

**THE HOUSEWIFE AND THE MODERN: THE HOME AND APPEARANCE IN
WOMEN'S MAGAZINES, 1954 – 1969**

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Abstract
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In 1957 a number of women's organizations were involved in planning a government-sponsored Festival of Women – an event that indicates contemporary awareness of and interest in the changing position of women. This study is similarly concerned with the position of women in the 1950s and 60s, relating constructions of the 'modern' woman in women's magazines to post-war developments, such as increasing levels of consumption and changing leisure patterns. There are two major themes in the thesis: the housewife and the modern. The study illustrates the centrality of 'the housewife' while accentuating the breadth and complexity of post-1945 women's roles and identities, with a focus on two sites pivotal to constructions of femininity in women's magazines: the home and appearance. The study also explores how women's magazines shaped the modern, emphasizing the range of ways in which this notion was constructed and understood. The concept of social capital is used to examine the significance of the modern, looking at *why* it was so important and its connection with ideas of exclusion and belonging.

The study looks at two magazines. *Home and Country* was the magazine of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, and hence it targeted rural women. *Woman's Outlook*, on the other hand, was the Women's Co-operative Guild magazine, aimed at working-class Guild members. Through comparisons between the two and with *Woman*, a mass-circulation weekly magazine, the thesis demonstrates that their respective rural and Co-operative identities were distinctive features that contrast with the urban and mass consumption viewpoints evident in other titles. These rural and Co-operative identities heavily influenced the perspectives of the organizational magazines and created alternative visions of the modern. The relationship of these features to post-war British modernity has received little attention, with historians' focus on the urban and the individual consumer positioning the countryside and the Co-operative movement as antithetical to the modern. However, this study reveals that rural and Co-operative interpretations of the modern enhance and develop understandings of key themes in 1950s and 60s British history such as national identity, consumer culture, generation and age.

The thesis situates *Home and Country* and *Woman's Outlook* within broader social and cultural networks and shows the extent to which women's magazines operated as cultural intermediaries. The study also engages with a number of intersecting bodies of literature, such as revisionist accounts of domesticity and recent work on women's organizations, and contributes to various discussions including housing in post-war Britain and feminist analyses of fashion and beauty. This multifaceted investigation generates new insights into both the housewife and the modern, insights which offer a more complex and nuanced account of 1950s and 60s Britain and the position of women.

Declaration

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Abbreviations

ACWW	Association of Country Women Worldwide
BSI	British Standards Institute
CA	Consumers' Association
CAC	Consumer Advisory Council
CoID	Council of Industrial Design
CP	Co-operative Press
CWS	Co-operative Wholesale Society
DIY	Do-It-Yourself
EAW	Electrical Association for Women
NCW	National Council of Women
NFWI	National Federation of Women's Institutes
NHS	National Health Service
OAP	Old Age Pensioner
FPA	Family Planning Association
UN	United Nations
WAC	Women's Advisory Committee
WCG	Women's Co-operative Guild
WW2	World War Two
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Introduction

In January 1957, *Woman's Outlook* magazine featured a preview of the forthcoming Festival of Women, a government-sponsored event that a number of women's organizations were involved in.¹ The article asked 'What are we really like, we women of the 50s?', before commenting on women's position in post-war Britain:

We have the vote, we have the right to work, even after marriage, some of us, a slowly increasing number, have the "rate for the job", but have we as much leisure? Have we enough time to devote to all the women's organisations which were so important in the early years of this century? Have we really achieved emancipation from the drudgery of the home, or have we accepted higher standards along with labour-saving equipment, and burdened ourselves just as heavily as our mothers?²

The author shows awareness of the changing role of women in 1950s, changes that mirrored wider social, cultural, economic and political shifts: mass democracy; married women's paid employment; the issue of equal pay; growth of privatized leisure; increasing levels of consumption and its impact on women's domestic roles.

This study is similarly concerned with the position of women in the 1950s and 60s, relating constructions of the 'modern' woman in women's magazines to post-war developments, such as increasing levels of consumption and changing leisure patterns. There are two major themes in the thesis: the housewife and the modern. The study illustrates the centrality of 'the housewife' while accentuating the breadth and complexity of post-1945 women's roles and identities, with a focus on two sites pivotal to constructions of femininity in women's magazines: the home and appearance. The study also explores how women's magazines shaped the modern, emphasizing the range of ways in which this notion was constructed and understood. The concept of social capital is used to examine the significance of the modern, looking at *why* it was so important and its connection with ideas of exclusion and belonging.

The study looks at two magazines. *Home and Country (H&C)* was the magazine of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, and hence it targeted rural women.³ *Woman's Outlook (Outlook)*, on the other hand, was the Women's Co-

¹ 'The Festival of Women', *The Times* 28/11/1956, p.4.

² 'Festival of Women', *Outlook* 12/01/1957, pp.16-17.

³ This thesis uses NFWI to denote the movement's official policies and campaigns. The terms WI or Institute refer to specific branches or *de facto* organizational activities and views. The WI began in Canada in 1897, with the aim of educating rural women, but it was not until 1915 – when war emphasized the need to increase food production – that there was the impetus to establish an organization for rural women in Britain. Maggie Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism – The Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (London, 1997), pp.17-40; the National Federation of Women's Institutes, <http://www.thewi.org.uk/index.aspx?id=1>, accessed 03/08/2010.

operative Guild magazine, aimed at working-class Guild members.⁴ Evidence from *H&C* and *Outlook*'s publishing boards, the NFWI *H&C* sub-committee and the Co-operative Press, complements the magazine sample. Through comparisons between the two publications and with *Woman*, a mass-circulation weekly magazine, the thesis demonstrates that their respective rural and Co-operative identities were distinctive characteristics that contrast with the urban and mass consumption viewpoints evident in other titles. These rural and Co-operative identities heavily influenced the perspectives of the organizational magazines and created alternative visions of the modern. The relationship of these features to post-war British modernity has received little attention, with historians' focus on the urban and the individual consumer positioning the countryside and the Co-operative movement as antithetical to the modern. However, this study reveals that rural and Co-operative interpretations of the modern enhance and develop understandings of key themes in 1950s and 60s British history such as national identity, consumer culture, generation and age.

The thesis situates *H&C* and *Outlook* within broader social and cultural networks and shows the extent to which women's magazines operated as cultural intermediaries. The study also engages with a number of intersecting bodies of literature, such as revisionist accounts of domesticity and recent work on women's organizations, and contributes to various discussions including housing in post-war Britain and feminist analyses of fashion and beauty. In addition, the thesis highlights the fruitfulness of comparative analyses, exposing links between topics often considered in disparate disciplines or areas of study. In a 2006 *Feminist Theory* special issue on beauty, for example, Rita Felski called for 'more feminist engagement' with domestic aesthetics as well as considerations of the body and beauty.⁵ Through its examination of the home and appearance, this thesis responds to Felski's request. This multifaceted investigation generates new insights into both the housewife and the modern, insights that offer a more complex and nuanced account of 1950s and 60s Britain and the position of women. The rest of the Introduction establishes the scholarship that underpins the study and supports its aims, beginning with work on post-war Britain.

⁴ An auxiliary of the British Co-operative movement, the WCG began in 1883 'to educate women in the principles and practices of Co-operation and to work for the improvement of the status of women'. The Co-operative Women's Guild, <http://www.coopwomensguild.co.uk/index.html>, accessed 03/08/2010.

⁵ Rita Felski, "'Because It Is Beautiful": New Feminist Perspectives on Beauty', *Feminist Theory* 7 (2006), p.280.

Post-war Britain

The 1950s and 60s are widely regarded as the age of affluence, the ‘you’ve never had it so good’ years, when the worldwide economic boom resulted in greatly increasing levels of consumption. Although the British public continued to feel the impact of austerity even after the government abolished its last vestiges, this study takes its starting-point as the end of rationing – May 1954 – and ends in late 1969. The prosperity that characterized these years had an enormous and wide-ranging impact and this study places such economic transformation into its social and cultural context through its attention to consumer culture in these magazines. By considering the period 1954 to 1969, the study traces continuities *and* developments, allowing reflection on the widespread observation that the post-war years were marked by accelerated discontinuities.⁶ This provides an opportunity to interrogate popular myths of the 1960s that rely on unfavourable comparisons to the preceding decade and misrepresent minority counter-culture as mainstream.⁷ Arthur Marwick, for instance, described the 60s as a reaction to the 50s’ ‘stuffy conformity’ and claims the later decade witnessed a cultural revolution.⁸ In contrast, this study aligns with the views expressed in the recently launched *Sixties* journal. The *Sixties* editors favour ‘the notion of the “long 60s”’ – incorporating the years after 1954 – and ask ‘whether a more circumspect language of repetition with variation or change is not more appropriate to characterize the period’s transformations’.⁹

Within some areas of scholarship on post-1945 Britain, the notion of decline dominates.¹⁰ Although this thesis does not deny evidence of this in relation to certain aspects of the study, it avoids decline as the prevailing narrative. As Jim Tomlinson observes, ‘declinism’ often seeks to answer ‘What went wrong?’ and ‘Who was to blame?’, queries that ‘crowd out more interesting analytical questions’. Moreover, ‘rejecting declinist approaches allows us to tackle some old issues without that incubus

⁶ Edward Royle, ‘Trends in Post-war British Social History’, in James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall (eds.), *Understanding Post-War British Society* (London, 1994), p.9.

⁷ Nick Thomas, ‘Challenging Myths of the 1960s: The Case of Student Protest in Britain’, *Twentieth Century British History* 13 (2002), pp.278,283; Elizabeth Wilson, *Only Halfway to Paradise – Women in Postwar Britain: 1945-1968* (London, 1980), p.7.

⁸ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties – Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c1958-c1974* (Oxford, 1998), pp.15,25.

⁹ Jeremy Varon, Michael S Foley and John McMillan, ‘Time is an Ocean: the Past and Future of the Sixties’, *The Sixties* 1 (2008), pp.4,5.

¹⁰ Jim Tomlinson, ‘Thrice Denied: “Declinism” as a Recurrent Theme in British History in the Long Twentieth Century’, *Twentieth Century British History* 20 (2009), p.235.

on our thinking'.¹¹ Resisting such an 'incubus' allows the thesis to probe the complexities of the 1950s and the 1960s. This is not an isolated endeavour: a range of work exhibits a similar aim. Alana Harris and Martin Spence, for example, use 'the changing contours of religiosity of the 1950s' in order to 'illuminate the instability of post-war England'¹², while Nick Thomas' seminal article on the 1950s reviews other recent research that 'presents a more subtle and more convincing model...which acknowledges, embraces and explores the contradictions in the evidence'.¹³

Exploring the complexities of 1950s and 60s Britain is an integral part of the study's concern with linking the position of women in these decades to post-war developments. The thesis comments upon a number of areas that existing scholarship regards as complex and even contradictory, such as tensions within understandings of national identity and 'Britishness' throughout the period. On the one hand, there were hopes of the 1953 Coronation ushering in a 'second Elizabethan age'.¹⁴ On the other, contemporary concerns about 'the fragility of national feeling' in the post-war years led to reassessments of national identity and international outlook.¹⁵ As Chris Waters argues, 'Britain's failure to generate new narratives of national purpose...led to a veritable crisis of national self-representation in the 1950s'; similarly, in the 1960s, 'new racism' emerged as Britishness was also becoming a fashionable phenomenon.¹⁶

Another example of a seemingly contradictory theme in this thesis and in literature on post-war Britain is the notion of the Janus-face, looking to the past *and* the future. Historians have paid increasing attention to the varied imaginings of the future that abounded in the post-1945 era. Becky Conekin, for instance, examines different visions of the nation's future inherent in the 1951 Festival and the 1953 Coronation.¹⁷ Conekin also emphasizes that British modernity looked both backwards and forwards and rather than seeing this as contradictory, she argues that it was 'mutually

¹¹ Tomlinson, 'Denied', p.249.

¹² Alana Harris and Martin Spence, "'Disturbing the Complacency of Religion"? The Evangelical Crusades of Dr Billy Graham and Father Patrick Peyton in Britain, 1951-54', *Twentieth Century British History* 18 (2007), p.483.

¹³ Nick Thomas, 'Will the Real 1950s Please Stand Up? Views of a Contradictory Decade', *Cultural and Social History* 5 (2008), pp.228-229.

¹⁴ Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters, 'Introduction', in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds.), *Moments of Modernity – Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* (London, 1999), p.1.

¹⁵ Becky Conekin, *Autobiography of a Nation* (Manchester, 2003), p.17. See also: Peter Barberis, 'Introduction: The 1964 General Election—the "Not Quite, But" and "But Only Just" Election', *Contemporary British History* 21 (2007), pp.284-285. There are similarities to the French inter-war experience. Monique Eleb, 'Modernity and Modernisation in Postwar France: the Third Type of House', *The Journal of Architecture* 9 (2004), p.506.

¹⁶ Chris Waters, "'Dark Strangers" in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963', *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997), pp.208,236-7. See also: Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity – From Dickens to Dad's Army* (Manchester, 1997), pp.166-7.

¹⁷ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.227,231.

reinforcing'.¹⁸ Similarly, Harris and Spence highlight the complex objectives of the 1950s 'crusade phenomenon', which they view as 'both traditional and modern', with a 'retelling and refashioning of the "old story" in a self-consciously modern and adaptive register'.¹⁹ More generally, historians have reconsidered the importance and nuanced influence of the past, particularly the legacy of the nineteenth century.²⁰ This thesis considers the visions of the past articulated on the pages of *H&C* and *Outlook*, visions that comment upon and inform understandings of the present in the magazines.

As well as commenting on existing themes in the literature, this study emphasizes additional complexities that have received scant historical attention. By comparing *H&C* and *Outlook* with each other and with *Woman*, the thesis demonstrates that *H&C*'s rural identity and *Outlook*'s Co-operative identity were distinctive features that contrast with the urban and mass consumption viewpoints evident in other titles. The thesis explores how these rural and Co-operative identities influenced the perspectives of the organizational magazines and affected representations of the home and appearance, creating alternative versions of modernity.

Recognition of assorted versions of modernity in post-war Britain is not new. Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters' 1999-edited collection, *Moments of Modernity*, is explicitly concerned with Britain's 'negotiation of various modernities after the war' and a range of studies such as Mort's investigation of the 1953 Rillington Place murder case show not one but many versions of modernity.²¹ However, the relationship of the rural and the Co-operative movement – *H&C* and *Outlook*'s distinctive features – to post-war British modernity has received little consideration. The thesis shows that historians' focus on the urban and the individual consumer has positioned the countryside and the Co-operative movement as antithetical to the modern. In contrast, this study investigates these rural and Co-operative versions of modernity, revealing the contribution they can make to our conceptions of modernity, post-war British history and the position of women in these decades.

Within this study, modernity refers to understandings of what 'the modern' was and how 'the modern' was experienced, responded to and made sense of. A rural version of modernity is therefore one in which experiences of and identification with the countryside have a significant impact upon ideas of the modern and affect reactions to

¹⁸ Conekin, *Autobiography*, p.80. See also pp.46-111; Conekin et al, 'Introduction', pp.1-2.

¹⁹ Harris and Spence, 'Disturbing', pp.482,488,512.

²⁰ Peter Mandler, 'How Modern Is It?', *Journal of British Studies* 42 (2003), pp.276-277; Mort, 'Scandalous', pp.120,123-5,132; Richards, *Films*, pp.137-138,158.

²¹ Conekin et al, 'Introduction', p.9; Frank Mort, 'Scandalous Events: Metropolitan Culture and Moral Change in Post-Second World War London', *Representations* 93 (2006), p.127.

constructions of the modern; a Co-operative version is one in which the Co-operative movement is a dominant, although not necessarily exclusive, influence. The thesis focuses on ideas and constructions of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook*, highlighting the diverse and multifaceted nature of this concept; as Conekin et al note, ‘there was not one experience of the modern’ in post-war Britain’.²² The thesis also explores how women’s magazines shaped the modern, emphasizing the impact of their composite nature upon representations of – and contestations about – how to be modern.

As well as enhancing understandings of these alternative versions of modernity, constructions of the modern in these magazines provide new insights into key themes in 1950s and 60s British history including national identity, consumer culture, generation and age, science and technology, expertise and the nuclear family. This is because of the significance of the modern at that time: as Conekin et al assert, this was an era ‘in which the modern emerged as a key signifier and a general referent...The years after 1945 were a period during which the modern became increasingly conscious of itself’.²³ Rather than seeing the rural and Co-operative identities in *H&C* and *Outlook* as problematic, the thesis demonstrates that these different viewpoints and experiences can enhance scholarship on the modern. Work on women and modernity, to which the focus now turns, illustrates this potential.

Women and modernity

Work on women and modernity informs this investigation of the relationship between the position of women in the 1950s and 60s and constructions of the modern in women’s magazines. Such work shares some of the concerns found in accounts of post-war British modernity. For example, the influence of the past is considered. Penny Tinkler notes that constructions of modern girlhood in magazines of 1920 to 1950 were ‘characterised by continuity with pre-established, “old-fashioned”, conceptions of girlhood’²⁴, while historians of the post-1945 period demonstrate links between the inter- and post-war years.²⁵

²² Conekin et al, ‘Introduction’, p.12.

²³ Conekin et al., ‘Introduction’, p.10.

²⁴ Penny Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England, 1920-1950* (London, 1995), p.187.

²⁵ Claire Langhamer, ‘The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 40 (2005), pp.342-343,361-362; Frank Mort, ‘Striptease: the Erotic Female Body and Live Sexual Entertainment in Mid-Twentieth-Century London’, *Social History* 32 (2007), pp.33,46-47. See also: Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London, 1991), p.9.

This study shows connections between inter-war and post-war visions of modernity. The inter-war period was a significant era in terms of women and modernity; as Adrian Bingham states, ‘these years saw the articulation of a self-consciously “modern” femininity’.²⁶ These decades are the focus of Judy Giles’ *The Parlour and the Suburb – Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity*, an account referenced at various points in this study. Giles investigates the complex ways in which women experienced and made sense of modernity.²⁷ She highlights the importance of the home and domesticity, claiming that ‘For millions of women the parlour and the suburb rather than the city were the physical spaces in which they experienced the effects of modernization. These were also the spaces that shaped the imaginations from which came their expressions of modernity’.²⁸ Giles emphasizes the incompatibility of these ‘expressions of modernity’ – expressions developed through suburban homes – with conventional frameworks of modernity that take masculine experience as the norm.²⁹ These arguments are important here because there are comparisons between Giles’ findings and the focus on the countryside and the Co-operative movement in this investigation. Due to both the contemporary prevalence of urban and mass consumption viewpoints and later scholarship’s attention to those features, rural and Co-operative constructions of the modern offer different ‘expressions of modernity’, as did the parlour and the suburb in the 1920s and 30s.

Other work also accentuates the alternative visions of modernity apparent in women’s experiences. Like Giles, Lesley Johnson discusses women’s challenge to the widely accepted assumption that one needs to leave ‘home’ in order to attain a modern identity and self-hood.³⁰ Writers often use new terms to communicate this sense of difference. In *Forever England*, Alison Light develops the concept of ‘conservative modernity’ as a means of integrating literature written by women into understandings of modernity in inter-war Britain.³¹ Penny Sparke explores the feminized model of modernity that reflected women’s experiences of material culture – as opposed to the

²⁶ Adrian Bingham, ‘Review Essay: “An Era of Domesticity”?’ *Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain*, *Cultural and Social History* (2004), p.233. See also: Mica Nava, ‘Modernity Tamed? Women Shoppers and the Rationalization of Consumption in the Inter-war Period’, in Maggie Andrews and Mary M Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband – Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture* (London, 2000), pp.46-64; Deborah S Ryan, ‘“All the World and Her Husband”: the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition 1908-39’, in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, pp.10-22.

²⁷ Judy Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb – Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford, 2004); p.164.

²⁸ Giles, *Parlour*, p.11.

²⁹ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.4-12,141-144.

³⁰ Lesley Johnson, ‘“As Housewives We Are Worms” Women, Modernity, and the Home Question’, in Morag Shiach (ed.), *Feminism and Cultural Studies* (Oxford, 1999), p.489.

³¹ Light, *Forever*, pp.10,11,214.

dominant masculine experience³² – while Mary Lynn Stewart’s examination of inter-war French couture calls for the concept of ‘hybrid modernity’ in order to accommodate fashion and femininity.³³

These writings have aided the development of my arguments about the distinctive versions of modernity and ideas of the modern constructed in *H&C* and *Outlook*. The thesis shows that gender was influential but the magazines’ rural and Co-operative identities were central to creating alternative visions of the modern too. As Felski comments, women’s experience of modernity has been affected by not only gender and

the oft-cited hierarchies of class, race, and sexuality but by their various and overlapping identities and practices as consumers, mothers, workers, artists, lovers, activists, readers, and so on. It is these distinctively feminine encounters with the various facets of the modern that have been largely ignored by cultural and social meta-theories.³⁴

This study integrates these ‘various and overlapping identities’ as part of its account of the ‘distinctively feminine encounters with the various facets of the modern’ portrayed on the pages of these magazines. Felski reinforces the usefulness of the modern as a concept. As well as being a significant feature in post-war Britain, it offers distinct advantages:

in spite of (or perhaps because of) its polysemic and indeterminate meanings,[the modern] serves to draw our attention to long-term processes of social change, to the multidimensional yet often systematic interconnections...assessing the differing, uneven, and often contradictory impact of such processes on particular social groups.³⁵

The ‘polysemic’ meanings of the modern are evident throughout this study because of its emphasis on the range of ways in which this notion was constructed and understood. The thesis concentrates on the ‘particular social groups’ that comprised the memberships of the NFWI and WCG, as these memberships formed the bulk of *H&C* and *Outlook*’s audiences. The next section outlines the composition of these memberships along with the literature on these organizations.

³² Penny Sparke, *As Long As It’s Pink: the Sexual Politics of Taste* (London, 1995), pp.4,174,191,229-230.

³³ Mary Lynn Stewart, *Dressing Modern Frenchwomen – Marketing Haute Couture, 1919-1939* (Baltimore, 2008), p.xii.

³⁴ Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London, 1995), p.21.

³⁵ Felski, *Gender*, p.9.

Women's organizations

Since the mid-1990s, there has been an upsurge in research into women's organizations and work by Maggie Andrews and Caitriona Beaumont is widely recognized as instrumental in changing attitudes towards groups such as the NFWI and WCG, the two organizations behind *H&C* and *Outlook*.³⁶ Despite focusing on the organizational magazines rather than the NFWI and WCG *per se*, the thesis intersects with the literature on women's organizations. Networks, for instance, are a prominent theme in studies of women's organizations and more informal community associations involving women, linking them to a whole host of campaigns and areas of activity³⁷, and an additional aim of this study is to trace some of the social and cultural networks in which these publications were involved.

The study is also sensitive to debates about use of the term 'feminist' to describe the NFWI and WCG. Andrews contends that the NFWI was a significant feminist organization because 'it attempted to challenge the boundaries of the socially constructed role for women in a number of ways, political, economic and in cultural terms'.³⁸ The NFWI, however, avoided this label as they saw feminism as incompatible with domesticity.³⁹ Due to this lack of self-identification, some scholars do not classify these groups as feminist. Catherine Blackford prefers to 'interpret "feminism" narrowly', using the term only to describe 'those organisations which identified themselves as feminist'.⁴⁰ Blackford does not deny the overlap between concerns and involvement in 'feminist' issues such as the Equal Pay Campaign.⁴¹ Furthermore, this stance does not refute the inclusion of the NFWI and WCG in definitions of a broader 'women's movement'.⁴²

³⁶ Lorna Gibson, *Beyond Jerusalem: Music in the Women's Institute, 1919-1969* (Aldershot, 2008), pp.42-44.

³⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.x,xi,5-6,8,27-28,53,421-423; Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows – How the Suburbs Happened* (New York, 2000); Catherine Blackford, 'Wives and Citizens and Watchdogs of Equality: Post-war British Feminists', in Jim Fyrrh (ed.), *Labour's Promised Land? Culture and Society in Labour Britain, 1945-51* (London, 1995), pp.69-70; Alison J Clarke, 'Tupperware – Suburbia, Sociality and Mass Consumption', in Roger Silverstone (ed.), *Visions of Suburbia* (London, 1997), p.156; Gibson, *Beyond*, pp.133-145; Annelise Orleck, "'We Are That Mythical Thing Called the Public": Militant Housewives during the Great Depression', *Feminist Studies* 19 (1993), pp.147-172; Gillian Scott, *Feminism and the Politics of Working Women: the Women's Co-operative Guild, 1880s to the Second World War* (London, 1998), p.264.

³⁸ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.xiii.

³⁹ Caitriona Beaumont, 'Citizens Not Feminists: the Boundary Negotiated Between Citizenship and Feminism by Mainstream Women's Organisations in England, 1928-39', *Women's History Review* 9 (2000), pp.418-420,425.

⁴⁰ Blackford, 'Wives', p.59.

⁴¹ Blackford, 'Wives', p.59.

⁴² Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.413.

While recognizing that these groups did not describe themselves as feminist, this thesis analyses the organizational periodicals from a feminist perspective. This approach, which considers the extent to which the groups prioritized women's welfare and rights as citizens, has become increasingly influential. Beaumont, for example, shows how a range of women's organizations worked to improve the lives and status of women.⁴³ Although none of these groups challenged the assumption of women's responsibility for domestic duties⁴⁴, they 'uncover a more accurate account of the lives of housewives who began to assert their rights as independent citizens long before the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement'.⁴⁵ The 'active citizenship' of inter-war women's organizations often involved campaigning related to the specific needs of wives and mothers, utilizing a rhetoric based on equality while creating a boundary with feminism.⁴⁶ The concept of active citizenship as a framework for NFWI and WCG self-perception remains visible in the post-war period of this study.

Other themes in the literature on women's organizations are apparent in this thesis. It explores understandings of the housewife as a skilled professional worker, illustrating challenges to and adaptations of this idea in the 1950s and 60s. These arguments draw on Andrews' insights into the WI's collective renegotiation of the meanings surrounding domesticity:

The organisation rejected the male capitalist value system's perception of their labour as of low status and value. To the NFWI women were domestic workers and their work was equivalent to that of men. The Movement did not merely validate women's work, they attempted to raise it to the level of skilled work...Through their WIs women could experience an alternative female value system which challenged the internalisation of dominant perceptions of skill, status and productivity.⁴⁷

The 'alternative female value system' was the product of the 'alternative cultural space' offered by women-only organizations⁴⁸, a space that has parallels with the 'women's worlds' within the women's magazines analysed here. Andrews underlines the implications of this gyno-centricity: as sites free from male domination, they had the potential to nurture and encourage women's skills and confidence. On the occasions when Institutes permitted men, this was only on women's terms: 'Within the WI social men were marginalised, they became outsiders, visitors within a female-defined culture

⁴³ Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.414.

⁴⁴ Caitriona Beaumont, 'The Women's Movement, Politics and Citizenship, 1918-1950s', in Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow, 2001), pp.275-276.

⁴⁵ Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.426.

⁴⁶ Beaumont, 'Citizens', pp.418-420,425.

⁴⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.9.

⁴⁸ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.11.

and value system'.⁴⁹ The ways in which this 'female-defined culture and value system' was evident in the organizations' publications is a consideration in later chapters, especially in relation to understandings of expertise in *H&C* and *Outlook*.

The study is also part of the current move away from focusing on the inter-war years. As Beaumont observes,

More recent research on the activities of women's organisations in the post-war period has demonstrated that many women's organisations continued to campaign for women's equality during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s and were effective in enhancing the lives of many women at this time.⁵⁰

Successful campaigns feature here. However, the thesis acknowledges the difficulties facing the NFWI and WCG in the post-war period too. The literature on women's organizations notes various problems. Beaumont highlights the impact of the growth in female employment, which 'had major implications for mainstream women's societies whose traditional membership was made up of full time housewives and mothers'.⁵¹ Due to this and other social changes, 'The WCG remained an important outlet for the views of working-class women but experienced a gradual decline in membership during the 1950s'. The NFWI 'fared better in terms of membership although they too had difficulty attracting young women as members'.⁵² Andrews similarly acknowledges the NFWI's continued success in terms of membership, nevertheless asserting that the post-war WI 'became very different in nature', losing its earlier radicalism and beginning 'to take on more of the middle-aged and middle-class focus that it is known for today'.⁵³

Scott's work on the WCG particularly emphasizes the notion of decline, beginning in the late 1920s and reaching fruition after 1945. During the inter-war years, internal changes resulted in the transfer of power from the Guild's membership and branches to the leadership.⁵⁴ The outbreak of war exposed the damaging consequences of this: the leadership's refusal to compromise on a policy of absolute pacifism 'caused a mass exodus of members from which the organisation never recovered'.⁵⁵ Scott also presents this deterioration in terms of waning radicalism. Initially 'the most left-wing element of the Co-op movement', by the 1930s the Guild had moved away from their

⁴⁹ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.66.

⁵⁰ Caitriona Beaumont, 'Housewives, Workers and Citizens: Voluntary Women's Organisations and the Campaign for Women's Rights in England and Wales in the Post-war Period', in Matthew Hilton, Nick Crowson and James McKay (eds.), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics Since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2009), p.60. See also: pp.59,61,67,69,72.

⁵¹ Beaumont, 'Housewives', p.61.

⁵² Beaumont, 'Movement', p.274.

⁵³ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.xiii.

⁵⁴ Scott, *Feminism*, pp.196,198,200-202,206,200-213.

⁵⁵ Scott, *Feminism*, p.194.

distinctive brand of working-class feminism.⁵⁶ Scott sees the post-war effects of this shift as catastrophic: ‘What had disappeared from the WCG was any feminist analysis of women’s role in the family’, epitomized by the organization’s name change to the Co-operative Women’s Guild in 1963.⁵⁷ As a result, the Guild was ‘culturally, politically, generationally, and organizationally’ ill positioned to engage with the so-called ‘second-wave’ feminism of the late 1960s.⁵⁸

This array of difficulties forms an important backdrop to this analysis, especially in relation to *Outlook*. Decline is not, though, the sole focus of concern. Instead, the study looks at the factors behind such changes and examines their impact upon constructions of the modern in the magazines’ representations of the home and appearance. It offers a new angle on the organizations that remains in keeping with the broader move to recognize their importance. The comparative approach used in this study also differs from many existing accounts. Beaumont discusses the NFWI and WCG together, but Scott refers to their divergent aims: whereas the WI and others were ‘apolitical’, the Guild’s purpose was ‘to provide education in Co-operation and Citizenship’. The 1947 WCG Annual Report stated that it ‘cannot and should not compete’ in the Institute’s arena of domestic arts and handicrafts – although ‘cultural activities’ did become more prominent around that time.⁵⁹

The comparative analysis does not obscure their differences; rather, it highlights them. The NFWI was a non-sectarian, non-party political organization for rural women of all ages, although it became increasingly associated with older women after 1945. It covered England and Wales (Scotland had a separate organization). Some members were from working-class backgrounds but many in the movement, especially the leadership and officials, were drawn from the middle-classes and higher. In the 1950s, the movement had over 500,000 members in 7000 branches.⁶⁰ The WCG, on the other hand, peaked in membership in 1939 with 87,246 members. In 1953, it had 58,875 members in 1692 English and Welsh branches (again, Scotland had a separate organization).⁶¹ These women were largely working-class housewives. An auxiliary of the Co-operative movement, the Guild’s activities and ethos inextricably intertwined with Co-operative ideology.⁶²

⁵⁶ Scott, *Feminism*, pp.246,263,269.

