks her to come to Germany. Helen is extremely selfish at this

point in the novel; she is thinking only of her own awkwardness and pain, never once considering how it will affect Margaret. Helen is young and very self-centered, but her immaturity does not make her a New Woman. She is impulsive and rash, and though she has been raised with much more freedom than a Victorian or Edwardian woman, her actions stem not from an overdeveloped drive to do whatever she pleases, but from a lack of parental guidance to help tone down and train her how to manage her freedom in a more controlled manner, lessons she would have learned from her parents.

The instinct to defer to male authority is, like Margaret, latent but present in Helen's character. Helen, however, has limits. She will not defer to a male if he does not possess a stronger nature than her. Her relationship with Tibby is evidence of this. Helen avoids Tibby for the most part, not because she does not care for her brother, but because he is not a person that she can relate to or really respect. Tibby is very self-centered too, which in the end makes him a better ally to Helen than Margaret after Mr. Wilcox refuses to help the Basts. Tibby is too focused on himself to be bothered by the change already happening in Helen. She does seek out Tibby for advice, however, in regards as to what to do about Mr. Wilcox's past affair with Jacky Bast. Helen learns the particulars of Mr. Wilcox's affair with Jackie from Leonard, but as a woman there is really nothing that she can do. She cannot accept or even consider that Margaret would know about the affair and still stay with Henry, but she also recognizes that because of her behavior, Margaret will not be likely to believe such news coming from her. Helen reveals the information to Tibby because he is male. Even though she does not really respect Tibby because he is not a dominant, strong male, he is her only option. As Margaret's closest male relative, it is his responsibility to decide whether or not to confront Mr. Wilcox, and Helen leaves it

to him. Helen also chooses to ask Tibby to give the Basts money from her, depending again on a man to right a situation that she feels is wrong. Helen does not rely on or seek out male authority often, but she clearly demonstrates a limited respect for it. For most of the novel, Helen does not greatly respect her brother; she defers to him because she must, not because she is truly willing to do so or feels that he deserves it. After her affair with Leonard, however, Helen finally finds a way to connect with Tibby at least a little, and it is through his willingness to help her that Helen finds herself beginning to respect her brother as a man.

Another important note in regards to the forming of Helen's character is that, while Helen is inherently responsible for her own actions, she is still not checked by Margaret when she returns to Wickham Place after her indiscretion with Paul. Although Margaret is not her mother and believes that Helen should make her own choices, as the eldest sibling and the only mother figure Helen knows, Margaret should have at least attempted to encourage Helen to give more thought to her actions. Margaret does not, however, and Helen is allowed to continue acting however she pleases, flying about from one distraction to the next. It is in this state of distraction that Helen first encounters Leonard Bast. She inadvertently takes his umbrella, and then embarrasses him by thoughtlessly commenting on its tattered state before she realizes it is his. Part of Helen's freedom with her words and actions comes from her wealth. Helen has never wanted for anything, and she has been fairly sheltered from the "abyss" as Margaret refers to it (Forster 46). It is therefore not surprising that Helen is so strongly affected by someone who is struggling to better himself in spite of his limitations.

With her highly sensitive emotions, it is surprising that Helen is not more

involved with championing the less fortunate until she meets the Basts. Once she learns about Leonard's desire to better himself, to see and explore the world, and with his endeavor to rise above his lowly place, Helen cannot help but want to help him. Like any of her other interests, Helen throws herself wholly into trying to aid him. A New Woman often involves herself with championing repressed groups: women in particular, but also the poor, those who had to work in the workhouse, and child labor. Helen's desire to help, therefore, is not in and of itself a bad desire. The problem comes when she grows almost obsessed in her concern. Once her emotions are raised, there is no stopping her until her plan is either achieved or it is busted in some way. That is the crux of the problem with Helen, and the lack of parental or at least of a guiding role model to check her results in her own downfall.

The fact that Helen is virtually raised by Margaret does not excuse her behavior, but it does put it in context. Helen is definitely not an ideal Victorian or a New Woman; like Margaret, she possesses a combination of the two types of women as well. She does, however, lean more towards the New Woman than Margaret. This is most clearly displayed first in her blatant disrespect towards Margaret and Henry when she brings the Basts to Evie's wedding party. Blatant disrespect in and of itself does not make a woman a New Woman, but Helen's not considering how her actions would appear or affect others is an attribute applied to the New Woman that is ridiculed by society. Helen is justified in her frustration and anger, but the manner in which she goes about trying to rectify the situation that she feels partially responsible for is wrong. Margaret is justifiably angry with Helen for her very dramatic, loud entrance into the party. It is an embarrassment not only to Margaret and to Henry, but it is also an embarrassment to

Leonard and Jackie. This incident reveals the extent of Helen's lack of forethought and self-control. Because she and Margaret seek Mr. Wilcox's advice, advice which they then pass on to Leonard Bast with the intention of helping him but that ended up ruining him, Helen feels that they are all, she, Margaret, and Mr. Wilcox, responsible for his downfall. By this point in the novel, Margaret has grown far less impulsive; she now reflects before acting, and she refuses to express the same concern or passion that Helen does. It is not that she feels the injustice done to the Basts less; it is just that she is mature enough to keep her feelings inside whilst she is in a public place. She does promise to talk to Henry about finding a position for Leonard, but only if Helen will take them away from Evie's party. Helen has been allowed to indulge her emotions too much throughout her life, and that makes it virtually impossible for her to reason out a situation before acting. As a result, Margaret's frustrated yet calm demeanor in this situation is more than Helen can tolerate at that moment.

Helen's second mistake is allowing herself to be alone with Leonard Bast. She unconsciously connects with him, first out of sympathy and concern, and then in her frustration with the injustice she believes that Margaret and Mr. Wilcox are doing him and Jackie. Because of how passionate and emotional Helen is, it is not surprising that she and Leonard have an affair. Leonard is awed by these leisured, upper-class women, especially Helen. He does not plan to seduce Helen, or to be seduced by her, but they both place themselves into a situation where they are too easily compromised. Helen does not take the Basts from London with the intention to do anything but to get them help. In "Gesturing Toward an Open Space: Gender, Form, and Language in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*," Elizabeth Langland makes the claim that "Helen has a sexual

relationship with Leonard—a woman's classic offering of her body in sympathy—and then arrogantly seeks to compensate him with cash" (442). Her affair with Leonard, though wrong, is not planned, nor is her gift of money compensation to Leonard as though he is a prostitute. She already plans to help the Bast's financially, either by securing Leonard a job or making a financial gift. If Helen had been a New Woman, she would have felt little or no remorse or shame about her affair. Instead, Helen chooses to leave England. She runs from her family, from the society that will censure her indiscretion. By traveling to another country, she can assume any number of identities or stories to disguise her situation. The fact that she runs from her family, hiding her situation even from Margaret and Tibby, demonstrates how she recognizes her mistake. On the one hand, Helen is still acting in a very selfish manner. By not telling her brother and sister why she leaves England or why she refuses to see them, they are made to worry for her health, mentally and physically. On the other hand, Helen also begins to mature. Her affair with Leonard and resulting pregnancy cause her to set aside much of her rashness, thoughtlessness, and over-passionate nature for the health and safety of her child. For Helen, motherhood brings an almost radical change. She is still passionate; she is still self-sufficient. Now, however, she also gives more thought to her actions. Helen embraces motherhood, another quality that many New Women avoid.