⁵⁷ For consistency, this study uses WCG throughout. Scott, *Feminism*, pp.273-274.

⁵⁸ Scott, *Feminism*, p.274.

⁵⁹ Scott, *Feminism*, pp.270,272. See also: Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.xii.

⁶⁰ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.xi,xiv,22-30,146; Beaumont, ‘Housewives’, pp.60,68,72,73; Beaumont, ‘Citizens’, p.417.

⁶¹ Scott, *Feminism*, p.xii.

⁶² Scott, *Feminism*, pp.2-4,244,264.

However, as Beaumont argues, most members of the NFWI, WCG and other groups such as the Townswomen's Guilds 'were wives and mothers working within the home'⁶³ and 'in spite of their obvious differences, all of these organisations were united in their desire to enhance the status of housewives and mothers'.⁶⁴ This common ground provides a basis for comparison of the two magazines. Moreover, by the 1950s, the notable characteristics of the NFWI and WCG – which matched the characteristics of their respective publications (rural; Co-operative; both increasingly marked by advancing age) – differed from standpoints and experiences that were widely accepted as the norm, such as urban living and mass consumerism. This divergence is at the heart of this study, with attention paid to the ways in which contributors to the magazines were engaged in a process of negotiating the place of NFWI and WCG members in the modern world. To accomplish this, it is necessary to contextualise the organizations within broader understandings of the housewife and women in post-war Britain. The historiographical background to this is now the focus.

Women in post-war Britain

The relationship between the position of women in the 1950s and 60s and post-war developments is at the heart of this thesis. In many ways, the position of women is emblematic of such changes; as Elizabeth Wilson notes with regards to a 1963 anecdote about 'housewives' tight trousers on motorbike pillions', 'in an appropriately sexist way the housewife's sexy bottom clad for leisure symbolized Britain's postwar new deal'.⁶⁵ This observation indicates the particular significance of 'the housewife'. The housewife became an increasingly prominent figure during the inter-war period, with domesticity widely promoted through media such as women's magazines.⁶⁶ In 1951, around two-thirds of women aged twenty to 64 were full-time housewives, most of whom were married women caring for children under fourteen.⁶⁷ The widespread experience of full-time housewifery was only ever a brief phenomenon in the middle decades of the twentieth century⁶⁸, but its prevalence at that time explains its importance in this thesis. The study illustrates the centrality of the housewife, focusing not on lived experience

⁶³ Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.415.

⁶⁴ Beaumont, 'Movement', p.267.

⁶⁵ Wilson, *Only*, p.13.

⁶⁶ Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.412.

⁶⁷ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain – Rationing, Controls, and Consumption 1939–1955* (Oxford, 2000), p.103.

⁶⁸ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Housewifery', in Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*, p.161.

but upon understandings of the housewife and domesticity configured in representations of the home and appearance.

Definitions of a 'housewife' vary. Robyn LeBlanc, for instance, analyses the label 'housewife' in relation to her Japanese subjects.⁶⁹ Those working on Irish domesticity often explain the terms they use.⁷⁰ In the British context, only a few authors refer to terminology; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska states that 'women become housewives in the context of marriage, motherhood and economic dependence'.⁷¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska also emphasizes the relationship between domesticity and identity: a focus purely on housework neglects that 'for many women [being a housewife] is not simply about what they do but strikes at the heart of who they are'.⁷² This study employs a similarly broad understanding, regarding a housewife as a woman whose primary occupation is domestic work (household tasks as opposed to paid employment undertaken within the home, such as outworking), although she may participate in paid employment too. Marriage and motherhood were commonly – albeit not universally – part of this experience for women in twentieth century Britain.

Variety is also apparent in terms of sources and approaches, with historiography on the housewife characterized by breadth and diversity.⁷³ Although Catherine Hall's 1992 lament that housewives were not thought to be worthy of academic study or even have a history is no longer valid⁷⁴, a great deal of what is written is contained – and therefore at times slightly obscured – within work with a broader focus.⁷⁵ Early work, for example, was largely sociological surveys that concentrated on the family, such as

⁶⁹ Robin M LeBlanc, *Bicycle Citizens – The Political World of the Japanese Housewife* (London, 1999), pp.28-39; Bourke, *Husbandry*, p.15.

⁷⁰ Joanna Bourke, 'Housewifery in Working-class England 1860-1914', *Past and Present* 143 (1994), p.168 footnote 5; Caitriona Clear, *Woman of the House: Women's Household Work in Ireland, 1922-1961* (Dublin, 2000), pp.11-12.

⁷¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska 'Housewifery' p151. See also: Una A Robertson, *The Illustrated History of the Housewife, 1650-1950* (Stroud, 1997), pp.1-2; Hall, 'History', p.44.

⁷² Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Housewifery', p.150. The following also raise criticisms of the housework focus: Alison Ravetz, 'A View From the Interior', in Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham (eds.), *A View From the Interior – Feminism, Women and Design* (London, 1989), p.189; Judy Giles, 'A Home of One's Own: Women and Domesticity in England 1918-1950', *Women's Studies International Forum* 16 (1993), p.239.

⁷³ For discussion of 'the housewife' and sources: Clear, *Woman*, p.10. For use of official records: Joanna Bourke, *Husbandry to Housewifery – Women, Economic Change, and Housework in Ireland, 1890-1914* (Oxford, 1993), p.202; Judy Giles, 'Help for Housewives: Domestic Service and the Reconstruction of Domesticity in Britain, 1940-1950', *Women's History Review* 10 (2001), pp.299-323. For use of life-writing: Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape For A Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives* (London, 1991). For use of literature: *Light Forever*. For use of oral testimony: Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-class Women, 1890-1940* (Oxford, 1984).

⁷⁴ Catherine Hall, 'The History of the Housewife', in Catherine Hall (ed.), *White, Male and Middle-class – Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, 1992), p.43. See also: Linda Burzotta Nilson, 'The Social Standing of a Housewife', *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 40 (1978), p.541; Nona Glazer Malbin, 'Housework', *Signs* 1 (1976), p.905.

⁷⁵ For an example of this, see: Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, pp.99-150.

Peter Willmott and Michael Young's research.⁷⁶ Some specific studies did appear, particularly in the United States, as in a 1958 investigation of housewives' friendships.⁷⁷ Much of this focused on marital divisions of labour and housewives' use of time.⁷⁸ The emphasis was often theoretical, with the housewife subsumed in a hypothetical paradigm of graphs and equations.⁷⁹

Certain themes in this early sociological research still figure in the large body of scholarship on the housewife that has developed since; for instance, investigations of the family continue to contribute to debates about women's domestic roles.⁸⁰ Work on the housewife is often in dialogue with other issues. In Britain, the close relationship between the women's liberation movement and the political Left influenced the rise of the 'domestic labour debate', with various feminist treatises and the 'Wages for Housework' campaign taking the view that women's unpaid domestic labour was beneficial to capitalism and essential to its maintenance.⁸¹ Echoes of such debates remain; disputes over the classification of housework as 'work' resound later in this thesis.

The growth of a self-consciously feminist movement from the late 1960s greatly affected analyses of the housewife, as shown by two British studies: Hannah Gavron's *The Captive Wife* and Ann Oakley's *Housewife*, published in 1966 and 1974 respectively.⁸² These share similar methodologies and structures, as well as corresponding findings. However, Gavron's insights lacked the feminist framework that informed Oakley's study: Gavron's language was that of captivity, not oppression, whereas Oakley challenged the inevitability of domesticity for women and demanded the abolition of the housewife, the family and gender roles.⁸³ As a later reviewer commented, Gavron wrote *The Captive Wife* in isolation; 'what Gavron in the early

⁷⁶ Peter Willmott and Michael Young, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957); Peter Willmott and Michael Young, *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (London, 1960).

⁷⁷ James H Williams, 'Close Friendship Relations of Housewives Residing in an Urban Community', *Social Forces* 36 (1958), pp.358-362.

⁷⁸ Ronald G Klietsch, 'Clothesline Patterns and Covert Behaviour', *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 27 (1965), pp.78-80.

⁷⁹ For an example of this, see: Reuben Gronau, 'The Intrafamily Allocation of Time: The Value of the Housewives' Time', *American Economic Review* 63 (1973), p.642.

⁸⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes – Men and Women of the English Middle-class 1780-1850* Revised Edition (London, 1992); John R Gillis, *A World of their Own Making – Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (New York, 1996); Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (London, 2003).

⁸¹ Eva Kaluzynska, 'Wiping the Floor with Theory: A Survey of Writings on Housework', *Feminist Review* 6 (1980), pp.27,29,40-44; Malbin, 'Housework', p.919.

⁸² Hannah Gavron, *The Captive Wife: Conflicts of Housebound Mothers* (London, 1966); Ann Oakley, *Housewife* (London, 1974).

⁸³ Alice Abarbanel, 'Review of *The Captive Wife*', *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 33 (1971), pp.599-600; Oakley, *Housewife*, p.222.

1960s needed was a feminist perspective...a women's liberation context'.⁸⁴ The negative assessments of domesticity in Gavron and Oakley's accounts are typical of attitudes in many early feminist analyses of the housewife. In arguably the most famous feminist text about housewives, the best-selling *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan also articulated difficulties facing women due to their domestic roles – what she labelled 'the problem that has no name'.⁸⁵ The large body of work that still engages with *The Feminine Mystique* is testament to Friedan's continued influence on popular and academic attitudes towards the housewife, although there have long been challenges to her views.⁸⁶ In 1971, for example, Helena Znaniecki Lopata wrote in *Occupation: Housewife* that women could be 'competent and creative in their social role as housewife'.⁸⁷

Many historians question the attitudes towards domesticity found in classic feminist analyses such as *Housewife* and *The Feminine Mystique*. Despite Joanna Bourke's 1994 claim that historians automatically regard women's domesticity as negative, there is a strong vein of historical research offering more complex assessments.⁸⁸ As long ago as 1979, the Birmingham Feminist History Group revealed that within a context where the ideology of 'equal but different' was still prevalent, the mothering theories of John Bowlby and Donald Winnicott could be interpreted positively.⁸⁹ In recent years, the Birmingham Feminist History Group's ideas have become more widely adopted, with Wendy Webster's work examining the dual role and racial aspects of women's experiences and identities being influential.⁹⁰ The nuances, multiplicity and contradictions surrounding the housewife and domesticity are now prominent in a wide range of accounts, including work on women and modernity and literature on women's organizations, both discussed previously. Internationally, Natalie Milaneseo discusses the housewife's status and power in

⁸⁴ Abarbanel, 'Review', p.600.

⁸⁵ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London, 1963), pp.13-29.

⁸⁶ For discussions of Friedan's impact, popularity and influence, see: Giles, *Parlour*, pp.144-156; Joanne Meyerowitz, 'Introduction', in Joanne Meyerowitz (ed.), *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America 1945-1960* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp.1-161; Nilson, 'Social Standing', p.542.

⁸⁷ Helena Znaniecki Lopata, *Occupation: Housewife* (New York, 1971), p.362.

⁸⁸ Bourke, 'Housewifery', pp.168-169. Bourke's claim is even disputed by earlier work with a similar focus to hers: Ellen Ross, "'Fierce Questions and Taunts": Married Life in Working-class London, 1870-1914', *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982), pp.575-602.

⁸⁹ Birmingham Feminist History Group (BFHG), 'Feminism as Femininity in the 1950s?', *Feminist Review* 3 (1979), pp.50,54,56.

⁹⁰ Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home – Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945-1964* (London, 1998), pp.28,92,120,124,132,135,162-164.

Argentina and Johnson's work with Justine Lloyd on Australian housewives challenges accepted views and contends that the situation was highly complex.⁹¹

This study shares the revisionist stance of these historical studies. However, as well as showing the centrality of the housewife, the thesis accentuates the breadth and complexity of post-1945 women's roles and identities. I show that alongside and *as part of* the housewife identity, there were other aspects to women's roles – the term 'housewife' often functioned as symbolic shorthand for a coalescence of various identities and roles, united by a perspective always gendered as feminine. The heterogeneity of women's roles depicted within these magazines confronts stereotypes of femininity that continue to abound, particularly for the 1950s. This element of the study corresponds with the goal of the ESRC Seminar Series 'Women in the 1950s'. The series, at which research for this thesis has been presented, aims 'to shed light on a neglected generation of girls and women...exploring the diversity and complexity of the lives and experiences of girls and women in this period'.⁹² This study explores diversity and complexity by highlighting the variety of roles that featured in these women's magazines and relating these roles to broader changes in post-war Britain. The next section discusses the concepts used to investigate this relationship between the position of women in the 1950s and 60s and developments in post-war Britain.

Concepts

Representations in magazines are as much based on aspirations as on reality and by the 1960s, various groups – including women's magazines and advertisers, a component part of the magazine industry – functioned as cultural intermediaries, negotiating such aspirations.⁹³ Trevor Keeble's study of *Woman* in the early 1950s, for example, demonstrates the relationship between magazines as cultural intermediaries

⁹¹ Natalia Milanesio, "'The Guardian Angels of the Domestic Economy' – Housewives' Responsible Consumption in Peronist Argentina', *Journal of Women's History* 18 (2006), p.110; Lesley Johnson and Justine Lloyd, *Sentenced to Everyday Life – Feminism and the Housewife* (Oxford, 2004), pp.1-21,156,160.

⁹² ESRC Women in the 1950s Seminar Series, <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/sociology/about/events/esrcseminars/>, accessed 15/04/2010.

⁹³ Mort, 'Striptease', pp.43,53; David Bell and Joanne Hollows, 'Making Sense of Ordinary Lifestyles', in David Bell and Joanne Hollows (eds.), *Ordinary Lifestyles – Popular Media, Consumption and Taste* (Maidenhead, 2005), p.8; Sam Binkley, 'Lifestyle Print Culture and the Mediation of Everyday Life: From Dispersing Images to Caring Texts', in David Bell and Joanne Hollows (eds.), *Historicizing Lifestyles: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from 1900 to the 1970s* (Aldershot, 2006), pp.112-113; Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London, 1991), p.21; Lisa Taylor, 'It was Beautiful Before You Changed It: Class, Taste and the Transformative Aesthetics of the Garden Lifestyle Media', in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Ordinary Lifestyles*, pp.119,121-123.

and notions of capital.⁹⁴ Keeble's study and Bev Skeggs' work on working-class women's use of appearance (that of themselves and their homes) to signify respectability inform conceptions of social capital here.⁹⁵

The thesis understands different forms of capital as 'essentially metaphors...not descriptors of empirical positions'.⁹⁶ Cultural capital is 'primarily legitimate knowledge of one kind of another', often developed via education – including the kind of education found in women's magazines.⁹⁷ Symbolic capital 'has been typified as "prestige" or "honour"...largely unconscious in all but effect'.⁹⁸ The two – symbolic and cultural capital – can feature in close proximity.⁹⁹ One form of capital (or both) can be invested in order to obtain and accrue more value, that is to say more legitimacy or prestige; the women in Skeggs' study, for example, 'invest in their bodies as a form of cultural capital'.¹⁰⁰ Continuing the currency analogy, exchange is a way of transferring capital from one field to another. In order for capital to retain its currency during a transfer, 'in some way, consciously or a "code"', it...[must have] something in common to both fields of activity'.¹⁰¹ As with all investments, there are risks and profits are not guaranteed: as Skeggs found, 'they did femininity to generate security but for some the deal did not pay back. However, the alternatives were considered to be worse'.¹⁰²

Pierre Bourdieu originally developed the concepts of symbolic and cultural capital. Although Bourdieu often neglects facets of identity such as gender, race and generation¹⁰³, his social theory is useful for feminist analyses, offering 'powerful tools' that can be reworked and redefined.¹⁰⁴ This flexibility and scope for redefinition are crucial. The thesis considers the extent to which the modern represented an investment in capital. It explores the symbolic value and legitimacy of the modern, asking why it was such a powerful theme in *H&C* and *Outlook*. Is it in hope that the magazines themselves and/or their readers then benefit from a transfer of this value and

⁹⁴ Trevor Keeble 'Domesticating Modernity: *Woman Magazine* and the Modern Home', in Jeremy Aynsley and Kate Forde (eds.), *Design and the Modern Magazine* (Manchester, 2007), pp.95-113.

⁹⁵ Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London, 1997).

⁹⁶ Skeggs, *Formations*, p.10.

⁹⁷ Keeble, 'Domesticating', p.99.

⁹⁸ Keeble, 'Domesticating', p.99.

⁹⁹ Keeble, 'Domesticating', p.109.

¹⁰⁰ Skeggs, *Formations*, p.83.

¹⁰¹ Keeble, 'Domesticating', p.99.

¹⁰² Skeggs, *Formations*, pp.113,11,15.

¹⁰³ Hugh Mackay, 'Introduction', in Hugh Mackay (ed.), *Consumption and Everyday Life* (London, 1997), p.5.

¹⁰⁴ Lisa Adkins, 'Introduction: Feminism, Bourdieu and After', in Lisa Adkins and Beverley Skeggs (eds.), *Feminism After Bourdieu* (Oxford, 2004), pp.3,5. See also: Beverley Skeggs, 'Context and Background: Pierre Bourdieu's Analysis of Class, Gender and Sexuality', in Adkins and Skeggs (eds.), *Feminism After Bourdieu*, pp.20,30.

legitimacy? As Skeggs notes, ‘if my parents surround me with the appropriate symbols, they hope I may be marked’.¹⁰⁵

Other writers also illustrate the usefulness of capital as a means of examining women’s relationship to the modern. Giles, for instance, refers to the middle-class home as a site for the display of taste and the demonstration of cultural capital.¹⁰⁶ Tracey Potts considers the capital value of domestic goods, claiming that retailers persuaded middle-class consumers to transfer investment to the modern because of the promise of symbolic revenue, with the modern as a new means of social distinction.¹⁰⁷ This study argues that the modern is particularly significant in *H&C* and *Outlook* because the dominant symbolic economy (those groups who have social and cultural capital) did not recognize these publications, their organizations and their members as modern. On the contrary, the publications’ distinctive features – rural, Co-operative and increasingly older age – were the antithesis of characteristics that symbolized the post-war modern: urban, mass-consumption, youth. This contrast indicates *H&C* and *Outlook*’s lack of prestige, legitimacy and value; the two magazines, their producers and readers lacked symbolic and cultural capital. This dearth drove the focus on acquiring and accruing more capital. Association, alliances and allegiances to the modern may appear to offer a means of accruing symbolic and cultural capital and of belonging to the post-war world – even if ‘proximity to the “right” knowledge and standards does not guarantee acceptance’.¹⁰⁸

These magazines, however, did not merely reiterate the terms of the modern recognized by the dominant symbolic economy. A close reading of these publications reveals alternative understandings of the modern. There were links and overlaps with other visions, but the magazines contained specific constructions – intertwined with their rural and Co-operative perspectives – that remained largely confined to them and their organizations. These internal ideas of the modern reflect assessments of worth and value made by contributors to the magazines: although de-legitimacy of one’s cultural capital means that it cannot be capitalized upon, ‘it may retain significance and meaning for the individual’ (or in these cases, the organizations and their magazines).¹⁰⁹ Such resistance to de-legitimacy through alternative values and understandings does not

¹⁰⁵ Skeggs, *Formations*, p.15.

¹⁰⁶ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.103,116.

¹⁰⁷ Tracey Potts, ‘Creating “Modern Tendencies”’: The Symbolic Economics of Furnishings’, in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Historicizing Lifestyles*, pp.156-172.

¹⁰⁸ Skeggs, *Formations*, p.15.

¹⁰⁹ Skeggs, *Formations*, p.10.

challenge the dominant symbolic economy.¹¹⁰ As Skeggs notes, the ability of her participants ‘to counter the de-legitimation of their own cultural capital’ took place only at a local level’.¹¹¹ The women ‘were able to generate their own local trading arenas with their own distinctions, but these barely influenced the supra-local arenas for capital exchange and conferral of legitimacy’.¹¹²

This study views *H&C* and *Outlook* in similar terms: they were ‘local’ sites, trading arenas with their own distinctions, giving value to certain dispositions even though they may have little value outside of the publication and the organization.¹¹³ These internal negotiations over values parallel the alternative meanings of domesticity negotiated within such groups. There are connections to analyses of women’s magazines too; Janice Winship asserts that publications create a ‘woman’s world’ ‘precisely because it does not exist outside their pages’.¹¹⁴ The notion of capital is important because it provides a framework for exploring concepts such as worth and value, suggesting a motivation behind the quest for legitimacy and prestige in a language that minimizes the need for researchers to make value judgements: as Skeggs asks, ‘Who would want to be seen as lacking in worth?’¹¹⁵ Ideas of worth and value are linked to issues of belonging and exclusion, also investigated in the thesis: who is excluded from visions of modern Britain? Why? On what terms did contributors to the magazines negotiate belonging?

Exclusion – or at least selectivity – and belonging are topics that occur regularly in historiography on women and on post-war Britain.¹¹⁶ Within this study, one of the crucial discourses of exclusion coalesces around age. The primary audience for *H&C* and *Outlook* were the members of the NFWI and WCG respectively. By the 1950s, these memberships were marked by their advancing age; they were middle-aged and older women. Literature on women in the post-1945 period often ignores or sidelines this generation, focusing on the lives of younger women – the daughters’ generation – and reflecting the emphasis on youth from the 1960s onwards.¹¹⁷ Webster observes that

¹¹⁰ Skeggs, *Formations*, p.11.

¹¹¹ Skeggs, *Formations*, p.11.

¹¹² Skeggs, *Formations*, p.161.

¹¹³ Skeggs, *Formations*, pp.11,161.

¹¹⁴ Janice Winship, *Inside Women’s Magazines* (London, 1987), p.7. See also: Cynthia White, *Women’s Magazines 1693-1968* (London, 1970), p.300.

¹¹⁵ Beverley Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture* (London, 2004), p.117.

¹¹⁶ Conekin, *Autobiography*, p.32; Giles, *Parlour*, p.49; Mort, ‘Scandalous’, pp.122-123; Steedman, *Landscape*, pp.110-124; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.25-44; Wilson, *Only*, p.8; Winship, *Inside*, p.91.

¹¹⁷ Liz Heron, ‘Introduction’, in Liz Heron (ed.), *Truth, Dare or Promise – Girls Growing Up in the Fifties* (London, 1995), pp.1,4,6-8; Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.358; Jean McCrindle and Sheila Rowbotham, *Dutiful Daughters – Women Talk about Their Lives* (Harmondsworth, 1977), pp.5-6; Steedman, *Landscape*, p.5.

such accounts portray the 1950s ‘as a period in waiting for something else...The waiting is the daughters’ perspective and what is awaited is their moment’.¹¹⁸ As in Tinkler’s study of girls’ magazines, age is therefore a fundamental consideration in this thesis: not simply giving attention to older women, but exploring the impact of age on the dynamics of the publications and their representations of the modern.¹¹⁹ How did contributors to the magazines negotiate the meanings of the modern so that their readers could be included and thereby acquire symbolic capital?

The exclusion surrounding age and generation created tensions in these magazines. Throughout constructions of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook*, there were tensions that clustered around dualisms such as belonging/exclusion, rural/urban, older/younger, working-class/middle-class, old/new, professional/amateur, expert/not expert, collective/individual, work/leisure and consumer/producer. These tensions were not always reconcilable. Magazines, for example, are committed to ‘the individual’¹²⁰, while rising individualism undermined the collective vision of women’s organizations – especially the WCG.¹²¹ However, the thesis argues that rather than viewing such tensions as dichotomous, in some cases it is more productive to see them as different aspects of the same phenomenon. Tensions were often the product of disjuncture between the distinct elements involved in the publications: their producers, advertisers and readers. As Chapter One establishes, within and between each element, there were differing ideas of the modern that contributed to the representations found on the magazine’s pages.

Structure

Literature on the housewife often emphasizes the family. Webster, for example, observes that relational identities such as wife and mother, rather than a more individual sense of self as obtained through an occupational identity, dominated many women’s understandings of themselves.¹²² This study shows the family was a core element in the complex range of roles and identities that the magazines incorporated in constructions of modern femininity. This accent on family is often indivisible from attention to the

¹¹⁸ Webster, *Imagining*, p.xxi.

¹¹⁹ Tinkler, *Girlhood*, p.2.

¹²⁰ Winship, *Inside*, p.80.

¹²¹ Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth, ‘Introduction: Making Space and Re-making History’, in Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth (eds.), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950* (Aldershot, 2007), p.10.

¹²² Webster, *Imagining*, pp.144-145. Milanese makes similar claims for Argentinean housewives: Milanese, ‘Guardian Angels’, p.93.

home, the arena in which the housewife's roles were largely undertaken and a place of particular significance in the post-war period, as also explored in later chapters.

The reinterpretations of domesticity discussed previously are evident in research on the home. For example, scholars now recognize the diverse range of meanings attached to 'home'.¹²³ As well as those working on women and modernity, many write about the importance of 'the modern home' in creating spaces for 'modern living'.¹²⁴ This thesis contributes to such discussions by deconstructing what exactly constituted 'the modern home' according to these magazines. Although this study focuses on representations of the home rather than actual spaces, research looking at the home as a space for the symbolic expression of self influences the approach used.¹²⁵ Jane Hamlett's study of nineteenth-century student rooms, for instance, illustrates the multiple discourses and complexity of the relationship between home and identity.¹²⁶

The other structural theme of the thesis – personal appearance – is also a crucial facet of identity formation. There is huge body of literature that contends dress is part of 'cultural self-definition' and clothes 'very much form part of and reflect our sense of self, whether it be consciously or subconsciously'.¹²⁷ As with the home, gender is

¹²³ This diversity has been explored by numerous work used throughout this study, but see also: Bourke, 'Housewifery', p.197; Adrian Franklin, 'Variations in Marital Relations and the Implications for Women's Experience of the Home', in Tim Putnam and Chris Newton (eds.), *Household Choices* (London, 1990), pp.57-65; Ghislaine Hermanuz, 'Outgrowing the Corner of the Kitchen Table', in Joan Rothschild (ed.), *Design and Feminism: Re-visioning Spaces, Places and Everyday Things* (London, 1999), p.67; Trevor Keeble, 'Introduction', in Penny Sparke, Brenda Martin and Trevor Keeble (eds.), *The Modern Period Room: the Construction of the Exhibited Interior 1870-1950* (London, 2006), pp.1-7; Barbara Penner, 'Rehearsing Domesticity – Postwar Pocono Honeymoon Resorts', in Hilde Heynen and Gulsum Baydar (eds.), *Negotiating Domesticity – Spatial productions of Gender in Modern Architecture* (London, 2005), pp.103,116-117; Penny Sparke, 'Introduction', in Penny Sparke and Susie McKellar (eds.), *Interior Design and Identity* (Manchester, 1999), p.3.

¹²⁴ Alice T Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History* (New York, 1998), p.16; Freddie Floré and Mil De Kooning, 'Postwar Model Homes: Introduction', *The Journal of Architecture* 9 (2004), p.411; Eleb, 'Modernity', pp.495-496,513.

¹²⁵ Irene Cieraad, 'Introduction: Anthropology at Home', in Irene Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space* (New York, 1999), p.2; Bourke, 'Housewifery', p.197; Judy Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp.64-95; Sparke, 'Introduction', pp.1-9; Louise Ward, 'Chintz, Swags and Bows: the Myth of English Country House Style, 1930-90', in Sparke and McKellar (eds.), *Interior Design and Identity*, pp.92-113; Tim Putnam, 'Introduction: Design, Consumption and Domestic Ideals', in Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, pp.7-19; Judith Sixsmith and Andrew Sixsmith, 'Places in Transition: the Impact of Life Events on the Experience of Home', in Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, pp.20-24.

¹²⁶ Jane Hamlett, "'Nicely Feminine, Yet Learned": Student Rooms at Royal Holloway and the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Women's History Review* 15 (2006), pp.137-161.

¹²⁷ Ruth Barnes and Joanne B Eicher, 'Introduction', in Ruth Barnes and Joanne B Eicher (eds.), *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (Oxford, 1992), pp.1-3; Kirsty Dunseath, 'Introduction', in Kirsty Dunseath (ed.), *A Second Skin – Women Write About Clothes* (London, 1998), p.vii. See also: Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson, 'Introduction', in Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson (eds.), *Chic Thrills – A Fashion Reader* (London, 1992), p.xi; Judy Attfield, *Wild Things, the Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Oxford, 2000), pp.1-3; Christine Boydell, 'Review Article – Fashioning Identities: Gender, Class and the Self', *Journal of Contemporary History* 39:1 (2004), p.138; Aubrey Cannon, 'The Cultural and Historical Contexts of Fashion', in Anne Brydon and Sandra Niessen (ed.),

fundamental to appearance; in her autobiographical work, Carolyn Steedman observes 'the connection between women and clothes surfaces often'.¹²⁸

Historians rarely acknowledge the synergy between the home and appearance¹²⁹, but – while discussing the two areas separately for reasons of organizational clarity – this study highlights their links and overlaps. The first chapter establishes the methodology and sources used, as well as the particular perspectives of *H&C* and *Outlook*. Three chapters on the home follow. The first looks at housing and consumer education; the second, domestic consumption; the third, interior décor. The final two chapters examine appearance. Chapter Five concentrates on clothing and fashion, while Chapter Six investigates the body and beauty. All of the areas considered were subject to change and transition in the post-war period and each contributes to the study's aim of providing a more complex and nuanced account of 1950s and 60s Britain and the position of women.

Consuming Fashion – Adorning the Transnational Body (Oxford, 1998), pp.23-24; Wendy Chapkis, *Beauty Secrets - Women and the Politics of Appearance* (London, 2000), p.79; Fred Davis, 'Clothing, Fashion and the Dialectic of Identity', in David R Maines and Carl J Couch (ed.), *Communication and Social Structure* (Springfield, 1988), p.23; Joanne B Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, 'Definition and Classification of Dress – Implications for Analysis of Gender Roles', in Ruth Barnes and Joanne B Eicher (ed.), *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (Oxford, 1992), pp.8,23; Roberta Garner, 'Review of *Cosmetics, Fashion and the Exploitation of Women* by Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed', *Contemporary Sociology* 16:4 (1987), p.576; Sandra Niessen and Anne Brydon, 'Introduction: Adorning the Body', in Brydon and Niessen (ed.), *Consuming Fashion*, pp.xi-xii; Wendy Parkins, 'Introduction: (Ad)dressing Citizens', in Wendy Parkins (ed.), *Fashioning the Body Politic: Dress, Gender and Citizenship* (Oxford, 2002), p.2; Helene E Roberts, 'The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman', *Signs* 2:3 (1977), pp.554-555; Lisa Tickner, 'Women and Trousers' in Design History Conference Papers, *Leisure in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1976), p.56; Elizabeth Wilson and Amy de la Haye, 'Introduction', in Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson (ed.), *Defining Dress: Dress As Object, Meaning and Identity* (Manchester, 1999), pp.1,7-8; Elizabeth Wilson, 'Fashion and the Postmodern Body', in Ash and Wilson (eds.) *Chic Thrills*, p.9; Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned In Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London, 1985), pp.2-3.

¹²⁸ Steedman, *Landscape*, p.24.

¹²⁹ Angela Partington considers both but focuses predominantly on fashion. Angela Partington, 'The Days of the New Look: Working Class Affluence and Consumer Culture', in Fyrth (ed.), *Labour's Promised Land*, pp.259-260.

Chapter One

H&C and Outlook: Women's Magazines and Organizational Periodicals

‘Always remember that it is your own magazine and the only one of its kind in the world’, announced *Outlook*’s editor in October 1957. Nine years later, the editor echoed this claim: ‘It is now more than ever your own magazine – the only one of its kind in the world’.¹³⁰ Comparable comments are found in many magazines aimed at women and girls¹³¹, reflecting publishers’ efforts to create unique publications; as Ballaster et al argue, ‘each magazine offers its readers a particular way of understanding the world’.¹³² The aim of this chapter is to ascertain the ‘particular way of understanding the world’ offered in *H&C* and *Outlook*, providing a foundation for the rest of the study. The chapter outlines the literature on magazines and its influence on the approach taken before discussing some of the ways in which *H&C* and *Outlook* functioned as typical women’s magazines and how their status as the periodicals of the NFWI and WCG had an impact. The final two sections further illustrate the importance of their organizational status, surveying the importance of the countryside in *H&C* and *Outlook*’s relationship to the WCG and its various allegiances. These sections demonstrate that *H&C* and *Outlook*’s respective rural and Co-operative identities were distinctive features and explore the influence of these identities on the perspectives of the publications. They also begin to establish the alternative constructions of the modern in these magazines, introducing themes that develop throughout the thesis.

Despite women’s magazines emerging as an important commercial enterprise in the nineteenth century and reaching their zenith in the 1950s, it is only since the 1970 publication of Cynthia White’s seminal *Women’s Magazines 1693-1968* that they have received serious critical analysis. White highlights the diversity of publications aimed at women, comparing older titles with newcomers and monthlies with weeklies.¹³³ She emphasizes the need for every magazine to have its own brand image and distinct character¹³⁴, which this chapter explores in relation to *H&C* and *Outlook*.

The body of literature that has developed since 1970 makes varied assessments of women’s magazines, concurrently portraying them as manipulative, bombarding readers with patriarchal and repressive ideals of femininity; helpful, offering guidance

¹³⁰ ‘Your Editor’s Letter’, *Outlook* 10/1957, p.1; ‘Talking Points’, *Outlook* 10/1966, p.1.

¹³¹ Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Fraser and Sandra Hebron, *Women’s Worlds – Ideology, Femininity and the Woman’s Magazine* (Basingstoke, 1991), p.10; Tinkler, *Girlhood*, p.1.

¹³² Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.29.

¹³³ White, *Magazines*, pp.126-131.

¹³⁴ White, *Magazines*, pp.181,288.

to readers; pleasurable, providing much needed leisure and a space for escapist fantasy. This study takes the view that women's magazines are highly ambiguous. Other recent research shares this stance, accentuating their polysemic and fragmented nature; contributions to Jeremy Aynsley and Kate Forde's 2007 edited collection explore 'their intrinsic ambivalence'.¹³⁵ The tensions manifest in such publications play a large role in this ambiguity. Janice Winship, a key writer on women's magazines, exposes various tensions within and between them. Describing them as 'mental chocolates'¹³⁶, she discusses variations between publications and changes within the industry. For example, she discusses the differing styles of friendly rapport: 'Each engages and embraces readers in a world of "we women" but assumes and constructs different definitions of who "we" are'.¹³⁷ Other tensions include the equilibrium between 'service' (advice) and amusement and the shifting balance between publishers' concern for profit and editors' concerns for advice and entertainment.¹³⁸ The latter conflict is apparent in this study, as is Winship's observation that magazines embody tensions between work, leisure and pleasure.¹³⁹

The usefulness of magazines for investigating concepts such as the modern is well established. Although Winship states that notwithstanding 'obvious signs of modernity...there is a timelessness' to the everyday life conveyed in magazines¹⁴⁰, Giles uses evidence from inter-war periodicals and Keeble, Joanne Hollows and Susan Weiner all consider magazines and modernity – in relation to post-war *Woman*, inter-war *Good Housekeeping* and French *Elle* and *Mademoiselle* respectively.¹⁴¹ Historical research on women's publications is not the only work informing the approach here. During the 1960s, the women's magazine industry began to target 'attitude' rather than demographics¹⁴², hence there has been a cross-fertilization with lifestyle media. This study has consulted research on this genre too, much of which concentrates on concepts

¹³⁵ Jeremy Aynsley and Kate Forde, 'Introduction', in Aynsley and Forde (eds.), *Design and the Modern Magazine*, p.10. See also: Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.7; Jacqueline Blix, 'A Place to Resist: Reevaluating Women's Magazines', *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 16 (1992), pp.67-68; Joke Hermes, *Reading Women's Magazines – An Analysis of Everyday Media Use* (Cambridge, 1995) pp.2,65; Joanne Hollows, 'Science and Spells: Cooking, Lifestyle and Domestic Femininities in British *Good Housekeeping* in the Inter-war Period', in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Historicizing Lifestyles*, pp.22,28-29.

¹³⁶ Winship, *Inside*, p.53.

¹³⁷ Winship, *Inside*, p.67.

¹³⁸ Winship, *Inside*, pp.13,28,52.

¹³⁹ Winship, *Inside*, p.55.

¹⁴⁰ Winship, *Inside*, p.68.

¹⁴¹ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.101-140; Keeble, 'Domesticating', pp.95-113; Hollows, 'Science', pp.21-40; Susan Weiner, 'Two Modernities: from *Elle* to *Mademoiselle*. Women's Magazines in Postwar France', *Contemporary European History* 8 (1999), pp.395-409.

¹⁴² Bell and Hollows, 'Sense', pp.9-10; Anna Gough-Yates, *Understanding Women's Magazines – Publishing, Markets and Readerships* (London, 2003), p.2; White, *Magazines*, p.287.

central to this thesis – cultural capital, domestic space, consumption¹⁴³ – and theories of modernity, as well as post-modernity.¹⁴⁴

Various analytical approaches have been influential.¹⁴⁵ Although this study focuses on representations within magazines, Joke Hermes' work on reader practices and Ballaster et al's concern for the 'relation between the reader constructed in and by the text (the *implied* reader) and the actual historical reader' has encouraged an awareness of the reader.¹⁴⁶ The study outlines the diverse views expressed by *H&C* and *Outlook* readers and the different ways in which the magazines conceived 'the reader'. Constructions of the reader relate to broader understandings of gender and gender roles in each publication. As Tinkler asks, 'How did magazines present girlhood and femininity to their readers? How were these representations produced? What does the form and content of these papers reveal about the cultural construction of adolescent girlhood in this period?'¹⁴⁷ The concept of 'preferred meaning' is crucial because while magazines may attempt to communicate one particular meaning, readers can create other meanings: articles and images are 'likely to be plundered...in a variety of ways not necessarily intended'.¹⁴⁸

This study examines representations in terms of preferred meaning but by no means denies the possibility of other interpretations – far from it. The thesis emphasizes the multiplicity inherent within such publications due to their composite nature.¹⁴⁹ There are various types of content – editorial, fiction, advice columns, features, correspondence and advertising – and three distinct elements involved in each magazine, namely its producers, advertisers and readers.¹⁵⁰ There are disparities between and within the three factions (producers; advertisers; readers): one advertisement may contain a very different preferred meaning to another manufacturer's

¹⁴³ David Bell and Joanne Hollows, 'Towards a History of Lifestyle', in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Historicizing Lifestyles*, p.3.

¹⁴⁴ Bell and Hollows, 'Towards', pp.3,4.

¹⁴⁵ For an evaluation of different theories, see: Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, pp.16-39.

¹⁴⁶ Hermes, *Reading*, throughout; Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.4.

¹⁴⁷ Tinkler, *Girlhood*, p.1. See also: Jeremy Aynsley and Francesca Berry, 'Introduction – Publishing the Modern Home: Magazines and the Domestic Interior 1870-1965', *Journal of Design History* 18 (2005), pp.1,5; Winship, *Inside*, p.23; Carol Dyhouse, *Glamour: History, Women, Feminism* (London, 2010), p.6.

¹⁴⁸ Pat Kirkham, 'Fashioning the Feminine: Dress, Appearance and Femininity in Wartime Britain', in Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds), *Nationalising Femininity – Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War* (Manchester, 1996), p.166. See also: Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.34; Blix, 'Place', pp.56-57; Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London, 1994), pp.48-55; Fiona Hackney, 'Reading the Modern Woman: Magazines and Readerships 1919-39', paper at *This Magazine Will Change Your Life* study day, The Women's Library (London), 01/04/2006; Grace Lees-Maffei, 'Introduction – Studying Advice: Historiography, Methodology, Commentary, Bibliography', *Journal of Design History* 16 (2003), p.724.

¹⁴⁹ Blix, 'Place', p.58.

¹⁵⁰ Tinkler, *Girlhood*, p.186.

advertisement for a similar product; two readers may express contrary views. This study contends that the disparities between and within these three factions created much of the ambiguity within each magazine.

Identifying assorted elements and factions within *H&C* and *Outlook* is fundamental to the study's aims, helping to discern their constructions of the modern and thus offer a more complex and nuanced account of 1950s and 60s Britain and the position of women. The thesis understands the magazines as an arena in which a number of factions (both individual and corporate) had a voice. A key issue is the extent to which the periodicals were successful in negotiating the cacophony of inputs and contributions: as well as providing an arena, is there any sense of each title functioning as a mediator? This is a prominent theme in design history research on magazines.¹⁵¹ Keeble demonstrates *Woman's* role as 'mediating forum' in the early 1950s, familiarizing its readers with the ideas of the design establishment.¹⁵² Crucial to this was *Woman's* friendly approach, the use of 'everyday language' and the role of the magazine's own experts.¹⁵³ This study explores the tactics for mediation adopted in *H&C* and *Outlook*, comparing their strategies and results with *Woman*.

The thesis uses visual and textual analyses, considering how the magazines looked alongside what they said. Such consideration of magazine design is important: as Aynsley, Forde and others argue, it has potential to provide an additional layer of meaning.¹⁵⁴ The study also pays attention to *H&C* and *Outlook's* production contexts. Anna Gough-Yates' investigation of the economic and industrial facets of the women's periodical press presents an alternative means of understanding magazines. She argues researchers need to discuss practices of production in order to position publications within their cultural circuits.¹⁵⁵ The influence of these ideas is apparent throughout later chapters, with the following section establishing the foundation for this.

¹⁵¹ Grace Lees-Maffei, 'The Production-Consumption-Mediation Paradigm', *Journal of Design History* 22 (2009), pp.354,368,372.

¹⁵² Keeble, 'Domesticating', pp.96,110.

¹⁵³ Keeble, 'Domesticating', pp.97,101,108-109,

¹⁵⁴ Jeremy Aynsley, 'Fashioning Graphics in the 1920s: Typefaces, Magazines and Fashion', in Aynsley and Forde (eds.), *Design and the Modern Magazine*, pp.37-55; Aynsley and Berry, 'Introduction', p.4; Blix, 'Place', p.58; Kate Pickles 'Review of *Who Was that Woman? The Australian Women's Weekly in the Post-war Years*', *Women's History Review* 12 (2003), pp.682-683.

¹⁵⁵ Gough-Yates, *Understanding*, pp.6-7,157.

H&C, Outlook and the women's magazine industry

The 1950s and 60s were both the boom years and a period of change for the women's magazine industry.¹⁵⁶ *Woman* is the most iconic of such publications: 'among the first of the middle-class weeklies to become a mass circulation periodical', it was selling two million copies per issue by the 1950s.¹⁵⁷ Due to its importance, this thesis uses *Woman* as its mainstream comparison. In contrast to *Woman*'s widespread popularity and fame, *H&C* and *Outlook* are relatively obscure publications. Work on their respective organizations uses them as part of a range of evidence; Andrews, for instance, discusses *H&C* alongside other NFWI documentation, and Lorna Gibson examines its music articles.¹⁵⁸ A detailed exploration using these magazines as the main focus is lacking though. Although not providing an institutional history, this study reveals further insights into the NFWI and WCG through its investigation of their magazines. These insights are an integral part of its account of 1950s and 60s Britain and the position of women.

This study treats *H&C* and *Outlook* as women's magazines. While White excluded 'those journals which are the organs of women's societies', I argue for their inclusion in the canon of the women's periodical press.¹⁵⁹ Their organizational situation was a vital part of their identity, but not the sole element and they functioned like mainstream periodicals. By locating *H&C* and *Outlook* within the magazine industry, this section shows the viability of classifying them as women's magazines – a theme continued throughout. For instance, later chapters further reveal how *H&C* and *Outlook*, like other women's magazines, were both shaped by consumer culture and themselves consumer commodities.¹⁶⁰

The 'Golden Age' of magazines was in decline from 1958, with various developments challenging and transforming the industry.¹⁶¹ Printing and postage costs, for example, increased. *H&C* and *Outlook* debated how to react to these increases; *H&C* records note that 'the Committee, after considerable discussion, recommended

¹⁵⁶ Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, pp.111-112; Weiner, 'Modernities', pp.395-409.

¹⁵⁷ Keeble, 'Domesticating', p.96.

¹⁵⁸ Andrews uses 78 issues from 1919 to 1992; Gibson uses 71 issues from 1919 to 1970. Andrews, *Acceptable*; Gibson *Beyond*.

¹⁵⁹ White, *Magazines*, p.18.

¹⁶⁰ Winship, *Inside*, p.7; Fiona Hackney, "'Use Your Hands for Happiness": Home Craft and Make-do-and-Mend in British Women's Magazines in the 1920s and 1930s', *Journal of Design History* 19 (2006), p.24.

¹⁶¹ For a full account, see: Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, pp.110-112; White, *Magazines*, pp.41-44,48,139-147,153,158-159,165-166,201,218,220,225-229,270,274-275,292,298; Janice Winship, 'Nation Before Family: *Woman*, the National Home Weekly, 1945-53', in [no editor given], *Formations of Nations and People* (London, 1984), pp.189-190.

that from 1967, the annual basic subscription should be raised by 1/-'.¹⁶² Trade union disputes adversely affected printing firms and Co-operative Press (CP) minutes refer to industrial negotiations.¹⁶³ Another difficulty concerned distribution. When launched, the sale of *Family Circle* via supermarkets rather than newsagents created controversy. CP minutes from 1964 specifically mention *Family Circle* and its point of sale, with alterations to their distribution methods introduced after this.¹⁶⁴ *H&C*'s producers instigated similar cost-cutting changes even earlier, restricting 'sale or return' and, from 1958, suspending distribution through newsagents in favour of subscription via WI branches.¹⁶⁵

Table 1.1 Comparison of key features

	Periodicity	1954 Price	1969 Price	Number of Pages
<i>H&C</i>	Monthly	4d	7d	35
<i>Outlook</i>	Fortnightly / monthly (from October 1958)	3d	N/A ¹⁶⁶	35
<i>Woman</i>	Weekly	4½d	10d	70

A consideration of key features, as in Table 1.1, allows comparison between the organizational publications and mainstream women's magazines. In terms of circulation, *Woman* had far higher figures, selling over 2.5 million copies per issue throughout much of the 1950s and 60s.¹⁶⁷ The size of its readership reflected its mass appeal; a broad age range, from teens to older women, read the magazine. *Outlook*'s circulation was similar to *The Lady*.¹⁶⁸ The October 1961 issue claimed that circulation once 'touched 100,000 copies'¹⁶⁹, but CP minutes cite 82,000 copies in 1955 and 47,000 in 1957 – the former credited to a popular competition. Audited sales figures for *H&C* stood at 128,997 in October 1953; 155,881 in September 1966.¹⁷⁰ This increase is attributable to the 1962 'three-in-one' circulation drive, a successful attempt to secure subscriptions from one-third of all NFWI members.¹⁷¹ The 'three-in-one' campaign

¹⁶² *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 06/04/66; CP minutes, 23/09/61.

¹⁶³ CP minutes, 23/09/67; White, *Magazines*, p.210.

¹⁶⁴ CP minutes, 26/09/64; 29/01/66; White, *Magazines*, pp.189-192,210-215.

¹⁶⁵ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 23/01/58, 02/04/58, 01/10/58, 20/07/62.

¹⁶⁶ From 1960, there are no covers on archive copies of *Outlook*, hence the price is unknown. However, when it moved to monthly publication, the price rose to 6d.

¹⁶⁷ White, *Magazines*, appendix iv.

¹⁶⁸ White, *Magazines*, appendix iv.

¹⁶⁹ 'Welcome!', *Outlook* 10/1961, p.9; CP minutes, 05/11/1955; 02/11/1957.

¹⁷⁰ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 06/01/1954; 05/10/1966.

¹⁷¹ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 26/10/1962.

reflects the targeted nature of *H&C* and *Outlook*'s readerships. In contrast to *Woman*'s mass appeal, the members of their respective organizations were their intended audience. As *Outlook*'s editor commented, 'Our magazine has always been primarily intended for guildswomen'¹⁷², while *H&C* had the status of 'the Official Magazine of the [WI] Movement'.¹⁷³

This is not to suggest that *only* NFWI and WCG members saw these magazines. More than just the purchaser often read magazines and letters in *H&C* and *Outlook* refer to non-members regularly reading them.¹⁷⁴ Such unofficial readership is ultimately unknowable, but many magazines indicate whom they regarded as their secondary audience: daughters of readers.¹⁷⁵ Some publications provided material specifically for this younger section of readers and such items are a reminder of the variety and fluidity of magazines. A seemingly contrary combination of variation alongside periodicity is an essential tenet of women's magazines, providing open-endedness and routine.¹⁷⁶ The sample selected attempts to capture both these aspects. It is comprised largely of April and October issues of *H&C* and *Outlook*, with additional sampling of the latter when it was fortnightly in order to mirror its frequency. A complete, cover-to-cover analysis of each issue sampled was undertaken. Due to its comparative role, the sample for *Woman* is one random issue per year. Although the three samples provide a large and detailed amount of evidence, sampling is, by its nature, selective; because of this, it is acknowledged that the findings are not absolute – further (or even conflicting) examples will be found in other issues.

Despite their regularity and routine, magazines rely on novelty to attract and retain readers, hence regularly restyle and modernize themselves.¹⁷⁷ CP was attentive to this need, with *Outlook* undergoing numerous alterations to format, content and production; there was an effort to improve presentation in 1958 and changes to the 'pattern of contents to be in line with proposals for Guild activities' in 1961.¹⁷⁸ As

¹⁷² 'Talking Points', *Outlook* 10/1966, p.1.

¹⁷³ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 23/01/1958.

¹⁷⁴ Mabel Barrett, *H&C* 04/1957, p.128; Miss A Turner, *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.35-36; White, *Magazines*, pp.197,216.

¹⁷⁵ Penny Tinkler, "Red Tips for Hot Lips": Advertising Cigarettes for Young Women in Britain, 1920-1970', *Women's History Review* 10 (2001), p.254; Penny Tinkler, "'A Material Girl'? Adolescent Girls and Their Magazines, 1920-1958', 1930s', in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, pp.100-103,105-106,109.

¹⁷⁶ Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.30; Joy Leman, "'The Advice of a Real Friend": Codes of Intimacy and Oppression in Women's Magazines 1937-1955', *Women's Studies International Quarterly* 3 (1980), p.67.

¹⁷⁷ Aynsley and Forde, 'Introduction', pp.1,3; Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.120; Marie-Louise Bowallius, 'Advertising and the Use of Colour in *Woman's Home Companion*, 1923-33', in Aynsley and Forde (eds.), *Design and the Modern Magazine*, pp.27,33; White, *Magazines*, pp.158-160,222.

¹⁷⁸ CP minutes, 28/10/1957; 02/11/1957; 21/06/1958; 28/09/1958; 26/03/1960; 28/01/1961; 22/09/1962; 03/11/1962; 15/12/1962; 30/03/1963; 05/11/1966; 25/06/1966; 07/05/1966.

mentioned, appearance is a significant but often overlooked aspect of magazines. In terms of layout, *H&C* and *Outlook* mirrored standard magazine formula: articles, fiction and full-page advertisements at the front, followed by other editorial features, with some full-page advertisements at the back.¹⁷⁹

During the post-war period, growing demand from advertisers resulted in greater use of colour.¹⁸⁰ Colour appeared at the front and back, where it was ‘most immediately observed by the reader’ and because of the paper and print technology involved.¹⁸¹ *Outlook* had regular coloured covers, funded by their biggest advertisers, from at least 1954.¹⁸² From 1962, advertisers’ pressure increased the presence of colour in *H&C*, with five coloured covers in 1963.¹⁸³ The extent of such developments was, however, severely limited compared to *Woman*. From its outset in 1937, *Woman* was exceptional in its use of colour and this continued post-war too. Whereas *H&C* and *Outlook* contained some colour pages and covers, colour – together with colour photography – was far more widespread in *Woman*, including double-page colour spreads from 1956.¹⁸⁴

The main practitioner overseeing such changes, as well as the overall content and tone of the magazine, was the editor. White’s 1970 lament that there is little recognition in Britain of editors’ importance is no longer valid¹⁸⁵, with great attention to individual editors, the editor’s role and the significance of other employees such as permanent staff writers.¹⁸⁶ In *H&C* and *Outlook*, the editors provided an occasional but authoritative commentary on the readers’ correspondence page, called ‘Letters to the Editor’ in the former.¹⁸⁷ ‘The Editor’ was the attributed writer of a few *Outlook* articles and its opening page often included an editor’s letter. This is a common convention in women’s magazines, with a friendly and direct address to the reader; ‘Your Editor’s Page’ in April 1957 discussed the cancellation of her holiday along with wider travel

¹⁷⁹ Bowallius, ‘Advertising’, p.26.

¹⁸⁰ Aynsley and Forde, ‘Introduction’, pp.1-2,6; Bowallius, ‘Advertising’, p.18; Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.117; Gough-Yates, *Understanding*, p.41; White, *Magazines*, pp.208-210; Winship, *Inside*, pp.27,55.

¹⁸¹ Bowallius, ‘Advertising’, pp.28-29.

¹⁸² CP minutes, 26/06/54.

¹⁸³ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 27/04/1962; 20/07/1962; 26/10/1962; 03/01/1963.

¹⁸⁴ White, *Magazines*, p.138; Winship, *Inside*, p.40;

¹⁸⁵ White, *Magazines*, pp.128-129,285.

¹⁸⁶ Aynsley and Berry, ‘Introduction’, p.3; Blix, ‘Place’, pp.58,62,65; Bowallius, ‘Advertising’, pp.20-21; Pickles, ‘Review’, p.281; Gough-Yates, *Understanding*, pp.118-131; Emily King, ‘Time Out Cover Design, 1970-81’, in Aynsley and Forde (eds.), *Design and the Modern Magazine*, p.285; Weiner, ‘Modernities’, p.398; Winship, ‘Nation’, pp.190,194,196-197,201-202; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, p.102.

¹⁸⁷ Editor’s comment, *Outlook*, 04/04/1955, pp.10-11; Editor’s comment, *H&C* 09/1954, p.329.

trends.¹⁸⁸ Despite this assumed familiarity, *Outlook*'s editor remained nameless. *H&C*'s editor was largely anonymous too, only named in a 1969 piece on the magazine's jubilee celebrations.¹⁸⁹

This anonymity may have been to maintain a sense of editorial continuity even if personnel changed. This was not a particular concern for *H&C*; Celia Mundy served as editor from 1940 until retirement in April 1969, when records indicate her replacement was Peggy Mitchell.¹⁹⁰ *Outlook*'s editorship was not as stable. Although containing relatively sparse information on the magazine's staff, CP minutes reveal that there were three editors in the four years following Miss Waddington's departure in October 1957.¹⁹¹ Records record Miss Browne's 1961 appointment as 'editorial staff position for women's interests'; only after 1966 staff reorganization was she designated editor.¹⁹² This reflects *Outlook*'s position as one periodical in the stable of CP publications. While *H&C*'s editor exercised usual editorial control and operated in consultation with the magazine's sub-committee, *Outlook*'s editor was subordinate to a Principal Editor as well as a CP board. It was the Principal Editor, for instance, that reported to the Board. Furthermore, in January 1961, the board placed the *Co-operative News* editor in command of general editorial and disciplinary supervision of *Outlook*. This decision followed problems encountered with one particular editor, who CP dismissed; the records are not explicit about the reasons for this decision.¹⁹³

Outlook's editor remained responsible for the bulk of the magazine's content, hence the board requested that a 'woman journalist' was employed.¹⁹⁴ This request suggests that the editor's position involved producing much of the magazine's material. This reflects the small-scale team working on *Outlook*; a former editor claimed that the publication only had four members of staff.¹⁹⁵ CP employees dealt with many roles, such as securing advertising. This structural system, with a small core of multi-skilling staff, became common in the magazine industry from the late 1970s.¹⁹⁶ *H&C* had a

¹⁸⁸ 'Your Editor's Page', *Outlook* 06/04/1957, p.1. For the two articles written by the Editor, see: 'Helping the Shopper to Get a Fair Deal', *Outlook* 04/1962, pp.20-21; 'They Prefer the Guild to Television', *Outlook* 04/1963, p.5.

¹⁸⁹ 'Our Jubilee Party', *H&C* 04/1969, p.148.

¹⁹⁰ Memo from Miss Withall to all staff, 19/03/1969; letter for Peggy Mitchell from unknown, 30/11/1971.

¹⁹¹ CP minutes, 26/10/1957; 22/03/1958; 06/05/1961.

¹⁹² CP minutes, 06/05/1961; 25/06/1966.

¹⁹³ CP minutes, 28/01/1961.

¹⁹⁴ CP minutes, 28/01/1961.

¹⁹⁵ Mary Stott, *Forgetting's No Excuse* (London, 1973), pp.54-55.

¹⁹⁶ Gough-Yates, *Understanding*, p.47.

similarly limited workforce; a later job descriptions document lists twenty positions, of which at least two were only part-time.¹⁹⁷

The editors relied on a variety of techniques to generate content for *H&C* and *Outlook*. Articles written by readers and organization members were printed. Non-original material was included, a practice in many publications.¹⁹⁸ A *H&C* short story, for instance, had previously been published in *The Times*, and all *Outlook* fiction was purchased from a syndicate.¹⁹⁹ There is evidence that items appeared simultaneously in *Outlook* and other Co-operative publications.²⁰⁰ Moreover, use of editorial personas was common; even *Woman's* famous agony aunt, Evelyn Home, was not a real person, although one writer – Peggy Makins – wrote the column for many years.²⁰¹ There is no proof that writers named in *Outlook* were personas, but it is likely due to the small number of staff. Records reveal personas in *H&C*. For a number of years, Lia Low wrote 'Home Affairs' articles under her own name and beauty articles under the pseudonym 'Anne Chester'.²⁰²

Editors also generated content by commissioning freelancers, particularly when specialist expertise was required. In *H&C*, for instance, 'A well-known psychiatrist', assessed the significance of the 1959 Mental Health Act, while in *Outlook*, a psychologist wrote about why keeping pets was pleasurable.²⁰³ Some freelancers worked regularly for a publication; at *H&C*, eight freelancers – covering the crossword, art and writing articles – held the only non-editorship posts producing content.²⁰⁴ Of these eight, Honor Wyatt (occasionally using her married name of Ellidge) was the most prolific, writing for the magazine throughout the years of the sample, aside from in 1963 when she lived abroad.²⁰⁵ Wyatt's involvement with *H&C* illustrates the networks surrounding the publication. Wyatt had previously worked for newspapers, including the *Manchester Guardian*, and for the BBC; the *H&C* sub-committee noted that she was a former *Woman's Hour* producer.²⁰⁶ Between 1960 and 1963, she adapted fiction for

¹⁹⁷ Job descriptions document, undated but probably late 1970s/early 1980s, *H&C* admin files 5FWI/G/2/1/3 box 252,

¹⁹⁸ Stott, *Forgetting*, pp.54-55; Jason Chambers, 'Presenting the Black Middle Class: John H. Johnson and *Ebony* Magazine, 1945-1974', in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Historicizing Lifestyles*, p.60.

¹⁹⁹ 'Committee Women', *H&C* 10/1963, p.365; Stott, *Forgetting*, pp.54-55.

²⁰⁰ In December 1954, CP minutes note Dr Welbeck's articles in *Reynolds News*; the 6/11/1954 issue of *Outlook* featured an article by him and a letter responding to one of his previous articles. CP minutes, 18/12/1954; 'The Awkward Age 2', Mrs Cale, *Outlook* 6/11/1954, pp.5,8-9.

²⁰¹ Irene Dancyger, *A World of Women – An Illustrated History of Women's Magazines 1700-1970* (Dublin, 1978), p.168; Hackney, 'Reading'.

²⁰² *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 04/01/1967.

²⁰³ 'Helping the Mentally Ill', *H&C* 04/1959, pp.114-116; 'Why Keep a Pet?', *Outlook* 10/1964, p.27.

²⁰⁴ Job descriptions document, *H&C* admin files.

²⁰⁵ Email correspondence with Prudence Anderton; *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 04/04/1963.

²⁰⁶ Email correspondence with Prudence Anderton; *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 07/10/1953.

H&C and it is possible that this material featured on *Woman's Hour* too, as she abridged books for their serials. Wyatt also wrote for *She* magazine and authored several books. Her connections to the WI extended beyond journalism; she lectured at Denman College (the Institute's educational establishment), gave branch talks and even persuaded her daughter to join the movement.²⁰⁷

Wyatt was not the only significant journalist employed by the organizational publications. Mary Waddington – who resigned as *Outlook's* editor in 1957 but occasionally wrote for the magazine into the early 1960s – became an influential women's editor at the *Guardian*, better known by her married name of Mary Stott.²⁰⁸ *Outlook's* producers regularly endeavoured to commission famous contributors, reflecting the importance of commercial success (secured by a strong and loyal readership) to the publication: as with mainstream women's magazines, *Outlook* had to survive financially. Securing a feature or regular column by a household name was a popular technique to lure readers. To write *Outlook's* advice page, for instance, CP employed Ursula Bloom. She was 'a prolific author of romance fiction' and had been *Home Notes's* agony aunt in the 1930s, by which time her public reputation was already established.²⁰⁹ She was *Outlook's* prized contributor; upon one of its re-launches, readers were reassured that among the familiar names being retained was 'of course, Ursula Bloom'.²¹⁰

Bloom was an 'old friend' of James Norbury.²¹¹ This connection – another example of networks – may explain how Norbury came to be writing for *Outlook*; his column started in 1958, the year he dedicated a book to Bloom.²¹² 'The strongest single influence in British knitting' in the post-war decades²¹³, Norbury was a formidable media personality: the BBC's television knitter from the early 1950s, he wrote vast amounts and his patterns appeared in magazines such as *Woman's Own*.²¹⁴ *Outlook* recognised his high profile; a photograph of him on the cover accompanied the launch of his column.²¹⁵ Again, personality was central. Only Norbury's first column dealt

²⁰⁷ Email correspondence with Prudence Anderton.