Another interpretation of Helen's actions throughout the novel is that she acts the way she does out of an unconscious rebellion, culminating in her affair with Leonard. Helen goes through a type of rebellion against parental authority, represented by Margaret and Henry Wilcox. Margaret first chastises Helen for her actions at Evie's party, and then Margaret basically orders Helen to take the Basts and herself to a hotel in

the village. Like a mother, Margaret tells Helen that she must discuss the situation with Henry, the father figure. Helen, though frustrated by Margaret's lack of immediate action, accepts that her rashness will not achieve the results she wants, so she concedes. Helen's impulsive nature, like in bringing the Basts from London to the wedding party, and her inability to hide her passionate, emotional nature, do not qualify her to be titled a New Woman. Helen has not been raised to be a quiet, obedient Victorian woman who suppresses her thoughts and emotions; she has been allowed to think and feel and express herself. In this way, she is a type of New Woman, but she does not act and express herself the way that she does to make a point or to assert her right to think and act independently. Because of the freedom of her upbringing, Helen does not possess the maturity to understand how her actions affect others. She has only just had a taste of the potential results based on how their misinformation affects Leonard and Jackie. She cannot apply this lesson, to gather facts and to clearly think out a situation before acting, until something drastic happens to her herself. She is stirred to action by the misfortunes and injustices happening to Jackie and Leonard, but until she has an affair with Leonard and becomes pregnant, Helen cannot understand how to be completely rational before she acts. Although Helen has a child out of wedlock, she is not a New Woman. Helen is human; she will make mistakes. Her mistake, in this instance, though a societal *faux pas*, is simply an error in judgment. Helen's pregnancy is the tool that settles Helen's character; it brings out her virtues while still refining her flaws. As a result, Helen, like Margaret, develops a character that combines the old and new versions of womanhood.

Helen's relationship with Margaret is important in how it changes throughout the novel. Her early dependence or attachment with Margaret is both maternal and a

friendship. As Margaret is courted by Henry Wilcox, they begin to grow apart. For Helen, Margaret's attachment to Henry Wilcox is difficult to accept. In her immaturity, Helen is no longer able to connect in the same way with Margaret. Margaret grows more mature, calm, and sensible as her relationship with Mr. Wilcox progresses, but Helen actually seems to grow more vocal when she is emotionally invested in something, like her irrational, loud behavior at Evie's wedding party. Their relationship is almost irrevocably breached when Margaret refuses to help the Basts because of Mr. Wilcox. Helen is so angry with Margaret that she in turn refuses to leave the Basts at the hotel and herself go stay with Margaret at Oniton. After she calms down, in a combination of shame and regret, Helen employs Tibby to tell Margaret goodbye. Helen's immaturity and selfishness drives Margaret to trick Helen into meeting her at Howards End. Both women act badly in this case; Margaret, based on the openness and honesty of their relationship in the past, is wrong to trick Helen, but her motives are pure. Helen is justifiably upset with Margaret for tricking her, but Helen does not have the right to stay angry based on how secretive she has been. Margaret tells Helen that Howards End "kills what is dreadful and makes what is beautiful live" (213), and she is right. It is at Howards End that the sisters reconcile, and it is to Howards End that Margaret moves herself, Henry, Helen and her baby to live in peace.

For Helen, the reconciliation with Margaret simply adds to the calm she has recently developed. Getting pregnant, though unplanned and a social blunder, causes Helen to reevaluate her life. For her own health and the health of her child, Helen is forced to learn to be more calm and rational. Hirai notes that "(b)y relinquishing her spirit and ceasing to have any connection with her old self and its struggles over social

and emotional relationships, Helen seeks peace for her divided spirit, from which she has reacted to the limits of reason itself" (107-8). Helen will depend on Margaret even more in her own process of maturing because Margaret has already changed, matured, and grown more thoughtful and quiet, thereby providing a peaceful environment for Helen. Helen also has no maternal experience, but Margaret does, having taken care of Helen since she is five and Tibby since he is a baby. Margaret does not want to have children of her own, but she is still a mother figure in her own right, and she works to recreate her family, including both Henry and Helen, at Howards End. Jeane N. Olson notes that "Margaret seizes the chance to create a new family structure encompassing both Wilcoxes and Schlegels, in which she would be the matriarch—not just a wife, not just an older sister, never a mother, but sharing equally with Henry in heading an extended family" (358). Family is important, especially to the Schlegels, and Margaret's recreating them all into this unconventional family begins the healing process. Margaret and Helen's relationship returns almost to what it is at the novel's beginning, only now both Helen and Margaret are more mature. Helen depends on Margaret for advice, and she again respects and admires Henry Wilcox. They become a family. Both Margaret and Helen have to go through several trying situations to recognize and develop their true characters, but in the end, both women are made better through the process. Helen, with her untamed, impulsive, passionate nature, finally finds a calming balance between emotion and thought, and Margaret matures into a calm, loving wife and maternal figure. In "'Islands of Money': Rentier Culture in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*," Paul Delany writes that "Margaret Schlegel gives *Howards End* its moral center, and she is its most sympathetic character…she has remained true to her mission of connecting classes and

sexes" (293). In effect, Margaret helps everyone to connect in the end, especially in regards to gender. In "Is the New Woman a Myth?," C. Morgan-Dockrell states that:

> The genuine new woman is she who… has awakened to the fact that the time has come with the work of the world in all departments has need of woman, that one sex cannot effectually and efficiently cope with the business and affairs of humanity; that in the intellectual sphere as in the physical there cannot be natural and healthy creation without the co-operation and amalgamation of all the mental attributes, male and female. (16-7)

Margaret is this kind of new woman; she recognizes the need for equality in all aspects of their lives, and she eventually brings her family into this same mindset. It is at Howards End that Margaret is able to bring about this marriage of older values with modern ones. Howards End, while still tied to the past, is becoming more modern, from the changes made to the buildings to the changed living situation. Howards End is now the permanent home of Margaret, Henry, and Helen and her baby, and the fact that Margaret is the one in charge rather than Henry demonstrates how even Howards End is seeing modernization. The main reason that Margaret and Henry are able to reconcile in the end is because Henry finally allows her to be her own person without trying to control or manage her; he sees and treats her as an equal, not a subordinate. Finkelstein notes that "(t)hroughout the novel, he never worries about women being oppressed, but at the end he is concerned over an equal relationship: he finally connects" (92). Because he connects, reconciliation is possible between both Margaret and him and Helen and him, but he still has to be removed away from the more modern world first. Both Margaret and Helen, however, are more tied to the past than the future, and it is in Howards End, a place representing the past with touches of the modern world, that the sisters can truly thrive.

Both of these women discover in themselves traces of that older, Victorian ideal of womanhood, but they also embrace facets of the New Woman. Mrs. Wilcox, embracing and representing the past, Victorian ideal, cannot survive in this war of changing womanhood. Margaret and Helen, however, find a way to take some of the best qualities of both and combine them into their own ideal type of womanhood, not wholly that of the old Victorian or of the modern New Woman. Margaret's version of womanhood is more traditional; she tastes what the modern world has to offer but chooses to embrace more of the traditional aspects of womanhood. Helen's version is more modern, yet her version of womanhood, after exploring and experiencing some of those more modern ideas, returns to a more traditional style. In *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Novelistic Form From Conrad to Woolf*, Michael Levenson writes that "character in *Howards End* is essentially a mode of aesthetic response, where this is understood not as the casual striking of a pose but as the deepest form of one's engagement with experience. That human responses vary so greatly poses perhaps the chief difficulty of the novel" (80-1). While, as Levenson suggests, Margaret and Helen respond to situations very differently, yet in the end they both discover that their ideals and habits are rooted in a more traditional vein. Even still, Helen's comment that "London's creeping" (240), represented by the red dust slowly making its way into the country, demonstrates how change and progress will never stop. The city, particularly London in this case, can be associated with the New Woman because the role of womanhood, not just changes wrought by the New Woman, will not stop. There is always something happening, some new opportunity opening to women in London. In the country, the older ideas of womanhood still hold some weight, but even there they are

changing. By establishing Margaret and Helen in Howards End, Forster accomplishes a compromise; change is inevitable, but not all change is bad. Some of the older, traditional values can still be held onto even with the changing role of women, like the importance of family. Margaret and Helen develop and nurture their own versions of the New Woman, and their versions, though they will not last forever, are an amicable compromise.