²⁰⁸ 'Women in a Changing World', *Outlook* 10/1960, pp.26,40; 'Welcome!', *Outlook* 10/1961, p.9; Katherine Whitehorn, 'Stott [nee Waddington], (Charlotte) Mary (1907-2002)', <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/77265> 28th August 2006, accessed on 28/08/2006.

²⁰⁹ Information and quotation from *Between the Covers – Women's Magazines and their Readers* exhibition, the Women's Library, London, 2009.

²¹⁰ 'Your Editor's Letter', *Outlook* 10/1957, p.1.

²¹¹ 'Norbury's Column', *Outlook* 04/1960, p.14.

²¹² Richard Rutt, *A History of Hand Knitting* (London, 1987), p.151.

²¹³ Rutt, *A History*, pp.151-152.

²¹⁴ Odhams advertisement, *Woman*, 23/03/1957 p.60; Rutt, *A History*, pp.151-152; Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920-60* (Manchester, 2000), pp.177-179.

²¹⁵ Editor's letter, *Outlook* 10/1958, cover, p.1.

Turn to me

THIS MONTH'S MOTTO: The new dress gives fresh heart to the old spirit. Many a battle has been won by buying a new hat. Many a woman made beautiful because she tied a fresh bow in her hair. ANON

DEAR READERS—Here is the *Outlook* in a new dress, new hat and a fresh bow and all! It is the same friend, with all the same good wishes in her heart, but she has bought herself a new attire and oh, how we hope that you will like it.

This has taken a lot of planning for you, and none of us want you to think that we have changed. We are the same people wanting you to celebrate with us this great occasion.

The pen club continues. I have so many friends who want to write to you—and this means you, not the woman next door—and this summer many of the friends have spent happy holidays together, and are already planning to be with one another for Christmas. I have friends for you all over Europe and in the States, and here I am waiting to answer your letters. Because now I can only write to you once a month, please do not forget me, but write as you always did, for I *want* to hear from you, and I shall feel lonely without your cheerful little notes, telling me of your plans, your homes, your children, your worries, and your happinesses. May those happinesses always increase. Please think of me as something of a distant relative, waiting for your letter, for you will never appeal to me in vain.

If the children's careers worry you, if you are concerned about Grandma who isn't happy as she is, if you are young and want to strike out on your own, or a bride-to-be and worried about your coming marriage; if you feel lonely, if—well, write to me. I am here to help with the everyday worries which come into everybody's lives, and all I ask is to be allowed to peep over your garden wall, and say "Hello".



By URSULA BLOOM

A friend in a new dress, but the same friend all the time; and what is more beautiful than loyal friendship? As ever,

Ursula Bloom

This is what my friends ask me:

Worried housekeeper

The money just doesn't go round.—C.R.

THERE is a home course of Household management that you could pursue, and this I think would help you to lay a finger on the leak. It really is just a case of allotting your money into sections and refusing to overstep those border lines. I am hoping to get your address about this.

She hates winter time

To Mavis.—But don't sit indoors by the fire grieving for the spent summer. Join a class. Living in London you have the wonderful Polytechnics, and they have infinite variety to offer you. Learn something because in that way you'll make fresh friends. Ask the local vicar for a social club, and join that. Refuse to be an Alice-sit-by-the-fire. May I write to you about this? I think I can help for, I know your district.

Printed and published by the Co-operative Press Ltd., Progress House, Chester Road, Manchester 16.

Figure 1.1 Bloom's column – typical in layout and style to the 'agony aunt' columns in many women's magazines of the period²¹⁶

²¹⁶ 'Turn to Me', *Outlook* 10/1957, p.48.

with knitting; the rest were opinion pieces, reflecting a wider trend of television personalities featuring in magazines from the mid-1950s.²¹⁷

Although *H&C* contained no comparable personality-led columns, both organizational publications used professional journalists. In this respect, and many others, *H&C* and *Outlook* functioned like mainstream women's periodicals. To regard them as women's magazines is not to deny the importance of their organizational identities, which were crucial too. Every issue featured their organization in some way. In April 1958, *Outlook*'s opening page mentioned the Guild twice and there were WCG references in an advertisement, an article and readers' letters.²¹⁸ The same issue of *H&C* contained NFWI-related content in four articles, six letters, four regular items, an obituary and some additional comments.²¹⁹

The regular NFWI items appearing in *H&C* included articles by various sub-committees, information from headquarters and courses lists for Denman College. *Outlook* contained no comparable regular columns on Guild activity until the 1960s. It seems that organizational pressure was needed to overcome CP resistance to such direct reporting; in May 1962, the WCG Liaison Committee suggested integrating the Guild bulletin but this did not happen until the bulletin folded later that year.²²⁰ Similarly, the 'Guild News Round-Up' – in which branches submitted information – began only because of the desires expressed in a 1966 readers' questionnaire.²²¹ This reader-driven change indicates a strong sense of connection to the magazine. This is unsurprising; these new features, along with a plethora of other Guild references and the various NFWI elements in *H&C*, highlight the extent to which the two organizations provided the primary market for these publications. With Institute members and Guildswomen comprising the majority of their readers, *H&C* and *Outlook* had audiences that were – in comparison to generic women's magazines – more closely connected and heavily involved with them.

²¹⁷ 'And Still Going Strong', *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.8-9; White, *Magazines*, p.162.

²¹⁸ 'Your Editor's Letter', *Soviet Weekly* advertisement, 'In Memory of a Pioneer', Mrs V Ryan, Mrs EM Sedgwick, *Outlook* 04/1958, pp.1,11,28-29,36-37.

²¹⁹ 'News of the Month', 'Country Markets Come to Town', 'Crime and Treatment of Criminals', 'Lady Pinney – An Appreciation', 'Spinnet to Skiffle', 'Notes From Headquarters', 'Letters to the Editor', 'Some Westmoreland Villages', 'Home Counties Supplement', 'News From the Institutes', 'The County and You', *H&C* 04/1958, pp.105,106-107,108,109-110,113,115,116-117,118-121,121.

²²⁰ CP minutes, 05/05/1962; 'A Closer Link with the Guild', 'Women's Guild Monthly Bulletin', *Outlook* 10/1962, pp.1,31.

²²¹ 'Talking Points', 'Guild News Round-up', *Outlook* 10/1966, pp.1,14-15.

The sense of connection between magazines and their readers has been subject to much discussion.²²² Techniques identified as encouraging greater levels of intimacy are visible in *H&C* and *Outlook*. Questions such as ‘Do you agree that that is true?’ directly engaged the reader.²²³ Members, who were probably readers too, wrote some organization-related articles and such reader contributions – often regarded as illusory in mainstream magazines – enhanced this level of connection.²²⁴ Readers’ letters are another vital element to engagement with all magazines, even though their validity is questionable.²²⁵ In the case of *H&C* and *Outlook*, authenticity is less doubtful. Numerous *Outlook* letters referred to particular WCG activities²²⁶, and *H&C*’s letter largely concentrated on issues pertaining to the WI. In addition, 63 of the 145 letters to *H&C*’s correspondence page named their Institute. Such explicit organizational connections mean that widespread fabrication would be difficult to conceal.

This is not to deny all problems when considering readers’ correspondence. Motivation for writing is difficult to discern, especially when monetary reward is given; *Outlook* paid the handsome sum of one guinea for the ‘Star Letter’ and 10s 6d to all others published in March 1954.²²⁷ Furthermore, even when correspondence is ‘real’, letters are subject to selection and editing.²²⁸ Despite these concerns, readers’ letters form an important aspect of the publications and the study cites such correspondence throughout.²²⁹ Another key component of women’s magazines is their producers: the NFWI and CP in the cases of *H&C* and *Outlook*. The following two sections further explore how their production contexts – the WI and Co-operative movements respectively – influenced the perspectives offered within the organizational publications.

H&C, the NFWI and the modern countryside

A distinctive feature of *H&C* is the sense of rural location throughout the publication. The countryside was central to the magazine’s identity, with a strong sense

²²² Aynsley and Berry, ‘Introduction’, pp.4-5; Aynsley and Forde, ‘Introduction’, p.11; Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, pp.9,125; Bowallius, ‘Advertising’, p.21; Gough-Yates, *Understanding*, pp.14,157; Leman, ‘The Advice’, pp.63-78.

²²³ ‘Editor’s Page’, *Outlook* 09/04/1955, p.1.

²²⁴ Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.9; White, *Magazines*, pp.128,131,147,158; Winship, *Inside*, pp.18,68.

²²⁵ Bowallius, ‘Advertising’, p.21; White, *Magazines*, p.128.

²²⁶ For an example of this, see: Mrs H Booth, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.9.

²²⁷ Letters page, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, pp.9-10.

²²⁸ Winship, *Inside*, p.77; Dee L McEntire, ‘Erotic Storytelling: Sexual Experience and Fantasy Letters in Forum Magazine’, *Western Folklore* 51 (1992), p.82.

²²⁹ Letters will be referenced by the name of correspondent in order to identify them as specifically as possible.

of place, ‘not just a physical terrain but a social environment of shared meanings crucial to the development of community’.²³⁰ The prominence of location in *H&C* is due to its status as the magazine of the NFWI, an organization specifically for rural women. Whereas the covers of many women’s periodicals tried to attract interest and reader identification by featuring a woman, often within a domestic setting, *H&C* used images of the British countryside.²³¹ Most showed generic countryside scenes or specific rural elements, such as waterways or villages, foregrounding an identity united by location. Gender was an integral part of this; cover images sometimes included women – or, more specifically, NFWI members – in countryside settings (Figure 1.2).²³² The publication’s title mirrored the Institute’s ‘For Home and Country’ motto while also combining the typical women’s magazine invocation to the ‘world of women’ (*Home*) alongside the emphasis on location (*Country*).²³³ In references to NFWI activities and in advertisements, the phrase ‘Country Housewives’ was used repeatedly, indicating that this gendered, rural identification was widely accepted.²³⁴ Readers appeared to share this identification too; most correspondents present themselves as living in the countryside.²³⁵

Country-living was not necessarily remote; in a 1961 article, Wyatt mentioned a member’s husband working at London Airport.²³⁶ Rural identification, however, did create a distinctive perspective within *H&C*. Despite being a London-based publication, the focus on the rural meant it had a more provincial outlook. Strong regional elements enhanced this. Every issue contained ‘News from the Counties’, reporting on branch activity in a different area each month, and a regional supplement. Regional editions of the magazine, stated on the cover, accommodated the different supplements – although it seems that the supplement was the only variation between editions.²³⁷

²³⁰ Whitney Strub, ‘The Clearly Obscene and the Queerly Obscene: Heteronormativity and Obscenity in Cold War Los Angeles’, *American Quarterly* 60 (2008), p.386.

²³¹ Winship, *Inside*, pp.7,9,11; Hackney, ‘Reading’; Fiona Hackney, ‘Making Modern Woman, Stitch by Stitch: Dressmaking in Women’s Magazines in Britain, 1919-1939’, in Barbara Burman (ed.), *The Culture of Sewing – Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking* (Oxford, 1999), pp.76-82; Stewart, *Dressing*, p.xvii.

²³² *H&C* 10/1962, cover.

²³³ Winship, *Inside*, p.66.

²³⁴ Denman College, *H&C* 04/1955, pp.149,151; Calor Gas advertisement, *H&C* 05/1954, p.173.

²³⁵ This is apparent in the addresses, but often in the content too. See for example: Frances Starte, *H&C* 05/1954, p.179; ME Denton-Cox, *H&C* 10/1963, p.362.

²³⁶ ‘Freshman Roche at Denman’, *H&C* 04/1961, p.129.

²³⁷ The archival collection of *H&C* contains only one version of each issue but a range of regional editions across these years. The majority were the Home-Counties edition, but other areas were: South-Western 04/1955; Northern, 10/1955, 04/1961, 04/1963; North-Western, 04/1960, 10/1962, 04/1969; Denman College special edition 10/1960; Yorkshire and Lindsey, 10/1961; West Midlands, 04/1962; Southern, 10/1968; Yorkshire and Lancashire, 10/1969.



Figure 1.2 *H&C* cover showing Institute members in a countryside setting, in this case Denman College, the grounds of the NFWI's educational establishment²³⁸

²³⁸ *H&C* 10/1960, cover.

The magazine industry made similar attempts to represent the regions more fully during the 1950s and 60s.²³⁹ Magazines were, however, London-centric. Furthermore, in contrast to the strong sense of place in *H&C*, remarks about location are difficult to discern in other contemporary publications. Location was only occasionally invoked in *Outlook*, with generic comments: some housewives ‘can get to large towns with stores only once in every two or three months’.²⁴⁰ *Outlook* and mainstream periodicals such as *Woman* contained a tacit assumption that readers lived in an urban – or, more accurately, suburban – location, as did around four-fifths of the population in England and Wales by the 1950s.²⁴¹ This assumption created an implicit emphasis on urban life and a corresponding marginalization of the countryside within their pages. Even though one-fifth of the population remained in rural areas – a figure comparable to the total populations of Scotland, Wales and Ireland (including the Republic)²⁴² – women’s magazines rarely acknowledged country-dwelling. Those examples that did appear presented country-living as exceptional, a deviation from urban experience. In 1959, *Woman*’s ‘A Countrywoman’s Diary’ article explained rural common-land through a comparison to London’s commons, an analogy that underlines the extent to which the urban constituted the norm.²⁴³

This construction of the urban as normative had major implications for conceptualizations of the modern in the 1950s and 60s. Attitudes in *Outlook* and *Woman* reveal the widespread omission of the countryside from understandings of the modern. On the few occasions when not ignored, portrayals depicted the countryside as *not* modern. The countryside lacked characteristics and traits that were widely accepted as central tenets of modernity, such as industrialization, urbanization and cosmopolitanism. In ‘A Change of Heart’, a 1956 *Outlook* short story, the protagonist has recently moved to the countryside and describes it as ‘living in an intellectual vacuum’. Her city-dwelling sister, on the other hand, cooks food such as ravioli – an Italian dish that functions in the story as iconic of the cosmopolitan sophistication absent in rural areas.²⁴⁴ A 1969 ‘*Woman* special investigation’ on teenage runaways presents the countryside as a place from which young women want to escape; London is their desired destination. The piece begins in a rural setting ‘at the end of the West Country lane’, where trains pass by: ‘Not just any trains, but the magic train – the train

²³⁹ White, *Magazines*, pp.129,202,171,173.

²⁴⁰ ‘Around the House’, *Outlook* 02/01/1954, pp.22-23,27.

²⁴¹ Brian Harrison, *Seeking a Role – The United Kingdom 1951-1970* (Oxford, 2009), p.146.

²⁴² Harrison, *Seeking*, p.173.

²⁴³ ‘A Countrywoman’s Diary’, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.44.

²⁴⁴ ‘A Change of Heart’, *Outlook* 06/10/1956, pp.10-11,15,27.

to London'. London represented modernity: 'the world of...bright lights, opportunities and freedom, gaiety and friends'.²⁴⁵

These references suggest that the rural was associated with the past, symbolizing a time before modernity transformed Britain from a rural society to an urban one. Although, as the Introduction notes, visions of the past informed post-war understandings of modernity, this pre-industrial rural past was not part of such configurations in women's magazines. On the contrary, the countryside was a remnant of a bygone era, a place left behind by modernity. As a result, these publications positioned the rural as outside of modernity and hence excluded from understandings of the modern. This is not to imply that all portrayals were negative. As its title indicates, the protagonist in the *Outlook* story has a 'change of heart' about rural life due to the friendliness of her neighbours.²⁴⁶ Other *Outlook* fiction presented country-life and country-dwellers as unsophisticated, but rather than being seen as derogatory, this was somewhat idealized and associated with attributes such as naivety, innocence and common sense.²⁴⁷ Conversely, the *Woman* piece on runaways emphasized the grim reality facing many young women who moved to London, including one girl's account of her suicide attempt.²⁴⁸

However, these examples do not alter the overall understanding of the urban as modern and the rural as not modern. There are many parallels between this contemporary evidence and historical writing on the 1950s and 60s. The historiographical attention paid to London – especially Soho – in the post-war period reflects its association with modernity as well as the city's symbolic capital.²⁴⁹ Research is beginning to explore the relatively neglected regions²⁵⁰, which have enormous potential to challenge existing accounts of the modern; as Wilson notes, "“swinging London” might always be a far cry from Wigan or Ipswich".²⁵¹ Nonetheless, this regional attention does not particularly challenge urban dominance; the literature also assumes an urban experience. Giles' choice of the title *The Parlour and the Suburb* reflects the importance she places on the inter-war suburbs in women's experience of modernity. While Giles states that the city and the suburb 'express two

²⁴⁵ 'One-way Ticket Girls', *Woman* 27/09/1969, pp.8-10,14,16,18.

²⁴⁶ 'A Change of Heart', *Outlook* 06/10/1956, pp.10-11,15,27.

²⁴⁷ 'One Enchanted Evening', *Outlook* 03/07/1954, pp.2-4,18,24.

²⁴⁸ 'One-way Ticket Girls', *Woman* 27/09/1969, pp.8-10,14,16,18.

²⁴⁹ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.117; Mort, 'Scandalous', pp.107-108; Mort, 'Striptease', pp.29-30,44.

²⁵⁰ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.130-141; Dave Russell, 'The *Heaton Review*, 1927-1934: Culture, Class and a Sense of Place in Inter-war Yorkshire', *Twentieth Century British History* 17 (2006), pp.323-349, pp.323-349; Thomas, 'Challenging', pp.277-297.

²⁵¹ Wilson, *Only*, p.7.

different ways of responding to modernisation'²⁵², *H&C* reveals that the countryside provided another way of responding. Across the magazine's pages, the modern was constructed in terms of rural life and rural experience; various aspects of country life providing the conceptual framework for understanding and adapting to post-war developments.

This is a neglected aspect of modernity, with the countryside commonly regarded as inherently anti-modern in historical research too. This study challenges this view, as do some other historians. Elizabeth B Jones, for example, uses the phrase 'rural modernity' in her assessment of farmwomen in Germany.²⁵³ In the British context, Peter Mandler demonstrates that alongside rural romanticism, there have been non-nostalgic and non-romantic responses to the countryside.²⁵⁴ Although the picturesque scenes on *H&C*'s covers suggest idealization of the countryside, the overall tone within the publication was decidedly non-nostalgic. Nor can we label attitudes as simply social conservatism or align them with political Conservatism. Mandler shows the role of the countryside in the cultural imagination of both Tories and socialists, and the NFWI was avowedly non-party political, with members from across the political spectrum.²⁵⁵

The rural created alternative understandings of the modern in *H&C*, understandings that incorporated the NFWI and its members. For example, agriculture was part of such ideas. Various aspects of agriculture appeared across a range of content, including advertisements and NFWI articles.²⁵⁶ Andrews questions the continued importance of agriculture to the WI movement after the 1930s²⁵⁷, but within *H&C*, it represented – if only symbolically – an important area to be associated with. This was because of agriculture's symbolic capital in the post-war period. The need for national self-sufficiency during World War Two (WW2) raised agriculture's significance and this was maintained post-1945 by factors such as a powerful farming lobby and legislation subsidizing farm incomes, changes which Harrison describes as 'in effect a third agricultural revolution'.²⁵⁸ These changes created a sense of the countryside as modern, or at least becoming modern; the Dolhendre (Merioneth)

²⁵² Giles, *Parlour*, p.35.

²⁵³ Elizabeth B Jones, *Gender and Rural Modernity – Farm Women and the Politics of Labour in Germany, 1871-1933* (Farnham, 2009), pp.11-14,203-204.

²⁵⁴ Peter Mandler, 'Against "Englishness": English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997), pp.166-167,170-175.

²⁵⁵ Mandler, 'Englishness', p.166; Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.xiii.

²⁵⁶ For selected examples of these, see: Carmarthenshire Education Committee, Bibby advertisement, *H&C* 04/1955, pp.134,143; 'Agricultural Education', *H&C* 10/1961, pp.330-331,333.

²⁵⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.33-35,105-106.

²⁵⁸ Harrison, *Seeking*, pp12-13,128-130.

Hillside farming scheme in Wales, part of the Festival of Britain's regional events, covered 'the rehabilitation and modernisation of three hill farmsteads and of a cottage'.²⁵⁹ Constructions of agriculture as modern are visible in *H&C*, particularly through the use of 'languages of modernisation (accompanied by adjacent terms such as "the new" and "the future")'.²⁶⁰ In 1956, for instance, the promotion of a *new* Ministry of Agriculture booklet outlined the *latest, up-to-date* advice on farm fires.²⁶¹ Such information helped readers to remain at the forefront of modern farming practices and hence assisted in creating a sense of NFWI members belonging to the modern world – not despite but because of their rural position.

Items on agriculture reveal rural *and* gendered ideas of the modern. Amongst the areas moving towards mass-production techniques (mass-production being widely seen as a modern characteristic) were those aspects of agriculture that women had traditionally been involved in, such as hen keeping and poultry farming.²⁶² Perhaps due to this association with women, these agricultural activities received the most attention in *H&C*. 'Another "Out-of-doors" Career' in May 1954 focused on a female poultry farmer. In addition to reinforcing a gendered perspective on the modern countryside, this article presented the countryside as a site of work. The reader was told that the woman farmer combines thirty hens with two children 'and a good deal of domesticity', making 'a useful profit on the eggs'.²⁶³ Such comments signal broader changes relating to women's paid employment in these decades. The number of married women working outside the home increased dramatically, from 10% in 1931 to 21.7%, 45.4% and 51.3% in 1951, 1961 and 1971 respectively.²⁶⁴ Much of this was part-time work, allowing women to juggle employment with their domestic responsibilities. Penny Summerfield, Dolly Smith Wilson and others demonstrate that women justified working by the financial contribution that it made to their family income – like the 'useful profit' made by the farmer.²⁶⁵

'Another "Out-of-doors" Career' was written by Wyatt, whose own family commitments had influenced her decision to become a freelancer writer.²⁶⁶ The

²⁵⁹ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.135-139.

²⁶⁰ Conekin et al, 'Introduction', p.10.

²⁶¹ Emphasis mine. 'Avoiding Fires on the Farm', *H&C* 04/1956, p.121.

²⁶² Harrison, *Seeking*, p.128.

²⁶³ 'Another "Out-of-doors" Career', *H&C* 05/1954, p.157.

²⁶⁴ Dolly Smith Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 17 (2006), p.209.

²⁶⁵ Penny Summerfield, 'Women in Britain Since 1945: Companionate Marriage and the Double Burden', in Obelkevich and Catterall (eds.), *Understanding Post-war British Society*, pp.63-72; Wilson, 'Affluent', pp.216-218; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.129-131,137-140

²⁶⁶ Email correspondence with Prudence Anderton.

importance of women's family roles and the acceptance of paid employment as part of the 'country housewife' identity are indicative of the multifaceted nature of women's roles in this period. Unlike many women's magazines²⁶⁷, *H&C* did not ignore paid employment or other issues that complicated simple representations of the housewife role. On the contrary, a range of roles was intrinsic to the concept of the country housewife presented on the periodical's pages.

Although *H&C*'s distinctive perspective was rooted in local – rural – experience, there were remarks about the national level and beyond in the magazine too. The conceptualization of other countries in these magazines contributed to their understandings of the modern, although this was far from straightforward. To a degree, evidence from *H&C* echoes broader reconfigurations of Britain's international position post-1945. From the end of WW2 until the mid-1960s, the 'three circles' policy – 'in which Britain played a major role in Europe, maintained a global empire and influenced US policy via the "special relationship"' – was influential.²⁶⁸ The countries listed with the final mailing dates for Christmas post in 1956 mirror the three circles: Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Cyprus, Malaya, Belgium, France, Holland and the USA.²⁶⁹

However, references to the Empire and Commonwealth were rare. *H&C* reported on the NFWI's involvement in a Ugandan farm institute, but the piece implies that the motivation for this involvement comes from the organization's contributions to 'Freedom From Hunger', a widely publicized international charity campaign of the time.²⁷⁰ Uganda's position as a Commonwealth country was not prominent. On the contrary, as other historians have found, Britain's imperial legacy – and the loss of power symbolised by Suez – is largely notable by its absence.²⁷¹ In contrast, the NFWI's membership of the Association of Country Women Worldwide (ACWW) – which encouraged a sense of connection with rural areas in other countries based on a shared rural, gendered identity – was clearly present in *H&C*.²⁷²

The absence of Empire indicates the problematic nature of imperial identity in the post-war period; as Webster demonstrates, growing levels of non-white immigration

²⁶⁷ White, *Magazines*, pp.150-151; Beaumont, 'Housewives', p.67.

²⁶⁸ John W Young, 'International Factors and the 1964 Election', *Contemporary British History* 21 (2007), p.352; Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xvii.

²⁶⁹ 'News of the Month', *H&C* 10/1956, p.315.

²⁷⁰ 'Within Karamoja', Sonia Reckitt, *H&C* 04/1964, pp.121,123,137; 'Towards Freedom From Hunger', *H&C* 04/1966, pp.136-137,138-139.

²⁷¹ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.184-185,189-190,196-197; Heron, 'Introduction', p.3; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.69,185-186.

²⁷² For example, see: JM Slings, *H&C* 04/1956, p.141; *H&C* 10/1962, front cover.

to Britain challenged the meaning of ‘home’ and ideas about national identity.²⁷³ The impact of these challenges is apparent in the extent to which notions of national identity changed in the post-war period.²⁷⁴ This is particularly pertinent for *H&C* as the NFWI had been associated with an older version of rural Englishness that was no longer appropriate or feasible if the organization wanted to retain a sense of belonging and relevance to the post-war world.²⁷⁵ The national and international context required different configurations of national identity (a national identity in which the conflation of Britishness and Englishness continued to be widespread²⁷⁶). While the ACWW provided one outlet for a more internationalist perspective²⁷⁷, the WI movement in the 1950s and 60s struggled to situate itself in new frameworks. There are parallels between the NFWI’s negotiations and Britain’s position: the emphasis upon ‘an improving, modern future underscored the recovery and renewal of a badly shaken but victorious country – a country which could make a distinctive contribution alongside the superpowers’.²⁷⁸ There was, however, more than one vision of Britain’s future. Representations in *Outlook* were markedly different to *H&C* due to its alternative perspective, as the following section establishes.

Outlook and the WCG, Co-operative movement and Labour Party

The previous section shows the distinctive rural perspective of *H&C* and the influence of that perspective on constructions of the modern within the magazine. *Outlook* reveals another way of experiencing, responding to and making sense of the modern, with a Co-operative version of modernity. The publication’s position in a network of Co-operative and Labour alliances is the focus, drawing attention to the issue of social class. Whereas the NFWI had a relatively broad social class composition, the WCG and Co-operative movement were overwhelmingly working-class. Although some, such as Giles, explore the impact of social class on housewives,

²⁷³ Webster, *Imagining*, pp.xi-xii,xxiv,26,63,65,67

²⁷⁴ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.30-31,38,97,175; Conekin et al, ‘Introduction’, pp.16-18; Mort, ‘Striptease’, p.30.

²⁷⁵ The association of ruralism, Englishness and the WI is explored at length by Andrews. Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.17,31-32,42-50,52,57,82,102-103,108,113-114,128,157-159.

²⁷⁶ Bridget Byrne, *White Lives – The Interplay of ‘Race’, Class and Gender in Everyday Life* (Abingdon, 2006), p.141.

²⁷⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.161-162.

²⁷⁸ Becky Conekin, “‘Here is the Modern World Itself’: The Festival of Britain’s Representations of the Future”, in Conekin et al (eds.), *Moments of Modernity*, p.246.

its role in women's lives is often underestimated.²⁷⁹ For WCG members, identification as working-class Co-operators was fundamental.

In November 1960, CP minutes recorded 'Endorsement of decision suggesting to WCG formation of Liaison Committee'. The committee included a number of representatives 'attending on behalf of CP'.²⁸⁰ As well as reinforcing the link between the WCG and *Outlook*, these minutes underline the importance of CP within this nexus. CP affected *Outlook* in crucial ways. For example, CP was a Manchester-based firm. Stott claims that this isolated the magazine from mainstream London-based journalism.²⁸¹ Although questioning the extent of this isolation by highlighting *Outlook's* saturation in a web of connections, this thesis embraces such geographical difference: as argued in relation to *H&C*, the alternative perspectives offered by a regional/provincial outlook require further examination and recognition.

Outlook's relationship with the WCG and CP placed it in a wider network of Co-operative alliances. From the late nineteenth century, the Co-operative movement in Britain was broad and its different structural elements were visible in *Outlook*. In 1966, the magazine featured an article entitled 'Know Your Movement' (use of 'your' encouraging a sense of reader belonging) that explained elements such as the Education Executive.²⁸² Scott contends that an increasingly prominent aspect of the WCG's relationship with the wider movement in the inter-war years was domestic consumption, with the Guild – and *Outlook* – actively involved in promoting 'Push the Sales' campaigns for Co-operative goods.²⁸³ This prominence assumed additional significance during the 1950s, as advertising became even more essential to the magazine industry's finances and Co-operative firms were *Outlook's* biggest advertisers.²⁸⁴ Advertising revenue subsidized production costs and kept cover prices to a minimum; by 1963, advertising offset the production costs of weeklies by 67% and monthlies by 82%.²⁸⁵ This boosted the presence of advertising in magazines; in some weeklies, the advertising-editorial ratio was fifty: fifty.²⁸⁶ Advertisers also became increasingly influential, shifting the balance of power within magazines.²⁸⁷

²⁷⁹ Gordon and Nair, *Public*, p.5. For examples in Giles' work, see: Giles, *Parlour*, pp.57,93,102; Giles, *Women*, p.65.

²⁸⁰ CP minutes, 05/11/1960.

²⁸¹ Stott, *Forgetting*, p.55.

²⁸² 'Know Your Movement', *Outlook* 04/1966, pp.11-12.

²⁸³ Scott, *Feminism*, pp.247-251,270

²⁸⁴ Winship, *Inside*, p.40.

²⁸⁵ White, *Magazines*, p.207; Winship, *Inside*, p.38.

²⁸⁶ White, *Magazines*, p.138.