Chapter 3

Follow the Leader: A "New Woman" to Fear in Elizabeth Robins's *The Convert*

The idea of the New Woman and what she represents was still present in Edwardian society, but with more and more women joining in the Suffrage Movement, the lines between the New Woman and the Suffragette in many ways began to blur. In *New Women, New Novels*, Ann Ardis notes that "twentieth-century writers did not always invoke the same legacy as they produced new riffs on the theme of the New Woman" (169). This is especially true as the Suffrage campaign grew in militancy, making the issues that the New Woman also believed in central, vocal assertions[5]. Even still, not all women involved with the Suffrage Movement were New Women; they did share some similar passions, like an awareness of how unfair the treatment of women in the workplace was, the repression of women in both the public and private sphere, and the right to do and speak out for themselves. The structure of gender politics, founded on a patriarchal system in which men had the sole control of the public space and women remained meek and quiet, was tumbling down. In *The New Woman and the Empire*, Iveta Jusová points out that:

> Although Robins' next play, *Votes for Women*, does not technically belong to the New Woman period… it pertinently illustrates that author's growing awareness of the political potentials of theatre and links the more assertively political women's suffrage movement directly to the earlier, more timid New Woman movement. The play demonstrated to British women in the 1900s how to transform the individual sexual and professional concerns of the New Woman into a political agenda. (117)

In this environment, Elizabeth Robins, as a member of the WSPU, wrote the play *Votes*

For Women! in 1907, later expanding it into a novel, *The Convert*[6]. At this point, Women's Suffrage has not yet been granted, and Robins's novel portrays the tenuous threads between patriarchal control and women gaining a voice, which were being fractured as the movement gained supporters. The idea of the New Woman fuels the Suffrage Movement, and like the New Woman, the women who participate are made to appear as radicals, un-sexed persons, and threats to society by all who do not want women to have the right to vote. Granted, the militant suffragettes deserve to be called radical, but even in their militancy, they did not intend to harm anyone. In *The Convert* and *Votes for Women,* the Suffrage Movement has returned to more reasonable tactics. The main figure of the novel and play is Vida Levering, a woman who is not only a New Woman, but she is also the type of woman that threatens even the acceptable changes being made in the roles of women in the home and society. Vida Levering is careful, quiet, and subtle; she knows how to play the acceptably modern woman in society, and she is a woman who is capable of influencing others. She has a personality that draws people to her, and she uses her talents/charms to get what she wants. In this chapter, I will use Vida to exemplify the type of New Woman whom authors like Stoker feared. I will also use Vida to demonstrate how women are set up to become New Women by the limitations of society, and how women, like Vida, are pushed to join the Suffrage Movement, in spite of the sometimes questionable tactics that are used, in order to demand personal justice for all women.

One decision that casts Vida Levering truly as a New Woman is her decision to leave her home when she is approximately eighteen. She leaves out of discontent with a family situation, which is not clarified in the novel, against her family's will. She tells

Jean Dunbarton that "It once happened to [her] to take offence at an ugly thing that was going on under [her] father's roof" (*Convert* 225). There are two possible interpretations of her decision to leave home. One interpretation casts her as the victim; her words imply that the thing she took offence at was something that affected her but was not directly related to her. Second, when Rachel Wark, a maid who served Vida's mother, and continued helping the family after Vida's mother's death, left the Levering family for a time, Vida may have left because she felt abandoned by a mother figure. Even if she was offended by whatever was going on at home, it is, at this point in time, still scandalous for a young woman of a fine, well-known family, to leave her paternal roof for any reason other than a marriage. Her rebellion against her family and her decision to leave her home set her apart from the acceptable, ideal behavior of an unmarried daughter. Vida represents a daughter who refuses to turn a blind eye to inappropriate and/or unacceptable situations going on in her family home.

Throughout history, women have turned blind eyes to such happenings because they do not have the means or the power/influence to exact change if they discover something inappropriate/unacceptable. This position would apply even more so to a daughter in the household. In a family of at least modest financial means, the wife is typically given some control over the household, like in domestic management, dealing with the servants, and training children. Daughters have no power; there can only be one dominant female in the household, and that position belongs to the mother while she lives and the eldest, unmarried daughter if the mother dies. Not only is Vida's mother dead, but she is also the younger sister, so she has no power. Knowing that she can neither change the situation nor get help from someone outside of her home, she chooses to leave

it. In relating some details of her past to Jean Dunbarton, Vida admits that she was "an impulsive girl… [who] turned [her] back on [her] father's house" (*Convert* 225). Her tone implies that she believes her actions to be justified, but in hindsight, probably ill-advised.

The second possible interpretation of the "situation" that motivated Vida to leave home is presented in Chapter 3 of the novel[7]. Her personal maid, Wark, has been with the Levering family since before Vida's birth. She served first Vida's mother, and then the family at large. As her mother dies when Vida is still young, Wark becomes a mother figure for Vida. In thinking to herself, Vida notes that "In the early days what she had 'liked' most about the woman was that Wark had known and been attached to Lady Levering. There was no one else with whom Vida could talk about her mother" (26). Based on this passage, Vida has a clear attachment to Wark, since Wark is Vida's connection to her mother. If Vida did not have a close connection to Wark, beyond just a mistress-servant relationship, Wark would have been dismissed. Wark has a personality that most people would not tolerate in a servant. She is abrupt, blunt, and moody, but the family does not dismiss her. Wark even goes so far as to leave the family for a time when Vida tries to get Wark to soften her manners. I believe that Vida views Wark as an anchor in her life. When Wark leaves, I believe that Vida feels abandoned, and not finding comfort at home, she rebels. One thing that is important to note, however, is that Vida does not blame anyone but herself for her decision. Vida is still accountable for her actions; her decision to leave home is hers, and she suffers the consequences of that decision.

Although Vida errs against decorum by leaving her paternal roof, she does at least

try to secure honest work as a teacher or governess. Her inability to find honest work raises an important issue among the other two ladies present during her conversation with Jean: Lady John and Mrs. Heriot. When Vida is explaining her efforts to secure work, Mrs. Heriot rattles off relief organizations that are supposed to provide protection for women. Vida refutes her each time because the organizations meant to help either refused or were closed at the time Vida had reached her most vulnerable point. Vida does not excuse her subsequent behavior by emphasizing that the help Mrs. Heriot mentions was either refused or unavailable from those organizations; rather, she emphasizes the despair and desperation a woman feels when she is refused, and what can happen when a woman reaches the point where she loses all hope, for she has been in that place. Vida is also not discrediting the service that the relief organizations mentioned by Mrs. Heriot can provide; she will not, however, allow these women to hide from the realities that these organizations cannot and do not always provide help when women seek and need it most.