²⁸⁷ White, *Magazines*, pp.156-157. For a full account of advertising and post-war women's magazines, see: White, *Magazines*, pp.17,125,138,156-157,196-197,203-207

For *Outlook*, the necessity of advertising revenue combined with Co-operative allegiances meant that Co-operative firms – especially the largest, the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) – exerted a huge influence. Their financial support was vital to the magazine’s efforts to modernize; in 1954, for instance, ‘to continue colour covers for further twelve months’ required CWS agreement.²⁸⁸ This affected CP policy. In 1961, the Principal Editor stated that ‘Editorial publicity for CWS goods has continued, as our service under CWS guarantee, and we should be able to put forward a good showing of such material in applying for renewal of guarantee’.²⁸⁹ This reveals a deliberate policy of promoting CWS goods in editorial content in order to secure future advertising. This policy was evident in the magazine itself. Front covers, for example, promoted Co-operative products featured in the magazine, as in Figure 1.3.²⁹⁰ Promotions were neither disguised nor subtle; the Home Editor’s October 1959 column focused exclusively on the CWS Christmas toy department, while all six recommendations in April 1963 were explicitly CWS branded.²⁹¹ Such attention was consistent with WCG policy too; to celebrate the firm’s centenary, the Guild made a ‘determined effort to publicize and increase the sales of CWS goods’.²⁹² This domination amounted to a ‘CWS veto on advertising’.²⁹³ Although not the exclusive advertisers – Co-operative Production Federation (CPF)²⁹⁴ and other firms carried in Co-operative stores did feature – CWS controlled who else could advertise.

CP attempted to increase the non-CWS advertising in its journals; in 1963, the board recommended a new formula whereby ‘goods on CWS invoicing-through list to be open for advertising’.²⁹⁵ Allowing others to advertise more widely would secure more advertising and improve revenue. This was a pressing issue for the entire magazine industry by the 1960s²⁹⁶, with commercial television becoming a growing rival for advertising. There were difficulties at *H&C* with maintaining advertising income. However, *H&C*’s advertising manager was able to solicit business from a broad range of firms.²⁹⁷ In contrast, the CWS veto restricted CP. As a result, when

²⁸⁸ CP minutes, 26/06/1954.

²⁸⁹ CP minutes, 23/09/1961.

²⁹⁰ For example, see: ‘A Dress to Delight’, *Outlook*, cover, pp.24-25. Covers are omitted from the archive records for issues from 1960 onwards but there are suggestions that this practice continued: Umbrella promotion, *Outlook* 10/1960, p.1.

²⁹¹ ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.28,30; ‘Round the Shops’, *Outlook* 10/1963, pp.29,31.

²⁹² ‘One Hundred Years of Progress’, *Outlook* 10/1963, p.1.

²⁹³ CP minutes, 04/05/1963.

²⁹⁴ Johnston Birchall, *Co-op: the People’s Business* (Manchester, 1994), pp.103-106.

²⁹⁵ CP minutes, 04/05/1963.

²⁹⁶ White, *Magazines*, p.273.

²⁹⁷ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 02/04/1958.



Figure 1.3 *Outlook* cover clearly showing a CWS promotion²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ *Outlook*, 13/07/1957, cover.

CWS reduced its advertising contribution for 1967, CP had little choice but to 'reluctantly' suspend *Outlook* in June that year.²⁹⁹

This moment in 1967 draws attention to many of the issues surrounding *Outlook*. By the mid-1960s, it was no longer tenable for CWS to financially support a raft of CP publications as the company was facing numerous problems; in 1964, for example, some of its operations suffered 'substantial losses'.³⁰⁰ The broader Co-operative movement was also in trouble, experiencing difficulty in responding to developments associated with post-war modernity such as mass consumption. Matthew Hilton argues that the movement struggled to adapt to affluence and new modes of consumption, therefore despite its zenith in the 1940s, it failed to take the lead in the burgeoning consumer movement of the 1950s and 1960s and went into a 'seemingly irreversible decline'.³⁰¹ Peter Gurney also outlines difficulties engaging with 1950s and 60s consumer culture, discussing the movement's contradictory responses to developments associated with affluence, such as the growth of credit facilities.³⁰² Gurney challenges Hilton's assessment of the consumer movement but does not dispute that there was an enormous reduction in the influence of the Co-operative movement – their 'effective marginalization'.³⁰³

Another feature associated with post-war modernity that threatened to undermine Co-operative principles and viewpoint was the rise of the individual. The Co-operative movement focused on the collective and struggled to adapt its ideology to accommodate increased emphasis on the individual.³⁰⁴ It therefore became isolated: the growing importance of the individual consumer 'undoubtedly helped undermine the co-operative alternative to mass consumption'.³⁰⁵ Contemporary evidence attests to this isolation. Although a dominating presence in *Outlook*, CWS was scarcely visible in other women's magazines. *H&C*, for example, contained no Co-operative advertisements. The sample for *Woman* contained four CWS advertisements, but this number is in no way comparable to the scale of advertising for private enterprise firms; even just other advertisements on the same pages outnumbered the two that appeared in

²⁹⁹ Editor's page, *Outlook* 06/1967, p.1; CP minutes, 05/11/1966, 17/12/1966, 18/03/1967, 06/05/1967.

³⁰⁰ Birchall, *Co-op*, p.157.

³⁰¹ Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in Twentieth Century Britain – The Search for A Historical Movement* (Cambridge, 2003), pp.3,176-177.

³⁰² Peter Gurney, 'The Battle of the Consumer in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Modern History* 77 (2005), pp.956-987.

³⁰³ Gurney, 'Battle', p.959.

³⁰⁴ Gurney, 'Battle', pp.959,982,984,987; Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.18,176-177.

³⁰⁵ Gurney, 'Battle', p.959.

June 1958.³⁰⁶ Hence in this highly commercialized mainstream periodical and the much smaller organizational periodical, there was simply no ‘co-operative alternative’ present; the Co-operative movement posed no challenge to conventional mass consumption.

In spite of wider marginalization, the Co-operative movement remained important to the many loyal members that it retained.³⁰⁷ Guildswomen and CP were part of this core membership, explaining why – unlike in *H&C* and *Woman* – a Co-operative perspective remained strongly apparent on its pages, as Figure 1.3 demonstrates. This loyalty and Co-operative perspective inextricably linked *Outlook* with the movement’s struggles. It was these struggles – and their financial implications – that led to the magazine’s closure. *Outlook* was not the only CP publication affected; the *Sunday Citizen* newspaper closed in May 1967.³⁰⁸ However, CP minutes specify that CWS selected *Outlook* as one of the publications that it would no longer support: ‘CWS meant the exclusion of “Woman’s Outlook”’.³⁰⁹ This wording is revealing; CWS chose to exclude *Outlook*, suggesting that they no longer regarded its readership, comprised predominantly of Guildswomen, as a significant element of the Co-operative movement.

This viewpoint was not without justification; the Guild’s dwindling membership – reduced from over 87,000 members in 1939 to fewer than 60,000 in 1953³¹⁰ – created an aura of decline around the organization. Historiography on the post-war WCG, outlined in the Introduction, also conveys such ideas. This study does not dispute assertions of decline but it is more concerned with the ways in which such changes were articulated and understood within *Outlook*. According to many contemporary and historical viewpoints, Co-operative understandings of consumption and collectivism were antithetical to post-war modernity, so how did the Co-operative movement experience, respond to and make sense of the modern? Constructions and understandings of the modern in *Outlook* provide answers to this question, revealing an alternative, Co-operative version of modernity. Furthermore, at a time when the Guild was increasingly sidelined within a movement that was itself isolated, how did *Outlook*’s contributors negotiate a vision of the modern that integrated the working-class housewives of the WCG?

³⁰⁶ CWS advertisements, *Woman* 20/09/1956, p.8; 07/06/1958, pp.51,60; 19/03/1960, p.69.

³⁰⁷ Gurney, ‘Battle’, p.984.

³⁰⁸ CP minutes, 13/05/1967, 27/05/1967.

³⁰⁹ CP minutes, 28/01/1967.

³¹⁰ Scott, *Feminism*, p.xii.

The magazine's relationship with the Labour Party shows one aspect of such negotiations. Scott investigates the Guild's connections with the Labour Party (and the Co-operative Party; the two were in a working partnership for many years) in the middle decades of the twentieth century.³¹¹ She demonstrates that the WCG leadership's increasing concern for party politics restricted the organization's brand of radical working-class feminism.³¹² Others also note that the tendency of Labour women – of which the WCG was just one group – to follow the party line limited their ambitions and achievements.³¹³ It is important to recognize, though, that women's organizations with political affiliations did not simply act as mouthpieces for the main party.³¹⁴ Even Scott acknowledges that measures designed to secure support for the Labour and Co-operative Parties were subjected to criticism in the 'Women's Pages' (*Outlook's* forerunner).³¹⁵

Outlook's partisan links were a distinctive characteristic, as the majority of women's periodicals – including *H&C* and *Woman* – remained avowedly non-party political, even if involved in political issues. However, links to the Co-operative movement were far more noticeable in the *Outlook* sample than the Guild's party political allegiances, partly due to Labour's failure to appeal to women voters during the 1950s.³¹⁶ The October 1964 issue most explicitly stated allegiances, with two items of party propaganda appearing. The first occupied the usual space of the 'Editor's Letter' on the opening page. As such editorials are 'the voice' of the magazine, this positioning reinforced the magazine's championing of Labour.³¹⁷ The content also reiterated this support: the headline 'Let's go with Labour!' was also the party's electoral slogan and the piece largely focused on criticizing the incumbent Conservative government.³¹⁸

³¹¹ Scott, *Feminism*, pp.5-6,193-197,205,222,231-237,270-271,276.

³¹² Scott, *Feminism*, p.5

³¹³ Beaumont, 'Movement', pp.267-268,274; ; Pat Thane, 'The Women of the British Labour Party and Feminism, 1906-1945', in Harold L Smith (ed.), *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot, 1990), p.140.

³¹⁴ Thane, 'Women', p.141; Wendy Pojmann, "'Join Us in Rebuilding Italy" Women's Associations, 1946-1963', *Journal of Women's History* 20 (2008), pp.83,93,96.

³¹⁵ Scott, *Feminism*, pp.199,206-209.

³¹⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, pp.4,264; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Exploring the Gender Gap: The Conservative Party and Women's Vote, 1945-1964', in Martin Francis and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (eds.), *The Conservatives and British Society 1880-1990* (Cardiff, 1996), pp.194-196,198,202-205; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Rationing, Austerity and the Conservative Party Recovery after 1945', *Historical Journal* 37 (1994), p.182; Beaumont, 'Movement', p.275.

³¹⁷ Winship, *Inside*, p.66.

³¹⁸ 'Let's Go With Labour!', *Outlook* 10/1964, p.1.



Figure 1.4 'Labour's Plans for the New Britain'.³¹⁹ The central image on the right-hand page shows Mrs Joan Baker, a former WCG national president standing as a Labour candidate.

The second piece was a double-page centre-spread concentrating on 'Labour's plans for the new Britain' (Figure 1.4). This propaganda formed part of Labour's campaign in a closely fought general election.³²⁰ The targeting of working-class housewives as voters indicates that notions of citizenship remained important in the magazine. Both items were explicit about the Guild/Labour relationship; the first claimed that many Guildswomen campaign for Labour and Co-operative candidates and the second showed a former WCG president standing for election. The desired outcome for Labour was to secure more votes, but such articles had benefits for *Outlook* too. By 1964, Labour's image was – unlike the Conservatives' – that of a 'modern' party³²¹, meaning that the Guild's Labour connections offered social capital and a way of positioning the organization as modern.

³¹⁹ 'Labour's Plans for the New Britain', *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.16-17.

³²⁰ Barberis, 'Introduction', p.286; Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xix; Chris Wrigley, 'Trade Unions and the 1964 General Election', *Contemporary British History* 21 (2007), p.333.

³²¹ Barberis 'Introduction', p.287; David Denver, 'The 1964 General Election: Explaining Voting Behaviour Then and Now', *Contemporary British History* 21 (2007), p.298; Steven Fielding, 'Rethinking Labour's 1964 Campaign', *Contemporary British History* 21 (2007), pp.309-324; Wrigley, 'Trade Unions', p.331; Thomas, 'The Real', p.232; Harriet Jones, "'New Conservatism'?: The Industrial Charter, Modernity and the Reconstruction of British Conservatism after the War", in Conekin et al (eds.), *Moments of Modernity*, pp.171-188.

Key elements in constructions of Labour as modern found in their wider campaign were also evident in the two *Outlook* pieces. Harold Wilson, for example, was – and remains – seen as crucial in creating this reinvigorated, modernized party image, hence his photograph was positioned prominently on *Outlook*'s opening page.³²² Languages of modernization featured in phrases such as 'Labour's plans for the *new* Britain', while comments that Britain was 'on the verge of a scientific revolution' allude to the centrality of science in understandings of the modern.³²³ The articles contrasted Labour's stance with the Conservatives, portrayed as backwards looking. For example, 'Let's go with Labour!' criticized the Conservatives on international affairs: they fail to realize the era of 'gun boat power politics' has gone 'and shame us by their [United Nations] voting record on such questions as South Africa, Angola, South-West Africa'.³²⁴ As in *H&C*, such statements reject imperial discourses in favour of an internationalist perspective – in this case symbolised by the UN.

A prominent subject in both Labour pieces and the 1964 election generally was housing.³²⁵ In 1963, the Profumo affair revealed dubious landlord practices in London, labelled 'Rachmanism'.³²⁶ The ensuing media and political interest in Rachmanism exposed the most pernicious effects of Conservative legislation liberalizing rent controls in the mid- to late-1950s³²⁷, as highlighted by the second Labour article: 'The 1956 Rent Act made the situation worse by enabling landlords to charge exorbitant rents on decontrolled property' printed in bold type.³²⁸ A similarly unfavourable attitude towards Tory housing policy was apparent elsewhere in *Outlook* too. In 1954, for example, an article referred to Guild opposition to the Conservatives' Housing (Rents and Repairs) Bill and the October 1962 issue contained two items criticising the new Rating and Valuation Act.³²⁹ These examples demonstrate that even when the Guild's party political allegiances were not stated, *Outlook* articulated pro-Labour views. The

³²² 'Let's Go', *Outlook* 10/1964, p.1; Barberis, 'Introduction', pp.285-287; Denver, 'Explaining', p.298; Fielding, 'Rethinking', pp.316-318,320-321; Martin Francis, 'The Labour Party: Modernisation and the Politics of Restraint', in Conekin et al (eds.), *Moments of Modernity*, p.170; Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xix; Wrigley, 'Trade Unions', p.331.

³²³ Emphasis mine. 'Let's Go', *Outlook* 10/1964, p.1; Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.46-79; Conekin, 'Here', pp.239-245; Giles, *Parlour*, pp.19-21; Judith Smart, 'The Politics of Consumption – The Housewives' Association in Southeastern Australia Before 1950', *Journal of Women's History* 18 (2006), p.14; Johnson, 'Worms', p.481.

³²⁴ 'Let's Go', *Outlook* 10/1964, p.1; Barberis, 'Introduction', p.288; Young, 'International', pp.356-358.

³²⁵ Jim Tomlinson, 'It's the Economy, Stupid! Labour and the Economy, circa 1964', *Contemporary British History* 21 (2007), pp.340-341.

³²⁶ John Davis, 'Rents and Race in 1960s London: New Light on Rachmanism', *Twentieth Century British History* 12 (2001), pp.69,90.

³²⁷ Davis, 'Rents', p.71.

³²⁸ 'Labour's Plans', *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.16-17.

³²⁹ 'Is It Any Use Talking?', *Outlook* 03/07/1954, p.5; 'A Closer Link with the Guild', *Outlook* 10/1962, p.1; 'The Rating Problem', *Outlook* 10/1962, pp.20-21.

expression of such views without any direct motivation from Labour suggests that the Guild – and *Outlook* – did not simply reiterate party political standpoints. A much broader identity and perspective dictated both engagement with issues and the terms of such engagement. Labour were part of this, but the Co-operative movement – especially CWS – were more dominant.

Conclusion

In ascertaining the ‘particular way of understanding the world’ offered in *H&C* and *Outlook*, this chapter provides the foundation for a range of issues that appear again in the study. The production contexts outlined here – such as the use of colour, the role of magazine writers such as Wyatt and Norbury and the possibility of editorial personas – figure throughout. Tensions are also important, especially disparities between and within each title’s three factions (producers; advertisers; readers), with later chapters demonstrating how such disparities created ambiguity. This emphasis on *H&C* and *Outlook* as women’s magazines does not obscure the influence of their organizational identities. Although, as Chapter Five discusses, there was some provision for the younger women who formed their secondary audience, *H&C* and *Outlook*’s distinct readerships – comprised largely of Institute members and Guildswomen – contrast with the enormous breadth of *Woman*’s readership. The following chapters explore the impact of this on the content and tone of the magazines.

As well as affecting their readerships, the organizational status of these magazines resulted in their rural and Co-operative perspectives. These perspectives were distinctive features: *H&C*’s rural outlook did not figure widely in other contemporary publications, while there is little evidence of a Co-operative standpoint in *Woman* or *H&C*. These rural and Co-operative perspectives were fundamental to the ‘particular way of understanding the world’ in *H&C* and *Outlook*. They influenced understandings of womanhood and femininity in the magazines, with different visions of ‘we women’ articulated; each chapter expands the diverse roles intrinsic to conceptions of the country housewife and the working-class housewife. These rural and Co-operative perspectives also affected understandings of what the modern was and how it was experienced, responded to and made sense of, creating alternative versions of modernity that have received little historical attention. This chapter has begun to analyse constructions of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook*. For example, Labour formed one aspect of *Outlook*’s vision of the modern, but it was not the most prominent Guild

allegiance. Later chapters further illustrate CWS dominance, showing that with the wider movement struggling to adapt to post-war consumption and becoming increasingly marginalized, CWS was vital in facilitating the Co-operative constructions of the modern visible in *Outlook*.

This chapter has introduced several topics central to both ideas of the modern and post-war British history. National identity, for instance, is a theme throughout the thesis: what contribution did conceptualizations of various countries make to understandings of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook*? The rejection of imperialist discourses in favour of other perspectives as shown in this chapter continues; Europe and notions of cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, receive more discussion. A number of chapters investigate the role of science in constructions of the modern, while the significance of housing – mentioned in relation to the 1964 election – is the initial focus of Chapter Two.

Chapter Two
The Housewife as Expert?
Housing and Consumer Education in *H&C* and *Outlook*

‘Everyone has the right to a decent home’ declared the *Outlook* article ‘Labour’s Plans for the New Britain’.³³⁰ There was widespread acceptance of the right to decent housing in the post-1945 era but there was a chasm between this belief and the reality of Britain’s housing situation.³³¹ Housing was an area of public concern throughout the period and, as the previous chapter shows, an important political issue in the 1964 election. This chapter begins by outlining the background to post-war housing debates, demonstrating older understandings of housing as an area of housewives’ – and their organizations’ – expertise. The second section considers issues prominent in contemporary housing debates and later literature on housing in the 1950s and 60s, including shortages, planning and tenure, examining the limited engagement with these issues in *H&C* and *Outlook* and the alternative perspectives within these magazines. These alternative perspectives build on the rural, Co-operative and gendered outlooks established in Chapter One, enhancing both understandings of post-war housing and key themes in British history. The third section further explores these perspectives in relation to the problems surrounding women and housing, and the solutions offered in the publications. Central to this is the theme of exclusion and belonging: the partial marginalization of women’s organizations and the concurrent growth of a consumer-based vision figure here. The implications of such changes become apparent in the final section. Moving from housing to consumer education, it reiterates notions of exclusion and investigates the inter-related concepts of expertise and education within the organizations and their magazines.

Literature on housing and the meanings of home emphasizes gender differences³³², often attributed to the experiences of housing that results from women’s domestic roles; WCG interest in housing, for instance, emerged from their

³³⁰ ‘Labour’s Plans’, *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.16-17.

³³¹ Sally MacDonald and Julia Porter, *Putting on the Style - Setting up Home in the 1950s* (London, 1990), *The Housing Crisis*. NB. This book does not contain page numbers, hence references refer to the chapter section instead.

³³² Helen Meller, ‘Gender, Citizenship and the Making of the Modern Environment’, in Darling and Whitworth (eds.), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England*, pp.16,20; Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.344.

understanding of the home as the site of housewives' working conditions.³³³ While some writers such as Alice Friedman contend that women have little influence over the patriarchal models of conventional housing design³³⁴, women's organizations had long worked to counter such exclusion through their involvement in debates about housing and built space.³³⁵ Since the late nineteenth century, such debates had formed an important aspect of women's active citizenship.³³⁶ During the inter-war period, women were highly active in these areas³³⁷: municipal housing provided a channel for the WCG and the NFWI vigorously campaigned for improvements to rural housing and water supplies.³³⁸ Andrews links NFWI inter-war concerns for housing with the movement's broader renegotiation of domesticity and its value:

the movement was able to claim an authority and validity to demand social reforms to improve rural houses from: the ideological significance placed by the NFWI on the home, their identification of domestic labour as both skilled and of high status and their appropriation of notions of Englishness...If rural homes were to be perceived as the heart of England...then, the NFWI members wanted the best material circumstances in which to fulfil these roles.³³⁹

During the war years, the views of women's organizations on housing gained national influence. Published in 1944, the *Dudley Report* was 'the major government report on the design of post-war houses...it was intended to do for post-war housing what the Tudor Walters Report of 1918 had done for inter-war housing'.³⁴⁰ Women's organizations including the NFWI and WCG gave evidence and had representatives on the report's committee.³⁴¹ This had major implications for the report's findings, offering perspectives on housing otherwise unrepresented by the committee's members. As Scott observes, 'The *Dudley Report* is strikingly sensitive to the daily routines of housework' because its committee included Guildswomen who were 'well qualified to

³³³ Gillian Scott, 'Workshops Fit for Homeworkers: The Women's Co-operative Guild and Housing Reform in mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', in Darling and Whitworth (eds.), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England*, p.166.

³³⁴ Alice T Friedman, 'Shifting the Paradigm: Houses Built for Women', in Joan Rothschild (ed.), *Design and Feminism: Re-visioning Spaces, Places and Everyday Things* (London, 1999), p.85.

³³⁵ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.92-93.

³³⁶ Meller, 'Gender', p.15.

³³⁷ Beaumont, 'Dilemmas', p.481; Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.421; Beaumont, 'Movement', p.264; Scott, 'Workshops', pp.166-169; Elizabeth Darling, "'The House that is a Woman's Book come True': The All-Europe House and Four Women's Spatial Practices in Inter-war England', in Darling and Whitworth (eds.), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England*, pp.122-140.

³³⁸ Scott, 'Workshops', p.167; Scott, *Feminism*, p.237; Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.xiii,65,79,83-90.

³³⁹ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.82. See also pp.81,97-98.

³⁴⁰ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1915-1985* 2nd edition (London, 1986), p.297.

³⁴¹ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.90,101; Burnett, *History*, p.298; Scott, 'Workshops', pp.171-176.

speak for housewives in general and working-class housewives in particular', having actually had 'first-hand experience of cleaning a kitchen'.³⁴²

The *Dudley Report* was also significant for the organizations themselves. Long-time NFWI and WCG demands – including 'that housewives should have a role in making housing policy' – 'now became mainstream and were adopted as national policy'.³⁴³ As well as incorporating the housewife's perspective into the final report, thus denoting 'official ratification' of the organizations' views, the Dudley committee treated 'the housewife' as an expert.³⁴⁴ The *Dudley Report* is therefore hugely symbolic, signifying the moment when the beliefs of the women's organizations – their re-negotiation of the meanings of domesticity and their claims to women's particular expertise that results from their domestic roles – gained national acceptance and official recognition. This is the moment when women's organizations and the women they represented most clearly achieved a sense of belonging; official visions of post-war reconstruction incorporated these organizations and their members on the terms that they valued.

The context of 1940s was central to this. During that decade, the housewife was a figure of political importance, essential to the war effort and post-war reconstruction.³⁴⁵ As Zweiniger-Bargielowska argues, 'As a result of women's principal role in the austerity policy domesticity became a site of political and economic power and a basis of female citizenship'.³⁴⁶ Many believed that the *Beveridge Report* also recognized housewives as equal citizens based on their domestic roles; in response to Beveridge's proposals, *H&C* declared that 'housewives have come into their own at last!'³⁴⁷ This mood did not last, as demonstrated by *Woman*. In the late 1940s, the magazine tried to reconcile 'we the nation' and 'we women', but 'in the pages of magazines after 1953 the nation was left to look after itself'.³⁴⁸ This shift coincides with the cessation of austerity measures; the end of rationing signaling the passing of the housewife's moment. Although there was 'official acknowledgement on the part of the state of the role of women's organisations active in Britain in the 1960s'³⁴⁹, the sense of belonging and recognition of the housewife-as-expert subsided.

³⁴² Scott, 'Workshops', p.176.

³⁴³ Scott, 'Workshops', p.179.

³⁴⁴ Scott, 'Workshops', p.179; Ravetz, 'View', p.199.

³⁴⁵ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.119-120,123; Giles, *Parlour*, pp.129-139; Scott, 'Workshops', p.179; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, pp.2,99-100,128,154-156.

³⁴⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, p.100.

³⁴⁷ Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.425.

³⁴⁸ Winship, *Inside*, pp.33,35.

³⁴⁹ Beaumont, 'Housewives', p.59.

The extent of this shift is apparent by the time of the next major government report on housing. In contrast to the *Dudley Report*, the 1961 *Parker Morris Report* did not emphasize housewives, reflecting the ‘different climate for women at this time’.³⁵⁰ Additional factors exacerbated this shift. During the post-1945 period, the voluntary sector was somewhat marginalized. As the following sections show, this was not absolute exclusion, but the culture of professional expertise that had begun to emerge in the inter-war years became came to dominate. This is important to understandings of the post-war modern; as Conekin et al state, ‘the expansion of professional expertise has been cast as a defining feature of the post-war years...Such men and women were frequently portrayed as the torch-bearers of modernity’.³⁵¹ The significance of ‘the professional’ and professionalism to post-war expertise created challenges for the women’s organizations and their publications: the housewife-as-expert discourse remained important within women’s organizations, combining their positive assessments of domesticity with ideas of active citizenship, but this concept failed to retain national recognition and official acceptance.

Another aspect of this was the rise of the Welfare State and government expansion, also affecting the ability of women to contribute to housing policy and debates.³⁵² As Andrews observes,

The expansion of the welfare state and Government...brought with it a mushrooming of both local and central Government experts. Official experts took over a variety of welfare issues which previously been the sphere of expertise of women in the NFWI and similar organisations.³⁵³

The ambiguity surrounding housewifery and difficulties in locating the housewife’s role within conventional terminology exacerbated this marginalization. Her unpaid status positioned the housewife as an amateur, therefore non-professional. However, women’s organizations disputed this view. Due to their constructions of housewifery as a skilled profession, they understood the housewife as unpaid but still professional. Such arguments are a theme in the rest of this chapter, which further considers tensions surrounding the concept of expertise. Later sections demonstrate that the housewife-as-expert discourse was subject to reconfiguration, with *H&C* presenting the housewife as

³⁵⁰ Ravetz, ‘View’, p.200.

³⁵¹ Conekin et al, ‘Introduction’, p.14. See also: Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.34,57; Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xx. For the inter-war period, see: Elizabeth Darling, ‘What the Tenants Think of Kensal House: Experts’ Assumptions Versus Inhabitants’ Realities in the Modern Home’, *Journal of Architectural Education* 53 (2000), pp.167-177.

³⁵² Darling, ‘House’, pp.129,137-140; Meller, ‘Gender’, pp.16,26-27,29.

³⁵³ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.149.

a professional figure who could both contribute expertise *and* receive further education in order to maintain and develop her skills.

This chapter's attention to the increasingly two-way process of expertise alters the focus on women's organizations and housing in the 1950s and 60s. For example, Andrews discusses the NFWI's continued involvement in housing throughout the 1940s and beyond although – as with other aspects of the organization's activities – the focus is on declining radicalism compared to their earlier housing campaigns.³⁵⁴ This chapter does not dispute this view. It is more concerned, though, with exploring perceptions within the organizational magazines: if previous opportunities were diminishing due to state growth and professionalism, how did the organizations adapt to the post-war modern? *H&C* and *Outlook* are ideal sources for such investigation because, as Elizabeth Darling argues, despite the wider marginalization of women's influence over built space, 'there was one place left which retained its power: the space of the text'.³⁵⁵

H&C, Outlook and post-war housing

The organizational magazines reveal campaigning and active citizenship on housing issues all through the 1950s and 60s. In 1955, for example, *Outlook*'s Editor encouraged protest against the new rates system, arguing that 'I think there is an opportunity here for guild branches to do a useful job. Why not arrange a public meeting'.³⁵⁶ In 1964, a *H&C* advertisement by the National House-Builders Registration Council referred to the WI raising concerns over building standards.³⁵⁷ This continued activity is perhaps unsurprising, given the scale of housing problems in post-war Britain. Wartime devastation, combined with a shortfall in investment³⁵⁸, meant that a range of difficulties persisted throughout the years of this study. As Langhamer highlights, for some, the desire for a modern home remained unfulfilled: 'Even at the end of the 1950s significant sections of the British population remained excluded from the home-centred society'.³⁵⁹

One aspect of this was a sheer shortage of housing stock.³⁶⁰ The Guild had been aware of this during the war; Scott writes that 'WCG leaders were in the vanguard of

³⁵⁴ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.80,93-97,118-120,123,148-152,160-161.

³⁵⁵ Darling, 'House', p.140.

³⁵⁶ 'A Closer Link with the Guild,' *Outlook* 10/1962, p.1.

³⁵⁷ NHBRC advertisement, *H&C* 10/1964, p.359.

³⁵⁸ Tomlinson, 'Denied', p.243.

³⁵⁹ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.343. See also pp.342-345,347-349.

³⁶⁰ Judy Attfield, 'The Empty Cocktail Cabinet: Display in the Mid-century British Domestic Interior', in Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, p.85; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, The Parlour.

those arguing that the acute housing crisis caused by the bombing had major implications for post-war reconstruction'.³⁶¹ Women's magazines acknowledged the repercussions of housing shortages. In 1956, an *Outlook* article sub-titled 'No 1 Human problem of to-day' gave advice on living with one's in-laws.³⁶² As late as 1969, the same topic was covered in *Woman's* sister publication, *Woman Bride and Home*, while in the same year, *H&C* carried an advertisement for Shelter's *National Campaign for the Homeless*.³⁶³ One of *Outlook's* Labour articles indicates the extent to which the shortage became a political issue: 'Yet even the people who have to live in slums are luckier than those who have no home at all...Every council has long waiting lists for houses, yet council house building has been halved during the thirteen years of Conservative rule.'³⁶⁴ This comment also alludes to another aspect of the shortage: slums. Slum demolition and re-housing had long been the focus of efforts to improve working-class housing and living conditions³⁶⁵, but existing measures were proving inadequate and slums continued to grow throughout the 1950s.³⁶⁶

Aside from these references, the sample for all three magazines contained little on slums and the housing shortage. This limited attention – an absence of discussion about such issues – is indicative of the marginalization of women's organizations within housing policy debates during from the 1950s. Planning – another major narrative in post-war British history³⁶⁷ – only appeared in a 1963 *H&C* report about a NFWI member who attended local planning inquiries and 'helped to prevent some smaller period residences being demolished in favour of petrol stations'.³⁶⁸

However, within other references to housing, the tone was not one of marginalization. The case of new houses illustrates this. Mrs Bates, an *Outlook* reader and the 'owner of a new house', wrote to the magazine with suggestions that would improve her home, including the re-positioning of outer doors on the leeward side of the wind: 'I am sure that most housewives would appreciate a more sheltered approach to the dustbin from the back door'.³⁶⁹ As well as revealing ambiguous feelings towards

³⁶¹ Scott, 'Workshops', p.170.

³⁶² 'Living with Mother-in-law' *Outlook* 14/01/1956, pp.16-17.

³⁶³ 'Letter From the Editor', *Woman* 27/09/1969, p.7; Shelter advertisement, *H&C* 10/1969, p.392.

³⁶⁴ 'Labour's Plans' *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.16-17; Davis, 'Rents', pp.72,91.

³⁶⁵ Tim Putnam, 'The Modern Home and the Evolution of the House', *Journal of Architecture* 9 (2004), p.424; Darling, 'Tenants', p.168.

³⁶⁶ Burnett, *History*, p.288; Davis, 'Rents', pp.72,74.

³⁶⁷ Peter Mandler, 'New Towns for Old: The Fate of the Town Centre', in Conekin et al (eds.), *Moments of Modernity*, p.219.

³⁶⁸ 'Denman Postbag', *H&C* 04/1963, p.126.

³⁶⁹ Mrs Bates, *Outlook* 04/1962, pp.14-16.

new housing – a common reaction³⁷⁰ – Mrs Bates’ comments show that the housewife-as-expert discourse did not vanish; it continued to inform understandings within the pages of the magazine, even if not outside of it. This is particularly noticeable when compared to remarks from a *Woman* reader, whose statement that ‘I was delighted with the good-sized airing cupboard in our new home’ suggests a more passive acceptance of the provisions made.³⁷¹

Mrs Bates’ letter indicates that rather than simply attributing limited attention to key issues to NFWI and WCG marginalization from housing debates, the situation was more complex. The absence of certain debates and issues in *H&C* and *Outlook* was not just a reaction to wider changes such as the rise of professionalism and state expansion. Engagement with housing issues also reflects the specific perspectives within the magazines: discussions were on their own terms, with different priorities and preferences to those expressed in the literature on housing. The concept of a ‘home of your own’ underlines the extent to which these magazines contained their own priorities and agenda. A concept that resonates throughout much of the twentieth century in Britain, ‘a home of your own’ was a hugely important ideal and aspiration in the post-war decades.³⁷² It has been subject to widespread historiographical investigation, with much work concentrating on attitudes towards and constructions of different forms of tenure.³⁷³

Tenure underwent a massive shift in the post-1945 period, as Table 2.1 demonstrates. Such changes are visible in ‘Labour’s Plans for the New Britain’, which asserts that:

³⁷⁰ Judy Attfield, ‘Inside Pram Town: A Case Study of Harlow House Interiors, 1951-61’, in Attfield and Kirkham (eds.), *A View From the Interior*, pp.215-238; Ioanna Theocharopoulou, ‘The Housewife, the Builder, and the Desire for a *Polykatoikia* Apartment in Postwar Athens’, in Heynen and Baydar (eds.), *Negotiating Domesticity*, p.70.

³⁷¹ Mrs RT, *Woman*, 05/10/1968, p.7.

³⁷² Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, pp.349-350; Webster, *Imagining*, p.165.

³⁷³ Burnett, *History*, pp.217-330; Cieraad, ‘Introduction’, p.5; Gary Cross, ‘The Suburban Weekend. Perspectives on a Vanishing Twentieth-century Dream’, in Silverstone (ed.), *Visions of Suburbia*, pp.108-131; Craig M Gurney, ‘“We’ve Got Friends who Live in Council Houses”: Power and Resistance in Home Ownership’, in Jeff Hearn and Sasha Roseneil (eds.), *Consuming Cultures – Power and Resistance* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp.43-68; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting, Room At the Top*; Mark Clapson, ‘Working-class Women’s Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates in England since 1919’, *Twentieth Century British History* 10 (1999), p.346; Daniel Miller, ‘Appropriating the State on the Council Estate’, in Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, pp.43-55; Scott Oram, ‘“Constructing Contemporary”: Common-sense Approaches to “Going Modern” in the 1950s’, in Sparke and McKellar (eds.), *Interior Design and Identity*, p.188 fn9. For a pre-1945 reference, see: Darling, ‘The House’, p.125.

A Labour Government will bring down interest rates, offer 100 per cent mortgages to those wishing to buy their own homes...The Rent Act will be repealed, and tenants will be protected against exorbitant rents and eviction. More money, at low interest rates, will be made available to local authorities to enable them to build more houses.³⁷⁴

This statement reverses Labour’s previous commitment to municipalize all rented housing.³⁷⁵ These 1964 plans construct a hierarchy with owner-occupation at the top, followed by private renting and *then* local authority housing. The caption accompanying the article’s image (Figure 1.4) contradicts this stance, positioning public sector housing above other forms of tenure: ‘A Labour Government will build more houses, bring down interest rates and protect tenants against exorbitant rents’.³⁷⁶ However, the hierarchy in the text prevailed: the Labour Government’s 1965 White Paper on housing ‘specifically recognized owner-occupation as the “normal” tenure and, by implication, relegated public housing to the position of a residual, short-term expedient’.³⁷⁷

Table 2:1 Tenure in England and Wales, 1945-1983³⁷⁸

	Owner-occupation	Rented from local authorities	Rented from private landlords
1945	26%	-	-
1947	-	12%	58%
1961	-	-	29%
1966	47%	-	-
1983	63%	29%	11%

This change in priorities represents a shift from accentuating the collective in the initial post-war period to greater individualism. Gurney claims that while the Co-operative movement struggled with this change, Labour were able to make this transition.³⁷⁹ This move from the collective to the individual – identified in a range of literature on Britain in the 1950s and 60s³⁸⁰ – links to another important historiographical theme: changing configurations of social class during the same period. Some claim that Britain was never as rigidly class-ridden as is often believed, but as Pat Thane notes ‘This was the first generation in which working-class people could have

³⁷⁴ ‘Labour’s Plans’, *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.16-17.

³⁷⁵ Davis, ‘Rents’, p.89.

³⁷⁶ ‘Labour’s Plans’, *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.16-17.

³⁷⁷ Burnett, *History*, p.287.

³⁷⁸ Where no figure is given, this indicates an absence of data. Burnett, *History*, pp.282-283; Harrison, *Seeking*, pp.161-164.

³⁷⁹ Gurney, ‘Battle’, p.959

³⁸⁰ For example, see: Mort, ‘Striptease’, p.47.

some hope that social mobility might be available to their children'.³⁸¹ Numerous contemporary discourses supported such ambitions, from the *Beveridge Report's* presentation of the classless housewife to sociological debates about embourgeoisement and the affluent worker. The change in Labour's hierarchy of tenure is part of such discourses, with owner-occupation becoming increasingly widespread and seen as the norm. However, social class divisions remained. Martin Francis, for example, shows that despite Labour's aim of classlessness, the party still felt it had to portray a working-class 'authenticity'.³⁸² Rather than classlessness, therefore, we see a period marked by shifting notions of social class and its associated values.

Returning to the issue of tenure, aside from this Labour article, there were few explicit references. Public sector housing is a conspicuous absence, particularly in *Outlook*. The magazine's pages give little evidence of Labour's support for social housing in the 1950s; *Woman* – which had no ideological commitment to the concept – contained more remarks, with council houses mentioned in two readers' anecdotes.³⁸³ There was some attention to private renting in *Outlook*. In 1955, a WCG member wrote about her branch's petition against the Rent Act, suggesting that opposition to decontrol and other Tory legislation provided opportunities for active citizenship.³⁸⁴ Only one letter made an outright declaration of owner-occupation, with a reader expressing her pleasure in buying a house after years of living in accommodation tied to her husband's job as a policeman.³⁸⁵ *H&C* was similarly reticent about tenure, with the only assertions of owner-occupation in a piece on renovation and 'Buying a House', listed as a new Denman College course for 1966.³⁸⁶ This implies that in contrast to the hierarchy articulated in the Labour article, most contributors to these magazines attached few advantages to owner-occupation. Legal ownership is not always the primary means through which women achieve a sense of ownership of their home; as Ruth Madigan and Moira Munro argue, women gain less from their form of tenure because advantages, such as capital gains increases, bring fewer rewards for them in comparison with

³⁸¹ James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall, 'Introduction – Understanding British Society', in Obelkevich and Catterall (eds.), *Understanding Post-War British Society*, p.5; Thane, 'Population Politics', p.131.

³⁸² Francis, 'Labour', p.154.

³⁸³ Small feature on a house move, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.75; 'Personally Yours', *Woman* 24/02/1962, p.5.

³⁸⁴ 'My Rent's Gone Up', *Outlook* 01/01/1955, p.27.

³⁸⁵ Mrs Sarah Donaldson, *Outlook* 10/1966, pp.29-30.

³⁸⁶ "'Ours" Part I', *H&C* 05/1954, pp.165,167; Denman College course list, *H&C* 10/1965, p.379.

men.³⁸⁷ Instead, as later chapters consider, women develop alternative strategies of ‘ownership’.³⁸⁸

This gendered perspective – an approach to issues developing from women’s specific experiences – is noticeable in these magazines throughout the post-war period. As well as tenure, depictions of types of housing illustrate this, with women’s familial roles – the experience and expectations surrounding marriage and motherhood – creating a preference for houses rather than flats. Although Sally Macdonald and Julia Porter argue that 1950s magazine advice ‘tended to idealise bedsitland’³⁸⁹, this was not the case in these three publications. Editorial content only occasionally referred to flats. For example, *H&C* mentioned YWCA involvement in designing ‘flatlets’ for the Ideal Home Exhibition and *Outlook* included a product recommendation for ‘flat-dwellers’.³⁹⁰ The photograph of a local authority block of flats in one of *Outlook*’s Labour articles (Figure 1.4) was unique in representing high-rise buildings; despite contemporary debates about such developments, there were no other remarks about this.³⁹¹

Flats appeared most regularly in magazine short stories. Fiction portrayed flat-dwellers as exceptions to the norm of marital-based family life, such as ‘spinsters’ or, more often, young unmarried women.³⁹² As Giles observes about inter-war magazine fiction, spaces such as bed-sits allowed the reader (a professional housewife) to ‘try on’ the identity of the fictional protagonist (young single women working in cities) and practise consumer skills.³⁹³ Flat dwelling denoted a life-stage before marriage, not an alternative lifestyle. In a *Woman* short story, the move from flat to house was even part of the transition to married family life: the protagonist lived in a flat but in anticipation of her forthcoming marriage had placed a down payment on a new house with her fiancé.³⁹⁴ Other elements of the magazines associated houses with family too. A *H&C* advertisement for Singer sewing machines, for instance, situated ‘the Cottage home’ and ‘the Bachelor flat’ as opposites; another firm extolled the virtues of underlay for ‘Flat-living people’ and ‘People with children’.³⁹⁵

³⁸⁷ Ruth Madigan and Moira Munro, ‘Ideal Homes: Gender and Domestic Architecture’, in Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, p.25. See also: Johnson, ‘Worms’, p.487; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.170-173.

³⁸⁸ Gurney, ‘Friends’, pp.44,59.

³⁸⁹ Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, The Landlord’s Choice.

³⁹⁰ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 04/1955, p.155; ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.28.

³⁹¹ ‘Labour’s Plans’, *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.16-17; Harrison, *Seeking*, pp.152-154; Mandler, ‘New Towns’, pp.221,225.

³⁹² For examples, see: ‘Rich Man, Poor Man’, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, pp.2-3,23,25,32; ‘Passport to Happiness’, *Outlook* 06/11/1954, pp.2-4,27,29.

³⁹³ Giles, *Parlour*, p.128.

³⁹⁴ ‘Sweet Rapture’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, pp.15-17,18,20.

³⁹⁵ Singer advertisement, *H&C* 10/1957, p.296; Duralay advertisement, *H&C* 10/1964, inside cover.

The preference for houses rather than flats, particularly amongst women, has been widely noted³⁹⁶, and often attributed to a desire for privacy. These examples do not deny this, but indicate that an emphasis on family life was also crucial – with houses regarded as the ideal site for family life.³⁹⁷ As a character in a *H&C* serial tells her daughter: ‘These smart flats weren’t built for babies...you can’t beat a bit of garden when there’s a baby’.³⁹⁸ This reiterates the importance of the family and women’s relational identities to understandings of womanhood in these magazines. As well as active citizens campaigning about housing, the NFWI and WCG publications constructed women as wives and mothers. The following section further considers this combination of identities and the influence of a gendered perspective on the treatment of housing issues, exploring specific housing problems and solutions identified in the magazines.

Problems and solutions

Due to the housing shortage, there was enormous demand for new houses in the post-war era; by 1960, almost 25% of England’s housing stock had been built since 1945.³⁹⁹ A corollary to this was the widespread growth of new housing estates and new towns, with a range of issues related to these developments. This section investigates these issues and others, further demonstrating that the engagement with housing in these publications requires understanding on their own terms, giving recognition to their gendered perspective rather than assessing them on the terms dictated by contemporary debates and later literature. In addition, the section shows that despite the wider marginalization of the housewife-as-expert discourse, this concept continued to resonate within *H&C* and *Outlook*, with women’s organizations being one source of solutions to housing problems. The section also examines other sources, particularly the growth of consumer solutions.

Many accounts of housing in the 1950s and 60s regard new towns as one of the most significant post-1945 developments. Contemporary commentators linked new towns and estates to changing conceptions of social class in the years after WW2,

³⁹⁶ Clapson, ‘Moving’, p.365; Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.346; Webster, *Imagining*, p.170.

³⁹⁷ Burnett, *History*, p.302; Clapson, ‘Experiences’, p.357; Hilda Heynen, ‘Modernity and Domesticity: Tensions and Contradictions’, in Heynen and Baydar (eds.), *Negotiating Domesticity*, p.19.

³⁹⁸ ‘Lychford-London Return’, *H&C* 10/1955, p.371.

³⁹⁹ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.159.

expressing fears about the decline of working-class traditions and the supposed commercialization, Americanization and homogenization of British culture.⁴⁰⁰

As with analyses of the suburbs, though, historians have begun to move away from purely negative assessments, examining the diversity of experience in both new towns and new estates⁴⁰¹: Langhamer, for example, states that ‘Evidence from Birmingham, Salford and Oxford also emphasizes working-class approval of postwar estate life’.⁴⁰²

There is little specifically on new towns in *H&C* and *Outlook*; the latter, for instance, contained one article on Welwyn Garden City – a much older form of the new town – and letter about Harlow New Town.⁴⁰³ This absence is typical of the magazines’ silences around contemporary housing issues (shortages; slums; tenure) and reinforces claims that women’s organizations were no longer prominent contributors to housing debates from the 1950s. However, both publications mentioned new towns and estates in relation to issues important to their organizational identities. For example, the NFWI and WCG saw these places as sites for membership growth. In *Outlook*, a Guild canvasser claimed that ‘Much of my success has been from housing estates’ and a member of the NFWI executive committee commented in *H&C* that ‘We must bring in women from the new towns’.⁴⁰⁴

New towns and estates also featured within the discourse of active citizenship that had long been central to the ideologies of women’s organizations. In these cases, active citizenship took the form of community-building, a role for women and their organizations noted in the literature on new housing.⁴⁰⁵ A 1963 article about recruitment highlighted WCG involvement in forging social connections. Talking about rapidly expanding urban areas such as Luton, a Guild field-worker believed that the organization could both flourish and play an important role in

the vast new housing estates that are springing up...where young mothers tied down by their children, cut off from their former friends and not yet closely acquainted with their new neighbours, feel isolated in their own homes and welcome the human contact that the guild offers.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁰ Webster, *Imagining*, pp.xii,xiv,67,70-71,80-83,86.

⁴⁰¹ Clapson, ‘Experiences’, p.345; Cross, ‘Suburban’, pp.108-131; Theocharopoulou, ‘*Polykatoikia*’, pp.65-82.

⁴⁰² Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.349.

⁴⁰³ ‘Making a Community’, *Outlook* 08/05/1954, pp.8-9,11; Leah Manning, *Outlook* 06/11/1954, pp.8-9.

⁴⁰⁴ ‘Making New Members’, *Outlook* 10/1962, pp.8-9; ‘“At Home” with the Executive’, *H&C* 04/1966, p.141.

⁴⁰⁵ Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.352; Clapson, ‘Moving’, p.364.

⁴⁰⁶ ‘They Prefer the Guild to Television’, *Outlook* 04/1963, p.5.

Outlook contained acknowledgement of the NFWI's parallel rural role, with a fictional reference to the WI integrating a newcomer into her village community.⁴⁰⁷ *H&C* fiction alluded to community-building too, with a 1956 short story stating that 'far-flung neighbours' were bought together by regular branch meetings.⁴⁰⁸

The comments made in relation to community-building reveal some of the difficulties linked to housing, in new areas and in existing communities. The NFWI and WCG tried to address such difficulties as part of their efforts to improve the lives of their members and these endeavours formed another aspect of the active citizenship discourse. As the remarks of the Guild field-worker imply, a major difficulty was that of loneliness and isolation. A theme in many histories of suburbia, housing estates and new towns, the association of women and loneliness is widespread⁴⁰⁹, often blamed on the privatized nature of domesticity; rather than communal activities, each housewife works alone in their own home: as a Harlow New Town housewife remembered, 'I thought I was the only person on earth'.⁴¹⁰

A number of historians argue that the lack of familiarity with one's location resulted in feelings of loneliness, with isolation being the result of the move to an unfamiliar area rather than specific neuroses connected to suburban or new town life.⁴¹¹ Evidence from *Outlook* verifies this; a fictional protagonist attributes her self-pity to being 'left alone in a strange district', while the Guild field-worker perceived the loneliness of young mothers on 'vast new housing estates' as the product of them being 'cut off from their former friends and not yet closely acquainted with their new neighbours'.⁴¹² In *H&C*, on the other hand, isolation was the result of rural location. A 1955 reader's letter mentioned the long walk undertaken by many attending Institute activities, with physical distance creating isolation from other country housewives.⁴¹³ In both publications, the respective groups represented the solution to isolation. Membership of organizations actively involved in community-building, as the NFWI

⁴⁰⁷ 'A Change of Heart', *Outlook* 10/1965, pp.10-11,15,27.

⁴⁰⁸ 'The Green Beret', *H&C* 04/1956, pp.129,131.

⁴⁰⁹ Franklin, 'Variations', p.64; Barbara Knecht, "'Special Needs" and Housing Design: Myths/Realities/Opportunities', in Joan Rothschild (eds.), *Design and Feminism*, p.105; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, *New Town Blues*; Susana Torre, 'Expanding the Urban Design Agenda: A Critique of the New Urbanism', in Rothschild (ed.), *Design and Feminism*, p.35; Webster, *Imagining*, p.170; White, *Magazines*, p.164.

⁴¹⁰ Attfield, 'Pram Town', p.218.

⁴¹¹ Clapson, 'Experiences', p.349; Attfield, 'Pram Town', p.218.

⁴¹² 'I'll Remember You', *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.2-4,13-15,25-26; 'They Prefer the Guild to Television', *Outlook* 04/1963, p.5.

⁴¹³ Frances Starte, *H&C* 04/1955, p.151.

and WCG were, provided a network of friendship, activities and interests; for women who were ‘far-flung neighbours’, there were few other opportunities to socialize.⁴¹⁴

An additional remedy to alleviate problems of isolation was transport.⁴¹⁵ As with loneliness, lack of transport – public and private – has been especially an issue for women.⁴¹⁶ Campaigns to improve rural public transport were part of NFWI efforts to address the difficulties and isolation facing countrywomen. Their particular status as country housewives was fundamental to claiming expertise in this area, allowing them to contribute to policy debates; as well as appearing in a television programme about bus transport, a 1960 *H&C* report claimed that WI members collected details of local bus services and presented this information to the Ministry of Transport in an interview.⁴¹⁷

Such claims indicate that the concept of the country-housewife-as-expert retained influence in certain areas of policy-making. However, private modes of transport became progressively more important from the 1950s: the number of cars in use in Britain rose fivefold between 1950 and 1970, with half the nation’s households owning one or more cars by 1966.⁴¹⁸ Discussions of transport in *H&C* demonstrate this shift. During the 1950s, there were only limited allusions to private motoring, as in one company’s promotion of their ‘chamois for cars or windows’.⁴¹⁹ The frequency of references increased in line with rising levels of car ownership, most noticeably in advertising for motor-related products such as car mats⁴²⁰ and a 1961 advertisement for the car manufacturer Daf. The image showed a woman driver with three smiling children in the car – like many advertisements at this time, underlining women’s role as mothers. The accompanying text emphasized the independence that the vehicle offered, a common theme in literature on private motoring.⁴²¹

The increasing prominence of the car, a symbol of modernity⁴²², reveals attempts to bring aspects of the modern that were currently missing – such as transport – to the countryside. There was little attention to cars in *Outlook*. The policy of only advertising and promoting goods with Co-operative availability may have been one

⁴¹⁴ ‘The Green Beret’, *H&C* 04/1956, pp.129,131; Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.xi,151; Beaumont, ‘Citizens’, p.417.

⁴¹⁵ Clapson, ‘Experiences’, p.356; Sean O’Connell, ‘Motoring and Modernity’, in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds.), *Twentieth-Century Britain* 2nd edition (Harlow, 2007), p.120.

⁴¹⁶ Clapson, ‘Experiences’, pp.352,355-357.

⁴¹⁷ ‘News of the Month’, *H&C* 04/1960, pp.121-122.

⁴¹⁸ Harrison, *Seeking*, pp.13,136,137; Clapson, ‘Experiences’, p.356.

⁴¹⁹ John P Milner advertisement, *H&C* 04/1958, p.114.

⁴²⁰ For example, see: Sentry Car Mat advertisement, *H&C* 04/1966, p.162.

⁴²¹ Daf advertisement, *H&C* 04/1961, p.126; O’Connell, ‘Motoring’, p.120.

⁴²² O’Connell, ‘Motoring’, pp.117-119,121.

factor behind this; the widespread provision of public transport in urban areas was another. Due to insufficient public transport in the countryside, the car became an integral element of constructions of rural modernity, although not without tensions emerging between the publication's producers, advertisers and readers. Six months after the Daf advertisement, a reader complained that too many Institute events required a car for attendance.⁴²³ As well as indicating continued problems with the availability of transport, this grievance discloses a tension within the magazine: whatever the advertisers' appeal, this did not necessarily translate into readers' experiences. This specific conflict reflects the gendered ambiguity of both cars and driving. Motoring was widely associated with masculinity, with relatively few women driving; even in the mid-1960s, women held only 13% of driving licences.⁴²⁴

There were also other tensions. Members' concerns about road planning – seen in the earlier example of resistance to a proposed petrol station – hint at opposition to the expansion of roads; the impact of motoring on the countryside had long been an area of controversy.⁴²⁵ However, other *H&C* evidence shows that the NFWI broadly endorsed and even encouraged driving in the 1960s. There were references to motoring-related activities at branch level, while the movement's official diary contained information on punctures to assist the 'WI motorist'.⁴²⁶ From October 1968, *H&C* featured a series of motoring articles, providing advice on driving and basic car maintenance – a trend seen in women's magazines from the mid-1950s onwards.⁴²⁷

The issue of transport exposes tensions between the collective and the individual in these magazines. On the one hand, there were the organizations, campaigning for collective measures to solve problems. On the other, there were advertisers offering individual solutions. Despite readers' continued lack of access to automobiles, the organizational embrace of the motor car suggests a shift from the collective to the individual, as seen in Labour's changing housing priorities. This development created a tension within *H&C* and *Outlook* that reflects their status as the publications of women's organizations: by their very nature, magazines address individuals, yet these magazines were part of a collective culture.

The shift from the collective to the individual is further apparent in representations of utility supplies. For many years, the housing concerns of women's

⁴²³ A Crouch, *H&C* 10/1961, p.352.

⁴²⁴ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.136; O'Connell, 'Motoring', p.117; Sparke, *Pink*, pp.198-199.

⁴²⁵ O'Connell, 'Motoring', p.121.

⁴²⁶ 'Better Driving', *H&C* 04/1962, pp.121-122; Jubilee Diary 1965, *H&C* 04/1964, p.137; 'Advertising Extra', *H&C* 10/1965, p.394.

⁴²⁷ 'Woman Awheel', *H&C* 10/1968, p.377; 04/1969, p.155; White, *Magazines*, p.162.

organizations included calls for mains provision of gas, electricity, water and sewage.⁴²⁸ Andrews, for example, establishes that NFWI campaigning for improved water, electricity and sewage supplies was ‘intrinsic to demands for improved rural housing’ and part of their efforts to ease ‘the burden of domestic labour’ on country housewives.⁴²⁹ The housewife’s domestic tasks also informed the Guild’s position on such utilities. Electricity was regarded as ‘one of the greatest aids to the alleviation of drudgery’ and without it – and other supplies, such as gas and hot and cold running water – many domestic innovations and technologies remained unavailable to the housewife.⁴³⁰

Such arguments were widely accepted by 1945; the *Dudley Report* envisaged a modern home planned around the supply of such utilities.⁴³¹ Despite this acceptance, there were shortfalls in provision. In 1951, 6% of households were without piped water and a further 14% shared facilities. In the late 1950s, 5% of households remained without wiring for electricity.⁴³² Even in 1971, ‘one-eighth of all dwellings still lacked at least one of the basic amenities’.⁴³³ All three publications recognized that these shortfalls especially affected the countryside: each referred to the continued absence of mains connection in rural areas.⁴³⁴ A 1954 *H&C* article on property renovation reiterated the extent to which country housewives lacked guaranteed access to electricity: the writer’s emphasis on its importance to her family – ‘For with us electricity is a “must”’ – suggests that mains connection was still not universally expected.⁴³⁵

As well as collective campaigns for improvements, there were individual solutions. In advertisements placed in *H&C* and *Woman*, companies exploited these shortfalls in provisions by presenting their own products as compensating for lack of mains supplies. For instance, *Woman* contained advertisements for water heaters that provided hot water without the need for a more extensive heating system. These advertisements used languages of modernization: ‘living modern’, ‘as modern as

⁴²⁸ Meller, ‘Gender’, p.21; Rebecca Pulju, ‘Consumers for the Nation – Women, Politics, and Consumer Organization in France, 1944-1965’, *Journal of Women’s History* 18 (2006), p.75.

⁴²⁹ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.87-88. See also: pp.55-57,80,91-98,118,148-151,160-161.

⁴³⁰ Scott, ‘Workshops’, p.168. See also: Cynthia Cockburn and Ruža Fürst-Dilić, ‘Introduction: Looking for the Gender/Technology Relation’, in Cynthia Cockburn and Ruža Fürst-Dilić (eds.), *Bringing Technology Home – Gender and Technology in a Changing Europe* (Buckingham, 1994), p.14.

⁴³¹ Scott, ‘Workshops’, pp.175-176.

⁴³² Burnett, *History*, p.288.

⁴³³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Housewifery’, p.159.

⁴³⁴ ‘Committee Woman’, *Outlook* 14/07/1956, pp.6-7; ‘Today in the Kitchen’, *H&C* 10/1958, pp.297-298; ‘Buying For the Home’, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.21.

⁴³⁵ “‘Ours’ Part I’, *H&C* 05/1954, pp.165,167.

tomorrow', 'get up to date' and 'it's the modern method'.⁴³⁶ Such phrases underline the association of hot water with domestic appliances, science and technology, all of which were central to ideas about the modern in these publications, as Chapter Three discusses.

Two *H&C* examples also show advertisers positing their products as the solution to the problem of lacking mains supplies. These 1954 and 1961 advertisements, by Calor Gas and Destrol chemical toilets respectively, specifically addressed rural-dwellers, appealing to 'Country Housewives' and 'everyone in remote rural areas'. In contrast to the modern countryside constructed by the magazine's producers, the NFWI, these advertisements portrayed the countryside as outside of the modern experience, backwards and in need of modernization; it is a negative image of a place left behind by the modern world. However, this tension in visions of the countryside is not as contradictory as it first appears. In these advertisements, the products themselves brought values associated with modernity and a modern way-of-life from towns and suburbs to the country: most notably hygiene ('vital to good health', 'hygienic flushing sanitation without mains', 'town type sanitation anywhere', 'a higher standard of health') and an improved standard of living ('better living conditions', 'you don't need gas mains for comfort').⁴³⁷

These advertisements presented the consumption of domestic goods as the solution to difficulties surrounding utility provision that many rural housewives faced. They offered an individual remedy, whereas the continued campaigning by women's organizations to increase provision of utilities represented a collective solution. The concurrence of the individual and the collective in women's magazines is observed by Giles: 'In the post-war world, alongside the egalitarian and collective sentiments of social welfarism, there ran an equally powerful discourse of individualism and personal responsibility that is mirrored in the address of magazines, like *My Home*, to its women's readers'.⁴³⁸

The importance of collectivism is particularly noticeable in *Outlook* because of the Guild's political allegiances. In 1956, the same year that Labour committed to the municipalization of all privately rented housing, the WCG's shared belief in collectivism was apparent in the sub-titles of two 'Committee Woman' articles. 'Making Electricity *Our* Servant' and 'Making the Most of *Our* Coal' reported on

⁴³⁶ Electrical Development Association advertisement, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.22; Main advertisement, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.47.

⁴³⁷ Calor Gas advertisement, *H&C* 05/1954, p.173; Destrol advertisement, *H&C* 04/1961, p.148.

⁴³⁸ Giles, *Parlour*, p.158.

Guildswomen serving on the Electricity Consultative Council and Women's Advisory Council on Solid Fuel and articulated a sense of communal endeavour through nationalization.⁴³⁹ The newly nationalized utilities therefore seemed to offer opportunities for active citizenship and for the housewife-as-expert concept to continue, although this related to individual activity rather the collective involvement of the organization.

Gas industry advertisements in *H&C* and *Woman* illustrate this too. These advertisements invoked collectivism through statements such as 'The gas industry makes the best use of the nation's coal'.⁴⁴⁰ Advertisements that appeared during the 1957 fuel shortages highlighted the obligations bound up with collective ownership and appealed to the responsible citizen associated with women's organizations, declaring 'Fuel Emergency Notice! In the national interest – *and your own* – do not waste gas!'⁴⁴¹ Such appeals were not unique to this crisis; Milanesio writes that in Peronist Argentina, 'Consumption choices made all housewives, regardless of class or political affiliation, protectors of the nation', while Rebecca Pulju argues that 'Women were *the* consumers of the nation' in post-war France.⁴⁴² The specific rhetoric used in these advertisements, though, addressed individual housewives in their homes, further suggesting that the discourse of the individual had eclipsed that of the collective housewife. The final section of this chapter confirms this eclipse, as well as the broader exclusion of the housewife from notions of expertise.

Consumer education in *H&C* and *Outlook*

From the mid-1950s, women's magazines increasingly featured guidance on consumer issues.⁴⁴³ This mirrored the wider post-war growth in consumer journalism and the rise of consumer organizations.⁴⁴⁴ Work on women's groups both in Britain and elsewhere reveals their role in this burgeoning consumer movement, with consumerism seeming to offer such organizations an area of expertise and authority.⁴⁴⁵ Chapter Three

⁴³⁹ Emphasis mine. 'Committee Woman', *Outlook* 14/07/1956, pp.6-7; *Outlook* 06/10/1956, pp.16-17.