Vida has a relationship with Geoffrey Stonor because he finds her when she has hit her lowest point, partially because those relief organizations could not or did not help her. Although she knows that their relationship is wrong, she hopes that once he finds out she is pregnant, he will marry her. She did not intentionally get pregnant to trap him into marriage; in fact, she is made even more hopeless by her pregnancy because Stonor will not take responsibility. He pressures her into having an abortion, which makes her very ill, but as soon as she is no longer pregnant, he basically abandons her. Vida later admits that although Stonor did try to find her after she disappeared from the farmhouse where she had her abortion, she would not have married him. The emotional and mental

scars made from their relationship make it impossible for Vida to even consider him after her abortion. It is through the concern of Mrs. Heriot, in fact, that Vida is eventually able to return home.

Now the main issue for which Vida struggles is justice for and the liberation of oppressed, repressed women who are in dire straits and want help. Vida has been in both places; she is still wealthy, and although she has lived through some horrors of her own, she allows herself to acknowledge that even worse realities exist. She experiences such a reality on the night when she disguises herself and goes among the women in the slums so that she may truly understand what they live through. She explains to Lady John and Mrs. Heriot that she "put on an old gown and a tawdry hat… (y)ou'll never know how many things are hidden from a woman in good clothes. The bold free look of a man at a woman he believes to be destitute—you must *feel* that look on you before you can understand—a good half of history" (224). Furthermore, in "Mass Appeal(s): Representations of Women's Public Speech in Suffrage Literature," Maia Joseph writes that "*The Convert*… [suggests] that a woman must enter into the crowd before she can emerge from it and speak publicly about the rights of women" (81). In other words, once a woman of class sees and understands the behavior of men towards destitute women, she should not be able to ignore the way that society favors men in such a way that women are too often left vulnerable. She will also then have the right and duty to speak out against such injustice. Women like Lady John and Mrs. Heriot do not want to face the reality of what is: that too often those women who would seek help to rise above their past, like women who prostitute themselves because that is the only way they can survive, are either turned away or simply cannot find aid before they are driven to their

breaking point. Mrs. Heriot tells Jean that she "needn't suppose… that those wretched creatures feel it as [they] would" (224). Mrs. Heriot represents those upper-class women that choose not to acknowledge the horrors that exist; in order to accomplish this, she "others" those lower-class women, thinking and speaking of them as less-human than herself and Jean. Mrs. Heriot is one of those women that use charity work to appease her conscience and maintain her social standing. Vida, however, knows from personal experience some of the realities that these poor women face, and she, like the suffragists and suffragettes, is not afraid to reveal the ugly truth in order to bring about change. Vida's detailed descriptions of the horrors women may face and her repudiation of Mrs. Heriot's assertions force an awareness of a reality that these upper-class women would rather not acknowledge, and it also introduces Jean to subjects she has been protected from.

Jean is the type of young woman who has been raised to hold the patriarchy in respect. She, like a "proper young woman" of this time, has been sheltered from most of the horrors of the real world, and she behaves with decorum and obedience. In *The New Woman*, Juliet Gardiner writes that "(m)arriage was still regarded as the destiny—and the desideratum—of most women. They were educated for it, conditioned to seek fulfillment in the roles of helpmeet and mother, and the alternatives were presented as chilling, indeed" (146-7). This is representative of Jean's mindset; she has been raised to reverence that traditional desire in a young woman to marry well and have a family, as well as the desire to be a support to her husband. She already shows through her words and actions that she will adapt herself to fulfill her husband-to-be's expectations. These ideas are reinforced in "Staging Suffrage: Women, Politics, and the Edwardian Theater,"

in which Carolyn Tilghman writes that "(t)he ideology that held that a woman's sphere was different from but complementary to a man's sphere and that a woman who ventured beyond her appropriate sphere was an anomaly had become a firmly entrenched means of social organization" (345). Jean has this mentality that her sphere is separate but should complement her husband's, ideas reinforced by her family. Her uncle Lord John observes that "We naturally expect now that you'll begin to think like Geoffrey Stonor, and to feel like Geoffrey Stonor, and to talk like Geoffrey Stonor. And quite proper, too!" (217). Lord John's comment shows that women are denied self-identity; they are expected to think, feel, and act like their husbands, and women like Jean have been raised with that mentality. In "Is the New Woman a Myth?," C. Morgan-Dockrell states that:

> The genuine new woman neither asks nor desires sexual superiority or supremacy. Nor is she ashamed or aweary of her of her womanhood. She is both ashamed and aweary, though of the poor puppet, too long her representative, who not alone must needs dance to the tune set for her by others, but must, not seldom, into the bargain pay the piper, and school herself to the belief that in so doing she is fulfilling her God-intended destiny, and she does claim in the name of justice to be allowed to be in all things what she was created for, a helpmate for man. (17)

This is exactly the type of New Woman that Vida is, and these are the ideas that she awakens Jean to. The fascination that Jean exhibits about Vida, how eagerly she listens to Vida's stories, is a foreshadowing of Jean's readiness to be "converted." Jean's friendship and involvement with Vida eventually culminates in Jean's rebellion although Lady John and Mrs. Heriot try to curtail Vida's influence over Jean. They do so in order to try and protect not only Jean's innocence, but also to protect the ideal type of young woman that Jean represents. Jean may be vaguely aware of the horrors of the world, but like her aunts, she is expected to help the destitute and unfortunate without getting tainted herself. For example, Lady John is aiding Vida in the building of a "cheap and humanely

conducted lodging-house" (223), but Robins reveals another problem here. These wealthy, upper-class women usually do their charity work out of societal expectation and an attempt to make themselves feel better about their own good fortune while deceiving themselves into believing that things are not as bad for these women as they appear. That is where one of the most positive qualities of the New Woman comes in; she not only faces the reality of what is, but she also makes others face it too. In this way, Vida is a commendable New Woman; however, because she exposes Jean to these horrors and is speaking out against the injustices these women face, Vida threatens the societal structure, blurring or obliterating the lines between classes. She is therefore viewed as a threat by Lady John and Mrs. Heriot because she does not respect the socially acceptable but sheltered upbringing Jean has had.

When denying the truth or simply dismissing an issue fails to work, those that favor the traditional roles of women in society resort to discrediting the threat. Mrs. Heriot has two reasons for attempting to discredit Vida. First, Mrs. Heriot is petty. Vida shoots down her proposal that an organ be provided for St. Pilgrim's Church. Both Lady John and Vida believe that a new lodging house, one that will cater to the poorest women, is more important, but Mrs. Heriot resents this because that is not what she wants. Second, Vida is not guarded in her retelling of the horrors she has seen and faced herself, and both Lady John and Mrs. Heriot try to prevent her from revealing such things to Jean. Tilghman's note that "the 'woman with a past,'… who was guilty of some sexual indiscretion outside the bonds of lawful matrimony and consequently posed a disruptive threat to the family structure" (348), is an idea which is applicable to Vida. Although she uses implications to make her point, Mrs. Heriot tries to warn Jean away from Vida

because Vida disrespects the patriarchal structure and is a threat to the innocence of Jean's mind. As Vida does not take the hint that Lady John and Mrs. Heriot want her to stop speaking about these horrors in such detail and especially around Jean, Mrs. Heriot seeks to discredit her. She is vengeful, and she begins her assault on Vida by making overt references to Vida's past, of which Mrs. Heriot is aware. Mrs. Heriot expects Vida to retreat, to change the subject so that her past will not be aired, but Vida is not a typical woman of the time. Rather than being ruffled by Mrs. Heriot's insinuations, she willingly uses her own past to further her point.