⁴⁴⁰ Calor Gas advertisement, *H&C* 05/1954, p.173.

⁴⁴¹ Emphasis in original. Gas industry advertisement, *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.18.

⁴⁴² Pulju, 'Consumers', p.84.

⁴⁴³ White, *Magazines*, p.162; Pulju, 'Consumers', p.81.

⁴⁴⁴ Matthew Hilton, 'The Organised Consumer Movements since 1945', in Alain Chatriot, Marie-Emmanuelle Chessel and Matthew Hilton (eds.), *The Expert Consumer: Associations and Professionals in Consumer Society* (Aldershot, 2006), pp.189,193; Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.2,203-204.

⁴⁴⁵ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.152-155; Pulju, 'Consumers', p.76; Landon Storrs, 'Left-Feminism, The Consumer Movement, and Red Scare Politics in the United States, 1935-1960', *Journal of Women's History* 18 (2006), p.48.

discusses the details of the consumer boom that lay behind these developments; this section concentrates specifically on consumer education in *H&C* and *Outlook*. The significance of the consumer movement for the NFWI and WCG – apparently providing an arena in which the housewife-as-expert discourse could flourish – was especially important at this time because of the marginalization of the housewife and her organizations from other areas of involvement such as housing. The position of women’s organizations in the consumer movement was, however, far from straightforward: the shift from collectivism to individualism also influenced understandings of the consumer and the movement was a battleground between various groups.⁴⁴⁶

One such group was the Co-operative movement, which experienced difficulties balancing their focus on the collective against post-war patterns of consumption. Gurney describes Co-operative attitudes as contradictory; developments such as hire purchase were condemned but at the same time became more commonplace within their stores. ‘Many cooperators had difficulty handling affluence, constrained as they were by an ideology that privileged an ethical understanding of consumption’, reflecting Co-operation’s roots in working-class socialism.⁴⁴⁷ Despite such difficulties, the Co-operative movement recognized ‘the need for providing some guidance to the consumer in a “complex” world’.⁴⁴⁸ In *Outlook*, articles about changes affecting consumers featured in 1957 and 1961. The first series concentrated on ‘explaining co-operative development’, such as the move from counters to self-service; the second was about ‘private enterprise shops’ – a rare acknowledgement in the magazine of non-Co-operative businesses.⁴⁴⁹

Articles about the WCG and consumer issues shared broader Co-operative attitudes. For example, during the 1950s, both the Labour Party and the Co-operative movement remained committed to increasing consumer protection.⁴⁵⁰ Similar demands appeared in two *Outlook* items from April 1962. The Editor, who wrote the pieces, articulated older notions of consumer protection, with manufacturers believed to dupe innocent consumers:

The Bill, of course, was killed by the Government, like so many others in the past that have tried to give the consumer more protection against exploitation. Doesn’t this attitude make your blood boil? Of course shoppers should be

⁴⁴⁶ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.3,22; Gurney, ‘Battle’, p.958.

⁴⁴⁷ Gurney, ‘Battle’, p.962.

⁴⁴⁸ Hilton *Consumerism*, p.205.

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Self-service Versus the Counter’, *Outlook* 10/1957, p.16; ‘The Small Man’, *Outlook* 10/1961, pp.29-31.

⁴⁵⁰ Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.170.

discriminating, but surely they are entitled to legal safeguards against deceit and malpractice.⁴⁵¹

Deceptive packaging, misleading labels, false claims for products – these devices are commonly used, and the customer does not always realise that she is being cheated. How is the consumer to be protected against these sharp practices? The real need is for a change in the law, to give her greater safeguards, but so far the Government has resisted most attempts to bring the appropriate legislation up to date. Some improvements have been effected, thanks to the efforts of Co-operative and Labour MPs but the law is still highly unsatisfactory.⁴⁵²

The use of ‘she’ and ‘her’ constructed the consumer as female, reflecting the long-standing association of women and consumption (see Chapter Three). More specifically, these articles conflated the consumer and the housewife. Both began with gender-neutral labels then switched to discussing the housewife: ‘Are you a careless shopper? Are you one of those housewives who are too “jolly careless”’⁴⁵³; ‘Helping the shopper to get a fair deal...Many housewives could quote similar experiences’.⁴⁵⁴ This focus on the housewife was part of the magazine’s gendered perspective, featuring alongside rather than in opposition to the Co-operative aspect of the Guild’s identity.

The housewife was also a central figure in the post-war consumer movement, resulting in a network of alliances between consumer organizations and groups representing the housewife. The NFWI and WCG were members of the National Council of Women (NCW), an umbrella organization active in this area; in 1956, for example, *H&C* publicized an NCW campaign launched ‘under the banner of “Consumer Protection”’.⁴⁵⁵ As well as their own campaigns, the NCW had representatives on the Women’s Advisory Committee (WAC) of the British Standards Institute (BSI). WAC considered standards and helped to ‘disseminate information about theirs and the BSI’s work in a broader programme of consumer education’, particularly emphasizing the importance of the Kite Mark, the BSI’s certification of standards.⁴⁵⁶ All three magazines mentioned the BSI and the Kite Mark but in accordance with WAC’s remit, references were most frequent in *H&C* and *Outlook*.⁴⁵⁷

Another BSI committee in this network was the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), established in 1955 in response to calls for consumer testing and seen as the

⁴⁵¹ ‘Are You a Careless Shopper?’, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.1.

⁴⁵² ‘Helping the Shopper’, *Outlook* 04/1962, pp.20-21.

⁴⁵³ ‘Careless Shopper?’, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.1.

⁴⁵⁴ ‘Helping the Shopper’, *Outlook* 04/1962, pp.20-21.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Watch-dogs for the Public’, *H&C* 04/1956, p.121; Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.167.

⁴⁵⁶ Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.180.

⁴⁵⁷ For examples, see: ‘Up to British Standards’, *H&C* 04/1957, pp.116-117; ‘How It’s Done’, *Woman* 12/12/1964, p.10.

official representative of the consumer.⁴⁵⁸ WAC's role extended to CAC involvement, hence the organizational periodicals promoted its activities too. In 1957, for example, *Outlook* promoted CAC's *Shopper's Guides*, with the Editor observing that 'Few Guildswomen will not know what the BSI is doing, for the General Secretary of the Women's Guild...is a member of the Women's Advisory Committee'.⁴⁵⁹ Such comments show that the WCG perceived themselves as integral to the BSI/WAC. In contrast, Hilton argues that the Guild's Co-operative ideology differentiated and marginalized them from what he describes as WAC's form of pro-business consumerism.⁴⁶⁰ In addition, Hilton links the BSI with the Conservatives rather than Labour.⁴⁶¹ However, such tensions are not apparent in *Outlook*. The *Shopper's Guide* promotion encouraged associate membership of CAC, emphasizing the individual consumer rather than the collective viewpoint of Co-operative ideology. Furthermore, the Editor highlighted a gendered consumer identity, claiming that 'The work that is being carried out by the Council should be welcomed by every housewife in Britain.'⁴⁶²

This organizational network featured even more prominently in *H&C*. Between 1956 and 1965, the publication's home and consumer page – 'Home Affairs' – was written by Elizabeth Gundrey, a 'well-established consumer journalist' who edited CAC's *Shopper's Guides* during those years as well.⁴⁶³ The ability of *H&C*, a small publication, to secure regular contributions from such a prominent figure – at the same time that she was involved in other high-profile roles – indicates that key individuals within the consumer movement regarded the NFWI as a crucial body within this network.

Gundrey's contributions to a magazine that addressed country housewives reinforces the importance of the housewife to the consumer movement of the late 1950s. Hilton explores this, placing the NCW/BSI alliance within the context of the wartime attention to the housewife – attention evident in the *Dudley Report*. Ultimately, though, Hilton sees the NCW as the 'new advocates of the consumer cause' only for 'a brief moment'⁴⁶⁴; although 'the consumer within the BSI imagination remained the middle-class housewife', the housewife lost her significance to the broader consumer movement from the 1960s.⁴⁶⁵ This was because that 'type of consumerism...failed to attract the

⁴⁵⁸ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.186-189.

⁴⁵⁹ 'Your Editor's Page', *Outlook* 14/07/1957, p.1; Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.168,173,179-183.

⁴⁶⁰ Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.170.

⁴⁶¹ Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.221.

⁴⁶² 'Your Editor's Page', *Outlook* 14/07/1957, p.1.

⁴⁶³ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.189,204.

⁴⁶⁴ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.168,170,183.

⁴⁶⁵ Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.191. See also p.182.

imagination of the public or the spirit of a professional affluent age'; other more successful consumer bodies, such as the Consumers Association (CA), drew on a more masculine image and notions of professional expertise.⁴⁶⁶

Changes to *H&C* contributors intimate this marginalization of the housewife; by 1967, a 'WI writer' rather than a well-known consumer journalist wrote Gundry's former column.⁴⁶⁷ However, even Hilton's account reveals that a strongly gendered understanding of the consumer did not entirely disappear in the 1960s. As well as remaining important in the BSI's imagination, the housewife figured in the proclamations of the state-funded Consumer Council, established in 1963.⁴⁶⁸ The Consumer Council also continued the network of links with women's organizations⁴⁶⁹; for example, their publicity featured in *H&C*.⁴⁷⁰ In addition, gendered understandings of the consumer remained apparent in *H&C* and *Outlook*, perhaps unsurprisingly as they were the publications of organizations representing the country housewife and the working-class housewife. The 'commonsensical motherly counsel' and 'traditional women's magazine style' of the *Shopper's Guides* may not have retained broader favour⁴⁷¹, but such style was consistent with the tone of *H&C* and *Outlook* throughout the period. Similarly, WAC's vision of the consumer as 'an intelligent sensible woman' was in keeping with ideas in these magazines.⁴⁷² The magazines both addressed and presented the reader as a sensible housewife capable of decision-making. The *Outlook* article outlining the move from counter- to self-service, for example, took the form of a conversation: Mr Benson (shop manager) explains the new system and its advantages to Mrs Sutcliffe (housewife).⁴⁷³ *H&C*'s 'Home Affairs' also assumed that the reader was capable of judgement; in April 1961, for instance, Gundry advised on buying carpet by detailing some test results, adding that 'really careful discrimination is called for'.⁴⁷⁴

Furthermore, whilst not disputing the wider marginalization of the housewife within the consumer movement, *H&C* and *Outlook* show clear resistance to this exclusion. The organizational culture intrinsic to these magazines facilitated this resistance: as the Introduction discusses, the 'female-defined culture and value system' of women's organizations allowed for the re-negotiation of widely accepted

⁴⁶⁶ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.192-193.

⁴⁶⁷ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 04/04/1967.

⁴⁶⁸ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.189-190.

⁴⁶⁹ Hilton *Consumerism*, pp.190-191.

⁴⁷⁰ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1966, p.163; 'Viewing Ahead', *H&C* 10/1968, p.374.

⁴⁷¹ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.189-190.

⁴⁷² Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.179.

⁴⁷³ 'Self-service Versus the Counter', *Outlook* 10/1957, p.16.

⁴⁷⁴ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1961, pp.146-147.

meanings.⁴⁷⁵ In particular, magazine representations disputed the notion of the housewife as an amateur. Both the NFWI and WCG constructed housewifery as a skilled profession, hence the housewife was a professional – albeit unpaid – worker. Payment was a crucial distinction. Hilton states that ‘By the late 1950s, other consumer groups would deplore the lack of expertise of the WAC...But the WAC members took a pride in their amateur status, *rejecting payment for their services even in an era when consumerism had entered a new professionalism*’.⁴⁷⁶ Gibson similarly refers to WI commitment to amateurism in the field of music.⁴⁷⁷ Such comments draw on specific frameworks of amateur/unpaid/non-expert and professional/paid/expert. In contrast, these organizations understood the housewife as professional/unpaid/expert.

Within *Outlook*, readers continued to present themselves as possessing expertise; in April 1962, two readers’ letters detailed a series of demands for improvements to housing, with one correspondent claiming that they were ‘improvements which only a woman’s influence could recommend’.⁴⁷⁸ Moreover, readers’ letters supplied domestic advice, reinforcing the impression that the housewife reader had expertise and specialist knowledge. This correspondence was literally valued – as established in Chapter One, *Outlook* paid for letters printed. References to Guild activities also indicate continued belief in the crucial contribution of housewives and their organizations to the consumer movement. Despite wider marginalization, the WCG envisioned a role for themselves even in the 1960s. To an extent, this focused around internal education, aimed at improving awareness amongst members. ‘Helping the Shopper to get a Fair Deal’, mentioned previously, perceived a ‘real need for consumer education and guidance’. It claimed that ‘many guildswomen are beginning to feel that this is a job they themselves ought to undertake’, with a forthcoming Congress debate about ‘Consumer Protection’ being included as an official subject for Guild speakers. Although attention was on branch activity, the potential for active citizenship and a broader role was acknowledged, with one branch secretary commenting that ‘I think it is high time housewives did act to secure a fair deal for the shopper...we as guildswomen could give a lead.’⁴⁷⁹

This article concentrated on washing powder, a battlefield for rival producers since the early 1950s.⁴⁸⁰ Several readers’ letters expressed opinions on washing powder

⁴⁷⁵ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.66.

⁴⁷⁶ Emphasis mine. Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.181.

⁴⁷⁷ Gibson, *Beyond*, pp.134-135.

⁴⁷⁸ H McFarlane, Mrs MP Redfern, *Outlook* 10/1962, pp.127-128.

⁴⁷⁹ ‘Helping the Shopper’, *Outlook* 04/1962, pp.20-21.

⁴⁸⁰ Gurney, ‘Battle’, pp.967-968.

too.⁴⁸¹ In the same month as one of these letters (October 1963), a *H&C* advertisement described this as an area of successful campaigning by the NFWI and WCG, declaring ‘A Square Deal that you helped create...created in response to the pleas of prominent women’s organisations and similar influential groups’.⁴⁸² While this was an apparent success, such concerns echoed older notions of consumption: products such as washing powder were part of ‘an older consumer politics of necessity’ whereas the consumer movement from the late 1950s was largely concerned with newer consumer goods that challenged distinctions between necessity and luxury.⁴⁸³ As the following chapter explores, newer goods did feature in *Outlook*, but not in terms of consumer education content. In this respect, there was a failure to engage with changes in consumer culture. There was no recognition of how consumer issues had developed and moved away from older housewifely skills of shopping; the Editor observed in 1957 that ‘*There is nothing new, as far as co-operative housewives are concerned, in the fact that women are sensible shoppers. Co-operative members for more than one hundred years have been good shoppers*’.⁴⁸⁴

Such comments reinforce arguments about Co-operative difficulties in adapting to new understandings of consumer issues. The Editor gives no intimation of the ways in which the image of the housewife consumer had changed during the twentieth century; as Carol Dyhouse writes,

representations of the prudent and socially aware “woman with the basket” of the early Co-operative Movement, the make-do-and-mend housewife of wartime austerity, changed radically after 1945. In the oft-quoted words of Mary Grieve, editor of the magazine *Woman*, in the 1950s “it dawned on the business men of the country that the Little Woman was now Big Business”.⁴⁸⁵

Evidence from *H&C*, on the other hand, demonstrates efforts to adapt to such changes. Compared to the continued stress within *Outlook* upon the potential contribution of the housewife and her organizations to the consumer movement, *H&C* reveals a change within the housewife-as-expert discourse. There is a shift in emphasis onto two-way interactions: as well as involvement in the consumer movement via the NCW and WAC, the housewife becomes the *recipient* of consumer education (her status as a professional expert providing justification for her need to receive such guidance and advice).

⁴⁸¹ For example, see: Mrs B Hardman, *Outlook* 10/1963, p.31.

⁴⁸² Surf advertisement, *H&C* 10/1963, inside cover.

⁴⁸³ Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.178.

⁴⁸⁴ Emphasis mine. ‘Your Editor’s Page’, *Outlook* 14/07/1957, p.1; Hilton *Consumerism*, p.192.

⁴⁸⁵ Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.2.

A range of business and trade associations targeted the housewife reader in this way, through advertising and editorial content. The Electrical Association for Women (EAW), for instance, continued their inter-war objective of educating female consumers by providing guidance in 'Home Affairs'.⁴⁸⁶ The International Wool Secretariat (see also Chapter Five) advertised their range of talks and publications in the 1950s and 60s, and the Advertising Association offered to speak at branch meetings.⁴⁸⁷ This identification of the WI as a potential audience indicates groups other than the BSI and Consumer Council continued to visualize the consumer as a housewife. However, such advertisements did not construct the housewife as involved in consumer education; rather, the housewife received such guidance.

The majority of references to consumer organizations (including business and trade groups) in *H&C* occurred in Gundry's columns, suggesting that her high profile and connections were essential in immersing the magazine within additional networks of consumer education. The absence of comparable *Outlook* examples reflects Co-operative pressure on the magazine. Although the publication articulated a more individual understanding of the consumer than is associated with Co-operative ideology, the movement (especially CWS) retained a strong influence. As a result, non-Co-operative business associations were unlikely to receive publicity in the magazine. While both the NFWI and WCG – and their respective publications – were part of broader networks within the consumer movement, *H&C* was able to embrace a breadth of connections and operate with flexibility unavailable to *Outlook's* producers: Co-operative links and Co-operative domination of the magazine restricted the range of responses to contemporary developments.

This chapter has explored these responses in relation to consumer education and housing. Within the shifting landscape of post-war Britain, the NFWI and WCG needed to adapt in order to retain their social capital. During the years of war and austerity, the housewife had legitimacy and value, therefore organizations representing the housewife shared this symbolic capital, as epitomized by the Institute and Guild involvement in the *Dudley Report*. However, we have seen that in the 1950s and 60s, the dominant symbolic economy – those groups who have social and cultural capital, such as the government and the consumer movement – increasingly valued professional expertise over the housewife-as-expert concept. For women's organizations, this move signalled

⁴⁸⁶ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 10/1959, pp.297,299; 10/1964, p.365; Sparke, *Pink*, pp.153-155; Suzette Warden, 'Powerful Women: Electricity in the Home, 1919-40', in Attfield and Kirkham (eds.), *A View From the Interior*, pp.131-150.

⁴⁸⁷ IWS advertisements, *H&C* 04/1956, p.120; 04/1959, p.130; 10/1968, p.396; Advertising Association advertisement, *H&C* 04/1964, p.144.

a lack of return on their investment. In terms of housing, the NFWI and WCG faced depleted capital value. In terms of consumer education, they had restricted options for investment; the network of alliances found in *H&C* and *Outlook*'s consumer content shows one way in which the organizations attempted to obtain and accrue capital.

This investigation has further demonstrated *H&C* and *Outlook*'s position as local trading arenas, with their own distinctions and values based upon the rural/Co-operative/gendered perspectives rather than the perspectives of the dominant symbolic economy. As a result, while the symbolic capital of the housewife and her organizations declined, significance and meaning remained for the NFWI, WCG and their publications, as evident throughout this chapter. Visions of an important role for the Guild in consumer education remained apparent in *Outlook*, while within both publications, there continued to be an emphasis on the role of women's groups in addressing housing difficulties.

Other elements of the magazines offered different solutions. For example, advertisers promoted private transport and domestic consumption as alternative ways of resolving housing problems. This disparity between the publications' producers and their advertisers created tensions. The chapter has identified other tensions too: around social class; within the Co-operative movement; changing notions of the consumer and consumption; differing conceptions of expertise and professionalism. Most notably, the rise of the individual over the collective – a shift seen repeatedly – created tensions. The prominence of the individual emerges further in the following chapters, which consider other aspects of the home that featured in *H&C* and *Outlook*, namely domestic consumption and interior decoration. Although both organizations had difficulties adapting to the consumer culture inherent within these areas, the flexibility shown here within *H&C* proves to be a distinct advantage whereas Co-operative links both helped and hindered *Outlook*. Their characteristic perspectives (rural; Co-operative; gendered) and alternative constructions of the modern continued to mark representations in both publications – despite marginalization, exclusion and adaptation, *H&C* and *Outlook* retained these distinctive identities and standpoints.

Chapter Three

Domestic Consumption and Understandings of the Modern Home

‘I like modern houses, don’t you?’ asked the protagonist of a 1963 *Outlook* short story.⁴⁸⁸ The direct address encouraged readers to identify positively with new houses, indicating the assumed desirability of such housing. However, as the previous chapter established, neither *H&C* nor *Outlook* gave much attention to new housing in the 1950s and 60s. Nonetheless, the house, as the location of the housewife’s labour, remained a significant site within the ideologies of the NFWI and WCG. Due to the marginalization of the housewife-as-expert discourse – and the resultant exclusion of women’s organizations from their previous influential position – the NFWI, WCG and their publications needed different ways of engaging with housing. This chapter and the next explore the focus of these magazines on ‘the modern home’ as an alternative to modern housing. The two chapters show how representations of the modern home functioned as a way of acquiring and accruing social capital, if only on a symbolic level within the magazines themselves. Symbolic capital – and the conferral of legitimacy, value and relevance – was particularly pertinent because the organizations and their members were moving from a position of inclusion to exclusion. The housewife was no longer integral to notions of expertise in areas where the NFWI and WCG had made important contributions, such as housing, while contemporary understandings and historical accounts regard the rural and the Co-operative – the distinctive perspectives in *H&C* and *Outlook* – as antithetical to ideas of the modern.

The home department of women’s magazines covered a diverse range of subjects.⁴⁸⁹ Focusing on domestic appliances and interior decoration, these chapters investigate representations of the modern home in *H&C* and *Outlook*, demonstrating how an array of contributors to the magazines (producers; advertisers; readers) understood and constructed the modern. The differing and contested ideas of the modern and the responses to them shaped each magazine’s version of modernity; we have already seen that the rural and the Co-operative were central to the visions in *H&C* and *Outlook* respectively, with gender also fundamental to both. This chapter begins by considering literature that underpins these chapters, before the second section discusses the inclusions and exclusions that characterized depictions of domestic appliances. The third section emphasizes the multifarious understandings of the modern home and

⁴⁸⁸ ‘Ancient and Modern’, *Outlook* 04/1963, pp.2-3,14-15,21.

⁴⁸⁹ Keeble, ‘Domesticating’, p.97.

modern womanhood, examining the two most prominent domestic appliance advertisers in *H&C* and *Outlook*: the Gas Council and CWS, respectively. The final section looks at key discourses in advertising and editorial content, with attention to the various facets to constructions of products as modern.

Literature on both the inter-war and post-war years has assisted in developing the framework for this investigation; Giles, for example, writes that inter-war housewives took pride in their décor and furnishing displaying ‘a “modern” identity’.⁴⁹⁰ Literature on ‘the modern home’ accentuates the *different* versions of the modern home rather than one definitive version, complicated further by the multiplicity of meanings attached even to specific aesthetics or objects; Sparke comments that ‘objects have lives and their meanings change in response to the different context within which they are found’.⁴⁹¹ The phrase ‘domestic modernity’⁴⁹² – in which the home is vital to experiences rather than a site to escape from and an anathema to more traditional conceptualizations of modernity (see Introduction) – is crucial, highlighting the different version of modernity and the modern.

Scholarship on the modern home intersects with work on post-war Britain. Science is a prevalent theme in both, with the concept of ‘science’ taking various forms. It influenced post-war design, validating the ‘modern agenda for design’ and becoming a stylistic feature – the atom being a frequently used motif.⁴⁹³ Technology was another aspect of scientific development explicitly linked to the modern; there was, for instance, a ‘complex interaction between time-saving technology and the pace of daily living’ (the latter regarded as a characteristic of modernity).⁴⁹⁴ Discourses of hygiene and cleanliness were expressions of science, although comfort and the notion of ‘cosiness’ were stressed too⁴⁹⁵: a concern for science did not exclude desires for a restful and relaxing home. In her study of Do-It-Yourself in the 1950s, Jen Browne refers to homes as ‘rationalized and comfortable environments’.⁴⁹⁶ Throughout the following chapters, we see a stress on science *and* comfort, supporting Hilde Heynen’s assertion that the widespread caricatures of a rational interior in opposition to a cosy interior creates ‘polar opposites...that hardly ever occur in a real-life situation’.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁰ Giles, *Parlour*, p.113.

⁴⁹¹ Sparke, *Pink*, p.8. See also pp.6-8.

⁴⁹² Hackney, ‘Use’, p.24; Keeble, ‘Domesticating’, p.110.

⁴⁹³ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.49,57.

⁴⁹⁴ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xx.

⁴⁹⁵ Hackney, ‘Use’, pp.30-32; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Social Aspirations.

⁴⁹⁶ Jen Browne, ‘Decisions in DIY: Women, Home Improvements and Advertising in Post-war Britain’, in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, p.132.

⁴⁹⁷ Heynen, ‘Modernity’, p.20.

Although reproduction and period furniture retained some popularity⁴⁹⁸, these magazines ignored older styles in favour of promoting the modern home as a route to belonging, a means of acquiring and accumulating social capital. As well as certain properties, such as hygiene, the modern home was about particular aesthetics – a certain style; as Fiona Hackney notes with regards to the inter-war period, ‘the important thing was that it *looked* modern’.⁴⁹⁹ ‘Contemporary’ is a common adjective in descriptions of post-war modern style, the word itself drawing on languages of modernization.⁵⁰⁰ Sparke outlines the main features of this aesthetic as the following:

The “contemporary” aesthetic, as it was called to differentiate it from first-generation modernism from which it nonetheless derived its essential tenets, was unashamedly “of the moment” in its forward-looking search for space, light, gaiety, harmoniously unified interior settings, organic forms, bright colours, contemporary patterns and new materials. Unmitigatingly “new”, it was received with unbridled enthusiasm by women as part of their bid to participate in modernity.⁵⁰¹

Such claims challenge widely held assumptions that view modernism as gender neutral and equate feminine style with tradition (one of many examples where associations with femininity render an experience or concept as inherently anti- or un-modern).⁵⁰² Sparke reveals that manufacturers’ efforts to cater for women’s ‘new-found love affair with modernity’ – thanks to the contemporary style – resulted in a ‘feminised model of modernity’.⁵⁰³ This ‘housewife aesthetic’, as Sparke labels it, flourished in the mid- to late-1950s but with massive implications in terms of capital. While finding an ally in the marketplace, this aesthetic did not conform to the proclamations of the design establishment and was hence ‘marginalised by dominant masculine culture...feminine taste...remained both illegitimate and marginal within cultural life as a whole’.⁵⁰⁴ Furthermore, during the 1960s, the emerging youth culture sidelined this look as old.⁵⁰⁵

These two chapters similarly explore the influence of gender on depictions of the modern home and contemporary style in *H&C* and *Outlook*, analysing examples where gendered constructions of the modern are visible. Other scholars underscore the interaction between gender and ideas of the modern too: Browne writes that certain home improvements were ‘the aesthetic manifestations of feminine values and tastes.

⁴⁹⁸ Sparke, *Pink*, p.181; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, A Little of What You Fancy.

⁴⁹⁹ Emphasis in original. Hackney, ‘Use’, p.33.

⁵⁰⁰ Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.140; Oram, ‘Constructing’, pp.174-190; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Mid-Century Modern.

⁵⁰¹ Sparke, *Pink*, p.189. See also: pp.190-193.

⁵⁰² Ruth Holliday, ‘Home Truths?’, in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Ordinary Lifestyles*, p.76.

⁵⁰³ Sparke, *Pink*, pp.188-189. See also: pp.182-186.

⁵⁰⁴ Sparke, *Pink*, p.221.

⁵⁰⁵ Sparke, *Pink*, pp.203,226.

They were also a reflection of people wanting to be modern'⁵⁰⁶; Langhamer states that women invested 'their own meanings in designed goods...if necessary ignoring design dictates to produce a domestic look that was simultaneously modern, reassuringly cosy and, above all, practical'.⁵⁰⁷ Like Sparke, Hackney identifies 'a distinctly feminine modernity' in her study of home-crafts and design advice in inter-war women's magazines.⁵⁰⁸ Hackney highlights the largely neglected but significant role of 'commercial magazines in disseminating and mediating modern, even modernist, design'.⁵⁰⁹ This continued in the years after 1945. Keeble shows *Woman's* position as a mediator between the design establishment and the public in the early 1950s⁵¹⁰, while Judy Attfield argues that late twentieth-century media representations of modernity brought modern design into homes.⁵¹¹

These chapters consider the role of *H&C* and *Outlook* as mediating forums. The concept of taste is critical. In the post-war period, women's magazines were increasingly involved in 'taste education'⁵¹², with bodies such as the Council of Industrial Design (CoID) using these popular mediums to disseminate its ideas and mould public taste.⁵¹³ Taste and social class are inextricably linked. Since the nineteenth century, 'conventions of "good taste" were central to the construction and consolidation of class identity'.⁵¹⁴ The bourgeois associations of 'good taste' reflect the social capital of the middle classes in Britain. If 'to have taste was to have the ability to judge'⁵¹⁵, then being middle class and hence having greater cultural capital was an advantage: one would be more likely to judge 'correctly'. Furthermore, the choices of the middle classes were more likely to be regarded as 'correct' due to their greater levels of symbolic capital and therefore legitimacy.

In the 1950s and 60s, this legitimacy was evident in links between notions of 'good taste' and the canon of 'good design', both of which were promoted by CoID.⁵¹⁶

⁵⁰⁶ Browne, 'Decisions', p.135.

⁵⁰⁷ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.356.

⁵⁰⁸ Hackney, 'Use', p.26.

⁵⁰⁹ Hackney, 'Use', p.23.

⁵¹⁰ Keeble, 'Domesticating', p.110.

⁵¹¹ Judy Attfield, *Bringing Modernity Home: Writings on Popular Design and Material Culture* (Manchester, 2007), p.6.

⁵¹² Penny Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1986), p.154; White, *Magazines*, pp.145-147,156,161-162,229.

⁵¹³ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.49,51,126,207,212-213,218,237-238; Keeble, 'Domesticating', pp.97-98; Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.353; Sparke, *Pink*, p.215.

⁵¹⁴ Trevor Keeble, "'Everything Whispers of Wealth and Luxury": Observation, Emulation and Display in the Well-to-do Late-Victorian Home', in Darling and Whitworth (eds.), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England*, p.71. See also: Featherstone, *Postmodernism*, pp.18-9; Skeggs, 'Context', pp.28-29.

⁵¹⁵ Keeble, 'Whispers', p.71.

⁵¹⁶ Attfield, *Bringing*, pp.4,7-8,13-16.