Mrs. Heriot is therefore thwarted until Vida leaves long enough for her to reveal more details of Vida's past to Jean. Again, however, Jean does not react the way Mrs. Heriot expects or wants. Jean is appropriately shocked by Vida's past, yet she is more awed than repulsed by it. This is yet further proof of why Vida is a dangerous New Woman. Before meeting her, Jean has shown the proper amount of innocence, she is obedient, she has the desire to and plans to marry, and she possesses the acquiescence to follow her husband-to-be wherever he leads. Once she meets Vida, however, she is immediately drawn to her. Vida possesses forbidden knowledge, knowledge that the restricted, limited Jean cannot help being curious about. In fact, although Vida spends only a few minutes talking to Jean, Jean already shows signs of Vida's ability to influence her. Normally, a word from her aunt would have stopped Jean from pursuing further acquaintance with Vida. Now, however, Vida has exposed her to realities that Jean did not comprehend before, and her interest and concern are raised by Vida's revelations. In fact, Jean demonstrates a desire and interest in learning more about such realities that even her aunts did not expect her to show. Furthermore, she ends up going

through a sort of rebellion. She not only realizes that Vida and Stonor have a past, but she also finds strength within herself to stand up for something that she is passionate about. Vida does not intentionally try to "corrupt" Jean's innocence, but in her passion for the Cause she is less guarded than she normally would be in a social gathering.

It is Vida's interest in and involvement towards the Suffrage Movement that slowly erodes the façade she maintains in social settings. Jusová also notes that "(c)ompared with the play, its novel version, *The Convert* (1907), traces in more detail Vida's gradual realization of the paralyzing effects of the feminine ideal and [Vida's] conversion to the suffrage cause" (118). This quote explains why Vida is less able to pretend that she is less aware of her and other women's lack of rights. Now that she knows more about the realities of the world, she chooses not to continue acting like a completely "proper" woman in society, one that says and does all the right things, and instead begins stating her real viewpoints more openly. Barbara Caine notes in *English Feminism, 1780-1980*, that "the fundamental question about whether women's primary identity was derived from their economic and class position or from the common interest they shared with other women by virtue of their sex" (147), which brings up another important point in regards to Vida's determination to aid the fight for Women's Suffrage. Vida does not distinguish between the upper-class women and the lower-class women that she is trying to help; instead, she fights for all women, regardless of financial means or class. Vida recognizes that the issues the Suffragettes are fighting for are issues that *all women* face, and all women should be able to do and speak for themselves.

It has been about twelve years since Vida's rebellion. Once she returns home, it is implied that she never reveals to her family what has happened to her; it is put aside as

one of those things that the bourgeois do not speak of or relive. In fact, Vida herself puts it aside for some time, returning to a quieter, "proper" demeanor. However, just as her first rebellion may be connected to Wark's leaving, so too is Vida's next "rebellion." It is only after Wark leaves, this time permanently, that Vida becomes truly involved with the Suffrage Movement. She is involved in some charity work before Wark leaves, like the concert she is helping a bishop with. She tells her sister that "The concert's mine, I admit, but the charity's the bishop's. What absurd things we women fill up the holes in our lives with… [but] (t)he reason I'm slaving over the concert… [is because] (i)t amuses me to organize it… I like managing things" (42). Two important things are revealed here. First, Vida recognizes the limitations that are placed on women as well as the societal expectations that are placed on women. A woman could do charity work because she truly wanted to, but it is also sadly one of the only things which women of the upper classes are allowed to do that possesses merit because women are restricted from participating in public affairs and all but specific types of jobs. Second, Vida admits that she throws herself so much into the organization of a charity event because she likes "managing things" (42), which reveals that she likes to be in control. Her desire to control situations is definitely a New Woman characteristic, and although she may play the meek and proper young woman in a social gathering, once she truly sets her mind to something, she is unstoppable.

Vida knows how to play society's games; with Lord Borrodaile for instance, she generally allows him to lead. If he dislikes a topic, she lets him lead the conversation away from it. If he disagrees with her viewpoint on something, she does not force her point. In *Elizabeth Robins, 1862-1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist*, Joanna Gates writes

that “Robins’s own experience had taught her that women were conditioned to behave in a way that won men’s approval. The growth that she had experienced in previous years of self-defined freedom was insignificant compared to the change she underwent as she began to investigate suffragists’ issues with the idea of writing a play” (158). This is exactly how Robins portrays Vida; before Vida rebels when she is approximately eighteen, she remains in her proper place within her family. After her rebellion, she can only pretend for a time that she agrees with society’s views. Vida, for a while, does what is acceptable in society, like allowing Lord Borrodaile to lead. Like Robins, however, the more Vida gets to know and becomes involved with the Suffrage Movement, the more she changes. She and her sister at first sneak off to Suffragette meetings; then Vida invites a Suffragette to visit her. It is this visit that cracks Vida’s façade; Vida knows that there is work to be done to help the cause of all women, but she, like most upper-class women, is at first reluctant to push too far against the bounds of propriety. Vida, in fact, tries to do something that women like Lady John and Mrs. Heriot do later in the story. Vida offers financial support to the Suffrage movement, a way for her to be “involved” without being truly committed. Lady John and Mrs. Heriot use charity work for a similar purpose; they are “helping” others without actually exposing themselves to the realities of the people they help. The difference, however, is that Vida does not continue to stay in the shadows; she slowly becomes more involved. Eventually, she becomes one of the speakers for Woman’s Suffrage. Joanna Townsend writes in “Elizabeth Robins: Hysteria, Politics and Performance,” that “Vida Levering is able to make [the] connection between her own past experiences and those affecting all women in her society… [which] gives her the strength to speak both in and against the dominant male discourse… with

the aim of cooperation by women with women and for women, rather than… with the patriarchal order" (116). Because she can apply her own past experience to the present evils still happening, Vida is an invaluable figure in the movement. Added to this, she possesses the kind of personality that draws people to her; she is intelligent, educated, acquainted with what is going on in the world around her, beautiful, and mysterious. She also has a way with words. She moves through society in a way that prevents those she socializes with from suspecting her to be a latent suffragette until she wants them to know. The feature that makes Vida so attractive to everyone around her is her self-assurance; she knows who she is, what has made her who she is, and she does not let anyone or anything rob her of her self-identity.

One point that Robins subtly makes throughout the novel is how so many women lack a self-identity. The married women in the novel are known primarily by their husband's names; for example, Lady John, Mrs. Freddy, etc. This is something that Robins uses to emphasize the importance that gender politics plays in the Edwardian period. Women are not only severely limited regarding what they can do, but they are also virtually denied a self-identity once they are married. Of course, women rarely discover their self-identity even when they are single, but by keeping Vida single, Robins is able to show how a single woman with financial independence, a hallmark often attributed to a New Woman, can gain a self-identity. In "Inventing Women: From Amaterasu to Virginia Woolf," Karlyn Kohrs Campbell writes that "(b)ecause… constructions of womanhood silenced them, denying women personhood and citizenship… women were compelled to invent the spaces and roles in which and the sites from which women's voices could be heard and heeded. Women had to invent

themselves as speakers, as rhetors" (112). This is what Vida does; she learns to speak for herself, both in the public and private sphere, after her affair with Stonor and her return home, and she never again allows herself to be dominated in a way that will require her to sacrifice her self-identity. This self-sufficiency and independence, this refusal to be cowed by society or patriarchal control, and her ability to influence others all serve to qualify Vida as a New Woman and prepare her to become a Suffragette.

By contrast, Mrs. Freddy, who is also involved in the Suffrage movement, is dominated by her husband. He allows her to participate in the more political aspects, like petitions, but he expects her to keep her Suffrage agenda in check in company. Mrs. Freddy allows herself to be controlled by her husband in this; if she starts speaking about anything close to women's rights, her husband or another male stops her. For example, she defends the Suffrage Cause by saying that "If you cared to know the attitude of the real workers in the Reform… you might have seen in any paper that we lost no time in dissociating ourselves from the two or three hysterical—" (140). It is her brother-in-law who gives her a warning look here, effectively stopping her from expressing any more sympathies. Mrs. Freddy may be sympathetic to the Cause and even involved to an extent, but she still operates under a patriarchal mindset. Men have the power and the final say, and Mrs. Freddy accepts that. What makes her different than Vida is that Mrs. Freddy does not fight her husband for the very rights she is trying to help secure for other women. Vida is not married, nor does she have a male relative to check her, but Vida also does not hesitate to fight for what she believes. For example, Vida holds the highest respect for Lord Borrodaile, but even he cannot exert any influence on Vida once she makes her mind up. She tells him that she is going to visit the slums at night, and

although he vehemently objects, she will not budge. In the same way, Vida does not allow herself to be curtailed by women like Lady John and Mrs. Heriot. In "'Hilda, Harnessed to a Purpose': Elizabeth Robins, Ibsen, and the Vote," Maroula Joannou writes that "(t)he sentiments [that the play and novel] express are designed to appeal to those bestowing charity rather than to those in need of it" (193). Joannou's note is important because it stresses the importance of reaching the women in the upper classes and getting them involved in the Suffrage movement. By making first herself and then the other women in her society become aware of the heart of the issues surrounding Women's Suffrage, Vida refuses to continue seeing the world through the same rose-colored glasses. Lady John and Mrs. Herriot still wish to, but Vida forcefully puts those glasses away. Vida has been through the fire, and she has come through it stronger. Now, she is too strong to be easily swayed, and her dedication and passion ignite the interest of others to her cause, be it out of simple curiosity or real interest.

Because of her past, Vida is more sensitive to the situation of the women whom she is trying to champion. As Jan McDonald notes in "'The Second Act was Glorious': The Staging of the Trafalgar Scene from *Votes for Women!* at the Court Theatre," that "the new century's 'Woman with a Past,'… turns a potentially tragic personal incident that should have excluded her from society according to social and stage conventions into the *raison d'être* for an active campaign in a public political forum and she fights so that other women are not subjected to economic and social prejudice" (140). Vida is not overcome or conquered by her past; rather, she learns from her past and uses it to fuel her motivation to prevent other women from ending up in the same position as she herself did. Many men and women try to brush off the fight for women's rights as "Sex-

Antagonism" (239), as though making it sound petty and rebellious will make it go away. In *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists From Brontë to Lessing*, Elaine Showalter writes that "Robins… saw the suffrage campaign as reflecting a deep hostility between men and women that finds its characteristic expression in sexual intercourse. Because they are able to acknowledge the existence of sex-antagonism, the suffragettes are free to act" (223). The point which Showalter is making is that those that want to discredit these women use the term "sex-antagonism" without actually acknowledging the truth of its presence in their own lives. Many, both men and women, choose to view the suffragettes as a threat to the patriarchal structure, so they label them as threatening stereotypes who incite conflict between the sexes. For example, the Suffragettes are described as "these new Furies that pursued the agreeable men one sat by at dinner—men who, it is well known, devoted their lives—when they weren't dining—to the welfare of England. But were these frail, rather depressed-looking women—were they indeed the ones, outrageously daring, who broke up meetings and bashed in policemen's helmets?" (75) It is true that some of the Suffragettes show force, but only one side of the story is being revealed. For example, Miss Claxton is known for carrying a whip, a whip that she is said to have used on a policeman. She explains to Vida the reasons for her carrying it. She tells Vida that she saw a policeman "knocking some of our poorer women about very roughly… I called out that he was not to do that again. He had one of our women… banging her head against the railings. I called out if he didn't stop I would make him. He kept on… and I struck him. I struck the coward in the face" (157). Miss Claxton's point is that men have too much power, and even when women stands up to men, women are not likely to win. Miss Claxton goes on to say that:

> (T)he police must be taught, they are not to treat our women like that… but their power is immense and almost entirely unchecked. It's a marvel they are as decent as they are. How should *they* be expected to know how to treat women? What example do they have? Don't they hear constantly in the courts how little it costs a man to be convicted of beating his own wife?... Stealing is far more dangerous; yes, even if a man is starving. That's because bread is often dear and women are always cheap. (157)

Miss Claxton raises two important points. First, the law is on the side of men. They are either able to get away with many crimes, especially crimes against women, or their sentences are very light. Second, the value of women is placed so low that there is a higher penalty for stealing bread than for misusing a woman. This is another driving force behind not only the Suffragettes, but also behind the New Woman. Women want justice; they want the right to defend themselves, in court, at home, and in public.

Later in the novel, Vida describes her view of the state of women to Jean. She believes that " Every woman is in a state of natural subjection… no, I'd rather say 'allegiance' to her idea of romance and her hope of motherhood; they're embodied for her in man. They're the strongest things in life till man kills them. Let's be fair. If that allegiance dies, each woman knows why" (239). The "why" that Vida is referring to is the result when women's blinders come off and they acknowledge their subjected state. For Vida, the disillusionment comes after her child is aborted. For Jean, it comes through the realization that Stonor is not the hero she thinks he is; she sees his past, his dependence on his father's favor as mattering more than doing right by Vida at whatever cost, and she is willing to sacrifice her own happiness to see him right his past wrong. Again, the problem is with men having too much power. Vida was not in a position to force Stonor to marry her once they discovered she was pregnant; she did not have the power. Like Vida, some women, who discover the powerlessness of their situations,

fight back. Before meeting Vida and Stonor, Jean would never have dared to go to a Suffrage rally, nor would she have dared to dredge up the past of a man. Vida makes Jean realize how she and many women have been blind to the disillusioning inequalities in their lives, but few like Vida have had the drive or nerve to fight against it. Women like Vida have finally had enough, and they are fighting back and demanding their right to have personal and political rights.

There are several motivations presented in the novel for a woman to be both a New Woman and a Suffragist or Suffragette. One of the main things that both the New Woman and the Women's Suffrage Movement want is of course to have equal rights with men. The New Woman is believed to want equality with men for equality's sake, but the Suffragists and Suffragettes want equality primarily so that women have the same rights to justice as men. When one of the speakers at a suffrage rally is asked why women want the vote, she replies that women want it:

> for exactly the same reason that you men do. Because, not having any voice in public affairs, our interests are neglected; and since woman's interests are man's. all humanity suffers. We want the vote, because taxation without representation is tyranny; because the laws as they stand bear hardly on women; and because those unfair, man-made laws will never be altered till women have a share in electing the men who control legislation. (88-9)

Added to this is the fact that so many people, both men and women, have a "door-mat" perception of women, and the New Woman and the Suffragettes are tired of it. One of the speakers states that "If we put ourselves under men's feet we must *expect* to be trodden on. We've come to think it's time women should give up the door-mat attitude. That's why we've determined on a policy of independence" (116). Women are finally beginning to feel that they should have the right to go out into public and participate in

society when they wish too, and especially to help decide who should be representing them.

Another reason that women, both New Woman and Suffragettes, feel that they deserve to have the personal and political rights is because so many women have to work in order to survive. At the final Suffrage rally in the novel, one of the speakers states that "You s'y woman's plyce is 'ome! Don't you know there's a third of the women in this country can't afford the luxury of stayin' in their 'omes? They *got* to go out and 'elp make money to p'ay the rent and keep the 'ome from bein' sold up. Then there's all the women that 'aven't got even miserable 'omes" (247). The point that this suffragette is making is that women are no longer able to simply stay in the home; they have been forced out into the workplace. One of the claims that men make to their superiority over women is that they are the bread-winners, yet men are no longer the sole providers. Oftentimes, it is the extra money that the women make that keeps the family alive. These women are not working out of rebellion against the patriarchy, as the New Woman is credited as doing. These working-class women work because if they do not, they and their families will die. They do much of the same work that men do, usually working longer and in worse conditions for far less pay; if for no other reason, then, these women argue that they should be allowed to vote so that changes for safer working conditions and equal pay for equal work may be more speedily implemented.

Robins provides several examples of how men think of women during this time period. One of the earliest examples is found in a conversation between Vida and Lord Borrodaile. At a dinner party given by the Freddys, Vida and Borrodaile sit next to each other during dinner. They are speaking about conversing, and Borrodaile states that

“men aren’t good at it… it’s rather the woman’s “part,”... rightly viewed, it’s a woman’s privilege—her natural function” (24). Vida’s reply is quite telling; she views this “honor” given to women as a “Geisha view of life” (24), meaning it is yet another thing that men expect women to do to please them. This is another example of the role of gender politics in the novel; men like Borrodaile consider maintaining conversation and making oneself pleasing as unworthy of their time and effort. However, expecting women to maintain a conversation is trivial in light of some of men’s other expectations for women. For example, during one of the Suffrage rally’s speeches, the female speaker points out that men do not view women as “worthy of being consulted. She is worthy to do the highest work given to humanity, to bear and bring up children… but she is not worth consulting about her own affairs” (91). This is one of the most powerful points in the novel, and it is one of the main reasons that women are stepping out of their prescribed roles and claiming more rights in untraditional ways as “New Women.” Women have been placed into a neat, confining box, and they are expected to stay in it. Even when a woman works for a cause, men like Lord John think that “Philanthropy… in a woman like Miss Levering, is a form of restlessness. But she’s a *nice* creature. All she needs is to get some ‘nice’ fella to marry her!” (219). Most men assume that the only motivation for a woman of class to involve herself with a cause like the Suffrage Movement is that she is trying to fill up the hole in her life made by not yet being married. Women are not considered able to think, feel, and do things for themselves; of course, if they did, they would no longer need to rely on men. I think this is perhaps the most terrifying aspect of the women’s demands for rights; men are used to being relied on, being the protector, and being in control. In *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860-1914*,

Susan Kent writes that “patriarchal society insisted upon the continued exclusion of women from public power because men feared the corresponding power that they would obtain in the private sphere” (191). Women’s weakness affirms men’s strength, so when women do gain personal and political freedom, men begin to feel less or unimportant, which is subconsciously why they fight so strongly against the New Woman and the Suffrage Movement.

Men want to continue to view women as the weaker sex, incapable of substantial, wholesome, and logical thought, because by doing so they retain their power over women. At a Suffrage rally, someone makes a point of highlighting that working-class men partially gained the right to vote from violent demonstrations. The female Suffragettes, minus the few militant Suffragettes that caused disruptions in the House, are not currently using violent means to make their points. Most of the Suffragists disassociate themselves from the militant Suffragettes that have caused problems because they do not want to gain their rights by violence. In fact, at the final Suffrage rally described in the novel, Ernestine Blunt says that “Well… you know some say the whole trouble about us is that we *do* fight. But it’s only hard necessity makes us do that. We don’t want to fight—as men seem to—just for fighting’s sake. Women are for peace” (254). Granted, she is not saying that women will not fight; she is saying that women would prefer to use peaceful means. There is an underlying threat in her wording, though, promising that women will do what is necessary. Even with most of the women not fighting, they are still far more harassed than the men who demanded the right to vote. In *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, Samuel Hynes notes that “(b)eneath the sense of political injustice was a deeper feeling, the women’s sense of the fundamental injustice of

sexual relations" (201). Hynes's point shows how the struggles women are facing all come back to gender politics; women are given a harder time, face more resistance than men, simply because they are women, and the New Woman, the Suffragettes, and the Suffragists are all crying out against this injustice and refuse to stand by and allow it to continue.

Added to this is the fact that it is men who decide what is feminine and what is not. For example, at the final Suffrage rally in the novel, Ernestine Blunt comments that:

> We [women] used to believe men when they told us it was that [working] was unfeminine—hardly respectable—for women to be students and to aspire to the arts that bring fame and fortune. But men have never told us it was unfeminine for women to do the heavy drudgery that's badly paid… Let the women scrub and cook and wash, or teach without diplomas on half pay. That's all right. But if they want to try their hand at the better-rewarded work of the liberal professions—oh, very unfeminine indeed. (253)

Her point is that men are content to let women do the most menial tasks, the most back-breaking work, so that they may not have to, but if a woman tries to better her situation, then she is unfeminine. Women are expected to fulfill certain roles, such as wife, mother, housekeeper, etc., but she is to do those duties without complaint or demand. As stated above, women are considered "worthy" of being wives and mothers, and that "she is worthy to pay the taxes that she has no voice in levying. [But] (i)f she breaks the law that she has no share in making, she is worth hanging, but she is not worth consulting about her own affairs—affairs of supremest importance to her very existence… (s)he will never get justice until she gets the vote" (91). Sue Thomas points out in "Sexual Matters and *Votes for Women*" that "women's material interests were not represented in the State which denied them a vote… a stock suffragist and suffragette argument" (49). Even though Vida, as a woman of means, is not in the same financial straits as most of the

women who desire the vote, she is conscientious of the fact that Thomas is making about how women ought to have a say when they are held to the same standards as men. Financial concerns are not the only or even the most important issue being made here; it is the unfairness of the laws which favor men over women in any venue. Vida and the women involved in the Suffrage Movement recognize that men have too much power over women, and one of their driving forces in furthering the Suffrage Cause is to handicap men like Stonor from being able to so easily take advantage of women. It is this drive that leads Vida to use the new-found relationship with Jean and the revelation of her connection to Stonor to exact her "revenge" for the past.

Before Stonor enters the room, Vida is fully prepared to resort to a sort of blackmail in order to get the help for the movement that she wants. She tells Stonor that "I am preparing you… (f)or the work that must be done. Either with your help or with girl's… One of two things… either her life, and all she has given to this new Service; or a ransom if I give her up to you" (297-8). Stonor comes into the room fearing that Vida will demand a marriage between them, but instead she offers him a choice between getting to keep Jean or giving Jean up. Vida proceeds to tighten the screw, as it is, by planting the idea that Jean "sees for herself that we've come to a place where we find there's a value in women apart from the value that men see in them. You teach us not to look to you for some of the things we need most. If women must be freed by women, we have need of such as—… Who knows, she may be the new Joan of Arc" (299). In other words, Vida knows that she can inspire Jean to be as dedicated to the work as she is, and Vida is telling Stonor that she believes that Jean could be as influential, if not more so, than Suffragettes like Ernestine Blunt. Vida is not only threatening to separate Stonor

from Jean; she is also threatening the patriarchal dominance that Stonor and the rest of the family have over Jean. Jean represents the future generation, one that can be led away from a reverence for the older ideals and be made to consider alternatives, like that women should have rights. This is a more blatant example of Vida as a New Woman, a woman who is not afraid to challenge social norms and acceptable behavior and is willing to get herself dirty as long as she achieves what she wants, and this makes her dangerous.

In truth, however, Vida does not give Stonor this ultimatum to be vindictive; she is merely taking advantage of the situation at hand. Carol MacKay, in *Creativity Negativity: Four Exemplars of the Female Quest*, writes that "Stonor… eventually makes the volitional—conscious, albeit hardly altruistic—decision to support the Woman's Cause… transposition is central to suffrage itself, [and] Robins wisely focuses on the ability of men to reposition themselves, both seriously and comically, vis-à-vis women" (159). MacKay's point here is that both Jean and Vida have a hand in influencing Stonor's decision to support the Cause, but he still chooses to help. In fact, Vida tells him she does not mean to keep him and Jean apart before he ever gives Vida the hope that he may throw in his support for Women's Suffrage. Eventually, they both stop being on the defensive and actually talk to each other. She not only shows sympathy for his difficulties, past and present, but she also opens herself up to him, letting him see the depth of her pain over the loss of their child. As soon as she opens herself up, Stonor also shows honest remorse and sympathy to her, and he finally comes to understand the passion with which she is dedicated to the women's movement. Vida's final words to Stonor, "You will have other children, Geoffrey; for me there was to be only one. Well, well… since men have tried, and failed to make a decent world for the little children to

live in, it's as well some of us are childless. Yes… *we* are the ones who have no excuse for standing aloof from the fight!" (304), reveal that she has decided not to require anything from him.

A characteristic often attributed to the New Woman is that she would often choose not to be a mother. In *Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862-1952*, Angela John notes that *The Convert* "explores the implications of a denial of motherhood… but [Vida] also suggests that women who accept such responsibilities, which can mean a wider group than natural mothers, have indeed a grave duty… she [also] points up the importance of those who do not have maternal responsibilities in leading women's suffrage" (163). Vida does not view the idea of motherhood negatively; if she had married Stonor and had their child, she would have happily stepped into the roles of wife and mother. Vida also does not have an abortion out of a sense of rebellion. Since she is childless, however, she thinks that she and other women without children or in a maternal position should be leading the Suffrage Movement. By doing so, women who are mothers do not have to sacrifice their time as mothers to the movement. Even if Vida had become a mother, her fierce independence, first displayed in her leaving home and later in her ignoring societal rules for polite conversation, leads me to believe that she would have become an advocate for Women's Suffrage even if she had married Stonor and had their child.

Vida will remain dedicated to the fight for women's rights, but she will not drag Stonor or Jean with her. In "The Theatrical Politics of Elizabeth Robins and Bernard Shaw," Joanna Gates notes that "Jean forces Stonor to make amends for his past betrayal of Vida, who knows she can bargain for his pledge to support suffrage. Instead, she leads

him to a true conversion, bringing him to understand the suffering she has endured" (50). Gates's point that Vida succeeds in converting Stonor shows that Vida in the end does not have to use blackmail to gain his help. Penny Farfan offers a different viewpoint in "From *Hedda Gabler* to *Votes for Woman*: Elizabeth Robin's Early Feminist Critique of Ibsen," noting that "Robins provides Vida with the opportunity not only to pronounce judgement on men and on patriarchal society throughout *Votes for Women*, but also to demand—and get—political compensation for women from Geoffrey Stonor in the final act" (71-2). Although Farfan implies that Vida gets Stonor's promise to support Women's Suffrage by demand, I argue that Stonor ends up pledging his support to the movement by choice, not by manipulation or force. Once they put aside their anger, they both express sympathy towards each other, and Vida no longer needs to force Stonor to help. He offers it both because he wants to and as a way to help right a past wrong.

Overall, Vida definitely fulfills the qualities attributed to the New Woman, and it is her ability to influence others that makes her the type of New Woman that authors of this time and society feared. Vida and women like her are, however, set up by society to be called New Woman largely because they demand rights and access that they have previously been denied, but in truth, should have. It is, however, unfair to paint them as a great social evil. While some of the choices that New Women and Suffragettes make are certainly worthy of censure, it is more about the method they use rather than the demand/desire itself being unreasonable. For example, when Vida initially starts out trying to blackmail Stonor, he shuts down. When she removes the threat of blackmail and they actually talk, Stonor listens and is willing to help. Sometimes, the only way to make someone listen is to first do something to get their attention; however, there is also

the danger that a violent action, like those of the militant Suffragettes, will stop progress rather than make it. Robins was definitely a supporter of Women's Suffrage and could be considered a New Woman. Her support of the Suffrage Movement, however, was of a more peaceful nature, and she highlights the suffragettes' desire for reasonable tactics to reinforce this point. Tilghman writes that "what the suffrage playwrights did differently in their plays was to give their female characters, whether virtuous or fallen, personal agency and an ingenuity that allowed them to triumph over the restricted and adverse circumstances in which they found themselves" (350). This is exactly how Robins empowers Vida, creating in her a New Woman that, while most of society will fear and/or censure her, presents the changing definition of womanhood. Vida represents all the women that recognized that women deserved personal rights and should fight for them.

Conclusion

Whether or not the respective authors I have examined were responding to the New Woman or just to the changing definitions of womanhood, all of the female characters except for Lucy Westenra are presented as women who combined traditional and modern ideas of womanhood in the shaping of their characters. Because the definition of womanhood changed whether the authors wanted it to or not, their female characters either had to embrace the changes or die clinging to the older ideals. In *Dracula* and *Howards End*, Lucy Westenra and Ruth Wilcox both belong to an older ideal of womanhood, one that is unable to adapt to the changing definition of womanhood. As such, both women die, but they both die as glorious representatives of the past whom are worthy of praise. The other female characters I examine, Wilhemina Harker in *Dracula*, Margaret and Helen Schlegel in *Howards End*, and Vida Levering and Jean Dunbarton in *The Convert* and *Votes for Women*, all adapt in different ways. Mina primarily embraces a more Victorian mindset, but she embraces certain attributes of a modern woman in that she works a job until she marries Jonathan Harker, she is educated, and she acquires professional skills. Her continued respect for the patriarchy, however, makes her an ideal representative of how women could embrace the modern while remaining true to the traditional ideal. Margaret and Helen both begin as quite modern women, with their education, financial freedom, and awareness of the world, yet they still choose to embrace more traditional values by the end of *Howards End*. Forster therefore created two women who tasted the modern world but still preferred the calmer,

quieter traditional style of womanhood. Finally, Vida comes to represent how a "woman with a past" can overcome that past and not be ruined in society. Vida learns how the older, traditional values repress and make women vulnerable, and she fights against that repression and vulnerability. Jean transforms from that older, traditional ideal of womanhood into a more modern definition, one that too is aware of the repression and control of women. She still remains true to many of her more traditional ideals, but she will no longer be controlled by them. All of these women demonstrate values that are commendable, whether those values are traditional or modern, New Woman-like or Suffragist/Suffragette, and as such should be viewed as exemplars in their own rights for the women in their respective times.

Notes

1. *Shafts* (1892-1900) and *Woman's Signal* (1894-1899) are available in The Gerritsen Collection of Aletta H. Jacobs (Journals) in the Muntz Library Journal Collections online.

2. For scholarly discussion of Lucy's failure to exemplify Victorian ideals, see Senf, "'Dracula': Stoker's Response to the New Woman"; Stevenson, "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula"; Spencer, "Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis"; Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin De Siècle*.

3. For scholarly discussion of Mina as a combination of the best traditional and modern values, see Senf, "'Dracula': Stoker's Response to the New Woman" and *Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism*; Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin De Siècle*.

4. For scholarly discussion of Lucy as a New Woman, see Senf, "'Dracula': Stoker's Response to the New Woman"; Spencer, "Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis"; Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin De Siècle*.

5. For more information on the Suffrage Movement, see Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860-1914*.

6. For an example of the types of demands made by the WSPU, see page 219 of the edition of Juliet Gardiner, *The New Woman*, listed in works cited.

7. For details about Vida's motivations, see pages 26-7 of the edition of *The Convert* listed in the works cited.

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