‘Good taste’ and ‘good design’ were embedded in the middle-class design establishment hence these concepts had symbolic value and status. Despite the middle-class status of ‘good taste’, CoID’s public education remit was an attempt at democratization – a move in keeping with changing conceptualizations of class (outlined in the previous chapter). For example, CoID’s involvement with *Woman* communicated their vision of taste and design to a wider audience – their rhetoric of ‘common sense’ neutralized and naturalized their messages, often obscuring their elite perspective.⁵¹⁷ However, theirs was a limited view of democracy. Sparke describes CoID’s ideals as a ‘masculine modernist culture’ with a gendered and social class agenda that condemned those deemed ‘their social and their cultural inferiors’.⁵¹⁸ In addition, the different visions of taste that abounded in the post-war period hampered efforts at popularizing ‘official’ versions of taste: popular taste reflected the feminine style of the marketplace and the domestic environment, contrasting with established ‘good taste’.⁵¹⁹

The following chapter particularly examines negotiations and tensions between different articulations of taste in *H&C* and *Outlook*. This builds on other work on women’s magazines that exposes their pivotal role in taste formation.⁵²⁰ Through their provision of guidance, magazines assist readers in acquiring the necessary information needed to display taste. This knowledge is essential, as is work.⁵²¹ These culturally learnt, highly gendered skills reflect cultural constructions of idealized femininity. Within these boundaries, there are possibilities for creativity and making tactical use of the available opportunities.⁵²² This (limited) appropriation – efforts to make the most of the situation – has parallels with the re-negotiation of the meanings attached to domesticity, seen in the ideologies of women’s organizations.

Concepts of taste intertwined with domestic consumption, which also underpinned understandings of the modern home. Many scholars see consumption and its enormous increase as a defining characteristic of post-1945 Britain.⁵²³ With

⁵¹⁷ Keeble, ‘Domesticating’, pp.98-99; Sparke, *Pink*, pp.169,219-220.

⁵¹⁸ Sparke, *Pink*, pp.192-193.

⁵¹⁹ Sparke, *Pink*, pp.1-3,7,11-12,204-210.

⁵²⁰ Bell and Hollows, ‘Making’, pp.1,12-15; ; Keeble, ‘Domesticating’, pp.96,108-109; Partington, ‘Days’, p.259.

⁵²¹ Bell and Hollows, ‘Making Sense’, pp.8,13; Featherstone, *Postmodernism*, p.19; Skeggs, *Formations*, pp.108-109.

⁵²² Erica Carter, ‘Alice in Consumer Wonderland’, in Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava (eds.), *Gender and Generation* (Basingstoke, 1984), p.187; Rachel Moseley, ‘Respectability Sewn Up – Dressmaking and Film Star Style in the Fifties and Sixties’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 4 (2001), p.476; Llewellyn Negrin, ‘The Self as Image – A Critical Appraisal of Postmodern Theories of Fashion’, *Theory, Culture and Society* 16 (1999), pp.99-118; Niessen and Brydon, ‘Introduction’, p.xvi; Elizabeth Wilson, ‘Review of *American Beauty*’, *Contemporary Sociology* 13 (1984), p.325.

⁵²³ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xx; Hilton, ‘Organised’, p.198; Mandler, ‘New Towns’, p.209; Frank Mort, ‘The Commercial Domain: Advertising and the Cultural Management of Demand’, in Conekin et al (eds.),

unemployment at its lowest level in the twentieth century and the growth of real wages⁵²⁴, the ownership of consumer durables increased massively in the 1950s and 60s. The number of television licenses issued, for example, rose from 15,000 in 1946 to 4.5million in the mid-1950s.⁵²⁵ These changes had major implications, undermining older notions of consumption, such as the traditional division of luxury versus necessity⁵²⁶ – with the Co-operative movement struggling to adapt to this. The increased flow of commodities made notions of taste a growing concern⁵²⁷, explaining CoID’s public education efforts. This consumption increase also explains the post-war rise of the consumer movement and the role of consumption as a site for identity and citizenship, as explored in Chapter Two.⁵²⁸

With the cultural turn, attitudes towards consumption have been widely revised. Scholars now reflect on the extent of individual agency, choice and control⁵²⁹; nuanced evaluations are commonplace, with consumption neither exclusively condemned nor celebrated.⁵³⁰ Interest in consumption is interdisciplinary, with different terminology used, little consensus on meaning and various methodological approaches.⁵³¹ This analysis draws on writing that looks at consumption in a broad sense⁵³², integrating a range of skills and activities such as looking, selecting, purchasing, making, altering and adapting, albeit all on the level of representation. This study is not alone in relating consumption to ideas of the modern and modernity.⁵³³ Historians often argue that the appropriation of consumption allows for making sense of oneself⁵³⁴, and this thesis

Moments of Modernity, p.56; Frank Mort, ‘Paths to Mass Consumption – Britain and the USA since 1945’, in Mica Nava, Andrew Blake, Iain MacRury and Barry Richards (eds.), *Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption* (London, 1997), p.15.

⁵²⁴ Nicholas Crafts, ‘The British Economy’, in Carnevali and Strange (eds.), *Twentieth-Century Britain*, pp.14-15.

⁵²⁵ Royle, ‘Trends’, p.13.

⁵²⁶ Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.19; Pulju, ‘Consumers’, p.81.

⁵²⁷ Featherstone, *Postmodernism*, p.17.

⁵²⁸ Attfield, *Bringing*, p.50; Hilton, ‘Organised’, p.193; Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.1-2.

⁵²⁹ Jeff Hearn and Sasha Roseneil, ‘Consuming Cultures: Power and Resistance’, in Hearn and Roseneil (eds.), *Consuming Cultures*, pp.1,5,12; Hilton, *Consumerism*, p.14; Mackay, ‘Introduction’, pp.2-3; Mica Nava, ‘Framing Advertising – Cultural Analysis and the Incrimination of Visual Texts’, in Nava et al (eds.), *Buy This Book*, pp.36-37.

⁵³⁰ Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp.7,9; Mort, ‘Paths’, p.17.

⁵³¹ Mica Nava, Andrew Blake, Iain MacRury and Barry Richards, ‘Introduction’, in Nava et al (eds.), *Buy This Book*, p.1; Featherstone, *Postmodernism*, pp.13,16; Mort, ‘Paths’, p.15; Frank Trentmann, ‘Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004), pp.374-376.

⁵³² Andrews and Talbot, ‘Introduction’, p.2; Mackay, ‘Introduction’, p.11; Nava et al, ‘Introduction’, p.3 ; Milanese, ‘Guardian’, pp.91-117; Keeble, ‘Whispers’, pp.68-84; Mort, ‘Paths’, p.17.

⁵³³ Attfield, *Bringing*, p.146; Mort, ‘Commercial’, p.70 ; Mort, ‘Paths’, p.27; Trentmann, ‘Beyond Consumerism’, p.373.

⁵³⁴ Maggie Andrews and Mary M Talbot, ‘Introduction: Women in Consumer Culture’, in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, p.2; Attfield, *Bringing*, p.50; Mackay, ‘Introduction’, p.1; Trentmann, ‘Beyond Consumerism’, p.401.

investigates the role of consumption in constructions of the modern woman as well as the modern home.

Due to her responsibility for shopping and selecting goods for the home, the housewife was a key figure in the mid-twentieth-century consumer boom.⁵³⁵ The relationship between women and consumption has been widely observed⁵³⁶, as has the multifarious impact of consumption on women's lives – influencing their self-fashioning along with material and social change.⁵³⁷ These chapters scrutinize the various ways in which the magazines presented domestic consumption as an aspect of the housewife's roles, as well as the role of *H&C* and *Outlook* in providing advice to assist readers with these tasks. During the inter-war period, publications addressing women and girls assumed a position as consumer guides⁵³⁸; the 1950s and 60s consumer boom greatly expanded this role, making consumption even more prominent in women's magazines and post-war periodicals generally.⁵³⁹

There was a strong editorial emphasis on consumption in *Woman* and a high level of advertising for consumer goods; the magazine's high circulation made it attractive to advertisers. As a result, *Woman* features more in these chapters than previously. As well as being essential to the success of a publication (see Chapter One), advertising was fundamental to representations of consumption in all women's magazines. Attention to the role of advertising further emphasizes the disparate elements that contribute to a periodical and its perspective. As I have argued, every magazine contains three distinct factions – producers, advertisers and readers – whose interests may not be mutual; on the contrary, they may even conflict. Examining the various voices within each magazine reveals nuances and even contradictions between the perspectives offered. These conflicts often remain unresolved, with no attempt within the publication to reconcile the varied messages. These different viewpoints all

⁵³⁵ Adam Arvidsson, 'The Therapy of Consumption Motivation Research and the New Italian Housewife, 1958-62' *Journal of Material Culture* 5 (2000), pp.252-253; Clare Haru Crowston, 'Editor's Note', *Journal of Women's History*, 18 (2006), p.7; Milanesio, 'Guardian', p.92; Smart, 'Consumption', p.29; Storrs, 'Left-feminism', pp.41,48; Theocharopoulou, '*Polykatoikia*', pp.65-82; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.76-77.

⁵³⁶ Andrews and Talbot, 'Introduction', p.1; Mort, 'Paths', p.16; Nava et al, 'Introduction', pp.1-2; Pulju, 'Consumers', pp.69-70; Giles, *Parlour*, pp.101-139; Janice Winship, 'New Disciplines for Women and the Rise of the Chain Store in the 1930s', in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, pp.35,37; Sparke, *Pink*, pp.9-10; Warden, 'Powerful Women', pp.131-132.

⁵³⁷ Haru Crowston, 'Editor's Note', p.10.

⁵³⁸ Tinkler, 'Material', pp.97,103,108.

⁵³⁹ Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, pp.115-116; Fan Carter, 'It's a Girl Thing: Teenage Magazines, Lifestyle and Consumer Culture', in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Ordinary Lifestyles*, pp.173-186; Chambers, 'Presenting', pp.54-69; Mark Jancovich, 'The Politics of *Playboy*: Lifestyle, Sexuality and Non-conformity in American Cold War Culture', in Bell and Hollows (eds.), *Historicizing Lifestyles*, pp.70-87; Janice Winship, *Woman Becomes an Individual: Femininity and Consumption in Women's Magazines, 1954-1969* (Birmingham, 1981), pp.1-41; White, *Magazines*, pp.145-147,156-161-162,229-230.

contributed to constructions and understandings of the modern within the publications. Due to the role of the home as a crucial site of consumption in the 1950s and 60s, it provides an ideal place to begin this analysis.⁵⁴⁰

Inclusion and exclusions

The contemporary meanings attached to household items go beyond their utilitarian uses, reflecting the symbolism of such goods.⁵⁴¹ Although consumer goods were central to women's experiences of modernity in the inter-war period⁵⁴², domestic consumption took on particular significance in the years following WW2 and austerity. Consumer goods implied new forms of privacy and family life, promising a future removed from the thrift and restraint of the recent past.⁵⁴³ For many housewives, such goods signaled a move towards equality: the idealized kitchen full of appliances seemed to offer an *escape* from drudgery⁵⁴⁴, a view antithetical to many 1970s assessments of post-war domesticity.

Many later accounts underline the arduous nature of housewifery, especially before the advent of electricity.⁵⁴⁵ The NFWI and WCG were fully aware of this; many of their members undertook housework on a daily basis and this influenced the organizations' perceptions of the home and consumer goods. Three NFWI essays submitted to the 1953 ACWW 'The Rural Home' competition illustrate this: as Andrews states, all three 'incorporated the modern cookers and other equipment... Yet these essays did not in anyway celebrate consumerism, but rather practicality'.⁵⁴⁶ The WCG was similarly enthusiastic about household appliances because of their alleged impact on the housewife's tasks and, again, this linked to ideas of the modern. The first item in the Guild's desired housing modernization program 'was to create the conditions for "*easy housework*"'⁵⁴⁷, with working-class wives benefiting from science and technology. As Chapter Two demonstrates, electricity was essential, deemed to be

⁵⁴⁰ Gurney, 'Friends', p.48; Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.355.

⁵⁴¹ Sparke, *Pink*, pp.173-174.

⁵⁴² Giles, *Parlour*, pp.112-117; Penner, 'Rehearsing', p.112.

⁵⁴³ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.346; Putnam, 'Introduction', p.9; Wilson, *Only*, p.6.

⁵⁴⁴ Sparke, *Pink*, p.166; Wilson, *Only*, pp.12-13.

⁵⁴⁵ Malbin, 'Housework', pp.909,918-919; Kaluzynska, 'Wiping', pp.29,33-34,39,40. Two key studies on housework are: Caroline Davidson, *A Woman's Work Is Never Done: a History of Housework in the British Isles 1650-1950* (London, 1982); Robertson, *Illustrated*.

⁵⁴⁶ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.95-96.

⁵⁴⁷ Scott, 'Workshops', p.173.

‘one of the greatest aids to the alleviation of drudgery’ and allowing the use of domestic appliances (denoting new technologies) which the organization demanded.⁵⁴⁸

As Gary Cross found in his study of the suburban weekend concept, domestic consumption could epitomize belonging.⁵⁴⁹ The women’s organizations believed that electrical appliances and other goods assisted the individual housewife in her tasks and symbolized inclusion – belonging to the modern world. However, despite the ‘gradual but spectacular introduction of an enormous array of goods into the home’ from the 1950s⁵⁵⁰, ownership was by no means universal even by the late 1960s. If possession of certain goods signified a modern home then this definition excluded many households, as Table 3.1 shows.

Table 3.1: Ownership levels of domestic goods⁵⁵¹

	1963 (% of private households)	Slum area, Leeds, 1960s	1983 (% of all households)
Television	82	74	81 (colour)
Vacuum cleaner	72	41	-
Washing machine	45	38	80
Refrigerator	30	-	94
Deep freezer	3	-	57
Tumble-drier	-	-	28

Changing attitudes towards consumer durables – with many items now classified as a necessity not a luxury – exacerbated the sense that households lacking certain items were not modern homes. The reclassification of goods was not entirely smooth. Older notions of consumption associated with the Co-operative movement remained evident in *Outlook*; in 1958, Mary Holmes reviewed an electricity exhibition, commenting that ‘a great deal of what I saw must remain in the luxury class’.⁵⁵² However, this statement was isolated. References to ‘luxury’ were rare and usually signaled a marketing technique, with terms such as ‘de luxe’ added to product descriptions to imply

⁵⁴⁸ Scott, ‘Workshops’, p.173.

⁵⁴⁹ Cross, ‘Suburban’, p.118.

⁵⁵⁰ Winship, *Inside*, p.42.

⁵⁵¹ Where no figure is given, this indicates an absence of data. Burnett, *History*, p.283; Elizabeth Shove and Dale Southerton, ‘Defrosting the Freezer: From Novelty to Convenience’, *Journal of Material Culture* 5 (2000), p.302

⁵⁵² ‘Electricity in a Woman’s World’, *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.41-42.

superiority. In 1956, for example, *Outlook* readers could win ‘a Morphy-Richards de luxe all-chrome automatic toaster’.⁵⁵³

Aside from Holmes’ comments, the changing conception of goods as necessities rather than luxuries was discernible in all three publications, especially in advertising, with many manufacturers presenting their products as essential. Home Editors’ references to ownership levels articulated such changes too. In 1957, *Outlook*’s Home Editor did not assume that readers owned a refrigerator; discussing a publication called ‘Food From the Fridge’, she added the remark ‘if you are lucky enough to have one’.⁵⁵⁴ Three years later, though, she felt able to say that ‘Many of us have washing machines’.⁵⁵⁵ Similar expectations were visible in *H&C*. Talking about insurance in 1963, Gundrey wrote that ‘A fridge, washing machine, a new cooker, extra furniture...which have appeared at intervals have swollen the total value of worldly goods’.⁵⁵⁶

Such statements promoted the notion that owning these seemingly essential items was a prerequisite for being included in definitions of a modern home. There are also suggestions of the reverse: exclusion, the positioning of some homes as not belonging, being outside of the modern, because of the absence of certain domestic goods. In some instances, this exclusion was the result of personal predilection for older methods. Professional laundering continued into the 1950s and references to this practice appear in *H&C* until 1955⁵⁵⁷, while as late as 1965, a *H&C* reader claimed to prefer her charcoal iron to ‘the modern steam iron’ which she said ‘retards the ironing’.⁵⁵⁸ Such remarks indicate that exclusion was sometimes self-imposed. There is additional evidence that exclusion resulted from resistance to household appliances. A *H&C* article about a government food hygiene campaign reported that ‘Dr Howie was surprised to find among housewives a general hostility towards pressure cookers’.⁵⁵⁹ Anecdotal evidence intimates that opposition even existed amongst those who owned appliances, with resistance to actually using them. Mrs Farrington wrote to *Outlook* about a conversation overheard between two friends: one said her washing machine had broken, providing an opportunity to give the clothes a ‘thorough good wash’; the other

⁵⁵³ ‘Anne Marsh’s Beauty Page’, *Outlook* 04/1958, p.11. See also: Hoover advertisement, *Woman* 02/07/1966, p.4.

⁵⁵⁴ ‘Around the House’, *Outlook* 13/07/1957, pp.8-9.

⁵⁵⁵ ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1960, pp.26-27.

⁵⁵⁶ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1963, pp.370,374; 04/1964, pp.145-146.

⁵⁵⁷ ‘Domestic Diary’, *H&C* 09/1954, p.333; ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1955, p.385; Rudi Laermans and Carine Meulders, ‘The Domestication of Laundering’, in Cieraad (ed.), *At Home*, pp.126-127.

⁵⁵⁸ Margaret G Waggett, *H&C* 04/1965, p.145.

⁵⁵⁹ ‘Aberdeen and After’, *H&C* 04/1965, p.137.

said she had an electric washing machine but takes washing to a ‘washette’. Mrs Farrington distanced herself from these views (‘it was quite evident that neither of them possessed a CWS “Invincible” washing machine!’), reflecting the complex and ambiguous relationship between women and goods.⁵⁶⁰

Such resistance may result from the values that some women attached to their domestic labour, values undermined by increasing domestic appliance ownership and the corresponding rise in standards (explored in the following section).⁵⁶¹ However, only occasionally was exclusion due to individual preference. Infrastructural issues were far bigger factors behind the exclusion of many homes from definitions of the modern that relied upon the possession of certain domestic goods. Advertisements and editorial recommendations of carpet sweepers, for instance, highlighted their non-electrical nature as a quality⁵⁶², reiterating the continued absence of electricity – itself symbolic of the modern, as established in the previous chapter. Housing design was another factor. When designing layout, for example, architects often neglected provision for the various activities involved in washing; in her letter to *Woman*, Mrs ST said she ‘desperately wanted a washing machine, but...it would take up far too much space in the kitchenette’.⁵⁶³

A further issue behind exclusion from consumer culture was cost. In October 1957, Susan Ingram (*Outlook’s* Home Editor) wrote that ‘If you’ve secretly longed for a modern steam iron, but haven’t been able to afford one, you may like to know that you can now buy a special soleplate to convert any ordinary iron’.⁵⁶⁴ This statement assumed that women desired such items, presented as in themselves a manifestation of the modern. Ingram’s endorsement appreciated that price was a prohibitive factor, although this was a relatively isolated example. Explicit recognition of problems with the cost involved in purchasing large goods was rare, albeit insinuated in some advertisements. *H&C*, for instance, included an advertisement for reconditioned, tax-free Hoover washing machines (presumably cheaper than brand new models) as well as small advertisements for replacement vacuum cleaner hoses (indicating repairs to goods rather than simply purchasing new ones).⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶⁰ Mrs Farrington, *Outlook* 14/01/1956, p.6; Sparke, *Pink*, p.9.

⁵⁶¹ Laermans and Meulders, ‘Domestication’, p.121; Gurney, ‘Friends’, p.59.

⁵⁶² ‘Guide to Good Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.16-17; Ewbank advertisement, *H&C* 10/1960, p.359; CWS advertisements, *Outlook* 09/04/1955, p.22; 07/04/1956, p.26.

⁵⁶³ Mrs ST, *Woman* 17/09/1955, pp.3-4; Laermans and Meulders, ‘Domestication’, pp.127-128.

⁵⁶⁴ ‘Tops in the Shops’, *Outlook* 10/1957, p.42.

⁵⁶⁵ Home Laundry Appliances advertisement, *H&C* 10/1957, p.322; S Kassell advertisements for vacuum cleaner hoses first appear in *H&C* 04/1963, p.152 and continue throughout the decade, becoming Bernard Martin and Co in *H&C* 10/1969, p.411.

Failure to acknowledge financial impediments did not mean that the publications totally ignored the exclusion of some readers' homes from understandings of the modern home. Langhamer observes that 'individual men and women were acutely aware of this disjuncture' between homes that were available and the 'ideal' homes of exhibitions and magazines.⁵⁶⁶ The organizations behind *H&C* and *Outlook* shared this awareness; in the 1920s, for instance, Institute members were 'quick to respond' when the movement's leadership espoused a heavily idealized view of country cottages.⁵⁶⁷ Within the magazines, Home Editors and advertisers offered various solutions to those readers unable to obtain the symbolic capital that came with owning consumer durables. In attempts to address the issue of space, Ingram recommended a portable washing machine that fitted on a stove and some appliance advertising made claims such as 'compact, fits neatly into any modern kitchen' and 'Yes, the spinner will fit into *your* kitchen – it's only 27½" high'.⁵⁶⁸

Furthermore, although rarely referring directly to the problem of cost, Home Editors' product recommendations regularly focussed on smaller, more affordable and often non-electrical items rather than large appliances. For example, in the late 1950s, *Outlook's* 'Housewife's Choice' was dedicated to 'Gadget Care', while in *Woman*, 'Edith Blair tells of fresh gadgets for saving time and labour'.⁵⁶⁹ This continued in the late 1960s: *H&C's* October 1969 'Home Affairs' column discussed a whole host of gadgets and small kitchen equipment.⁵⁷⁰ These goods lacked the level of symbolic capital that larger appliances possessed; nevertheless, as Sparke observes, items such as food processors 'were work tools which were meant to be seen as well as used, items of display helping to transform the kitchen'.⁵⁷¹ Within these magazines, such goods represented an alternative means of marking one's home as modern for those who could not access the larger, more expensive, electrical appliances.

Advertising pressures limited the ability of magazines to portray a different way of creating the modern home. There were some small item advertisements, but higher value appliances were most widely advertised. As the influence of advertisers on women's periodicals increased from the 1950s, editorial recommendations became a more noticeable feature; *Outlook* and *Woman* had columns dedicated to the assessment

⁵⁶⁶ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.350.

⁵⁶⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.89.

⁵⁶⁸ 'Tops in the Shops', *Outlook* 14/01/1956, p.27; Triumph advertisement, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.54; Acme advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, back cover.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Housewife's Choice', *Outlook* 10/1957, p.21; Next issue, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.35.

⁵⁷⁰ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 10/1969, p.409.

⁵⁷¹ Sparke, *Pink*, p.201.

of domestic goods. Product endorsements were not as prevalent in *H&C* due to the broad remit of its 'Home Affairs' column, which included consumer education alongside home-related material, although this is not to deny any advertising influence on *H&C*'s editorial content: in October 1963, thirteen pages after a Helifrost freezer advertisement, Gundrey advised on defrosting freezers.⁵⁷² Such advice assumes widespread, even if not universal, ownership of the item involved. Such assumptions of ownership create an inclusive tone. Inclusion in – belonging to – consumer culture, even if only symbolically within the pages of the magazine, was important because domestic consumption formed an essential tenet of ideas of the modern, sometimes featuring in unexpected ways. As we saw in Chapters One and Two, the countryside was fundamental to NFWI understandings of the modern, whereas some *H&C* advertisers constructed the countryside as outside the modern, with their own products bringing suburban modernity to rural areas: the case of freezers unites these perspectives.

Freezer advertisements only appeared in *H&C*; there were none in the sample for *Outlook* or *Woman*. The perceived purpose of freezers altered with changing patterns of food provision.⁵⁷³ A 1961 *Woman* editor's letter intimated later perceptions of frozen food as an asset to women trying to combine domestic responsibilities with paid employment: 'Modern short-cut meals...are all boons to a busy woman, especially if she's a job-plus housewife.'⁵⁷⁴ However, until the 1970s, the imagined consumers for freezers were a niche market of those with a lot of home produce.⁵⁷⁵ Rural women fitted into this category. A 1964 Helifrost advertisement declared 'Freeze your own produce', while *H&C*'s Home Editor regarded a book called *Deep Freezing* as suitable for the country housewife reader: 'Farmers' wives and those with a well-stocked garden can learn how to really make their freezer pay'.⁵⁷⁶ The freezer is perhaps a unique example of a domestic appliance targeted at rural-dwellers. As such, it occupies a significant position, symbolizing inclusion of the countryside in the modern world of consumer durables. Of the many appliance advertisements in *H&C*, only those for freezers recognized facets of specifically country life and integrated them into the product's purpose. Advertisements for other appliances largely ignored the particularities of rural living, as the following section demonstrates.

⁵⁷² Helifrost advertisement, 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 10/1963, pp.357,370.

⁵⁷³ Shove and Southerton, 'Defrosting', pp.308,313.

⁵⁷⁴ Editor's letter, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.3.

⁵⁷⁵ Shove and Southerton, 'Defrosting', pp.305-306.

⁵⁷⁶ Helifrost advertisement, *H&C* 10/1964, p.335; 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 10/1968, p.399.

Domestic appliances: advertising and editorials

If ‘the modern domestic ideal, as represented by electrical appliances, was central to post-war British culture’⁵⁷⁷, then advertising for such appliances had a fundamental position within that ideal too. As in *Woman*, whose commercial success attracted many advertisers, *H&C* contained a range of appliance advertising by major manufacturers and an enormous number of smaller advertisements promoting items from kitchen timers to electric blankets.⁵⁷⁸ In contrast to this variety, CWS – who in effect financed the magazine (see Chapter One) – dominated *Outlook*. The *Outlook* sample contained only one advertisement for a non-Co-operative household item; the “‘Speediwork Trio” food grater and shredder’ was, of course, available from Co-operative stores.⁵⁷⁹

Outlook’s home pages often endorsed several Co-operative items, but each issue contained just one or two home-related advertisements. As late as 1965, these advertisements drew on older traditions of trust in the Co-operative name and faith in its products: ‘You know what you’re getting with Society’.⁵⁸⁰ Although CWS were not alone in claiming to be a trusted brand⁵⁸¹, such comments reinforce earlier arguments that the Co-operative movement had difficulties in adapting to new conceptualizations of consumption. However, the rest of this chapter and the next show that CWS advertising was not completely isolated. It echoed ideas and discourses found in other manufacturers’ advertising in this period; as Gurney remarks, ‘the movement had little choice to take up the weapons of its adversaries’.⁵⁸²

Many domestic appliance advertisements targeted women, ‘who had both more money to spend than ever before and a large say in what went into the home’.⁵⁸³ The consumer was widely perceived as female, with the housewife an especially prominent figure. Manufacturers presented appliances as essential tools in assisting with her domestic tasks: a 1955 advertisement claimed that eight out of ten housewives used gas cookers; CWS declared that their vacuum cleaners had ‘everything that busy housewives look for’.⁵⁸⁴ Despite, by the post-war years, women generally making the

⁵⁷⁷ Sparke, *Pink*, p.170.

⁵⁷⁸ Smith’s advertisement, *H&C* 05/1954, p.172; Leo Specialities Company, *H&C* 10/1969, p.142.

⁵⁷⁹ Speediwork advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1959, p.44.

⁵⁸⁰ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1965, p.30.

⁵⁸¹ Acme advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, back cover.

⁵⁸² Gurney, ‘Consumer’, p.969.

⁵⁸³ Sparke, *An Introduction*, p.154.

⁵⁸⁴ Gas Council advertisement, *H&C* 04/1955, p.154; CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1958, back cover.

transition to full-time housewifery upon the birth of their first child⁵⁸⁵, advertisements portrayed the wedding and initial period of marriage as critical in establishing the foundations of the home and a later move to full-time domesticity. CWS vacuum cleaners, for instance, were advertised as ‘A bargain for the new housewife!’ and ‘a wonderful opportunity for the newly married’, with ‘and the not-so-newly-married’ added in parentheses.⁵⁸⁶

These examples ignored the housing difficulties facing many newly-weds, outlined in the previous chapter. The emphasis on the bridal market was linked to the social ritual of weddings and the significance of gifts in setting up a home⁵⁸⁷; both editorial content and advertisements referred to products as suitable wedding presents.⁵⁸⁸ *H&C* and *Outlook* advertisements often featured brides as the recipient of goods, but the CWS vacuum cleaner advertisements were a rare suggestion that the reader themselves may be a bride. Overall, constructions of *H&C* and *Outlook* readers as brides or newly-weds were uncommon. In contrast, advertisements in *Woman* – whose readership spanned a wider age range – regularly addressed readers in these terms, with phrases such as ‘Now you’re engaged...the time to think about the things you must have to start a home of your own’.⁵⁸⁹

Despite appliance manufacturers targeting the female consumer, they did not depict buying decisions as solely women’s responsibility. Advertisements often pictured a satisfied-looking woman *and* man, insinuating joint decision-making.⁵⁹⁰ Unlike in inter-war period⁵⁹¹, advertisements did not speak to men as the purchasers, although they referred to husbands buying appliances for their wives: ‘Dad, bless his cotton socks, is buying Mum a Duomatic’.⁵⁹² Even in such circumstances, women were influential: ‘Even a hubby will see the point...Sing the praises of this cabinet wringer to your husband. He’ll agree that the “1209” is indeed a boon’.⁵⁹³ Such comments

⁵⁸⁵ Webster, *Imagining*, p.129.

⁵⁸⁶ For example, see: CWS advertisements, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, back cover; 10/1959, p.37.

⁵⁸⁷ Christine Morley, ‘Homemakers and Design Advice in the Postwar Period’, in Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, p.91; Theocharopoulou, ‘*Polykatoikia*’, pp.71-72; Maureen Turim, ‘Designing Women: the Emergence of the New Sweetheart Line’, in Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds.), *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body* (London, 1990), p.220.

⁵⁸⁸ For examples, see: ‘Our Cover Story’, *Outlook* 02/01/1954, front cover, p.27; ‘Gadget Gossip’, ‘Looking Forward’, *Woman* 10/04/1954, pp.43,51; ‘Tops in the Shops’, *Outlook* 08/10/1955, p.21; Editor’s Page, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, p.1; Ewbank advertisement, *H&C* 04/1960, p.132.

⁵⁸⁹ Belling advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.28.

⁵⁹⁰ Wellstood advertisement, *H&C* 10/1955, p.365; CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1961, p.32; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, ‘Make Do and Mend’.

⁵⁹¹ Scott, *Feminism*, p.257.

⁵⁹² Duo-matic advertisement, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.69.

⁵⁹³ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, back cover.

indicate the influence of family structure on consumption patterns⁵⁹⁴, and reinforce the expectation that women wanted household appliances. Other elements of the magazines articulated this supposed desire; in an *Outlook* short story, the protagonist's family buy her what she has always wanted – a washing machine – after she rescues a pregnant neighbour.⁵⁹⁵ This story drew on a broader discourse that constructed appliances as a reward for domestic success: as a 1954 *H&C* advertisement boldly proclaimed, 'A good housewife deserves a Hotpoint'.⁵⁹⁶

In *H&C*, the biggest electrical appliance advertising campaign was for Gas Council products. Their advertisements appeared regularly between 1954 and 1958, with a number in *Woman* too. They featured 'Mr Therm', an illustration of a star that personified the appliances. As well as being an abbreviation of thermostat, the moniker Mr Therm functioned to equate the appliances with domestic servants, as shown in phrases such as 'Leave the laundry to Mr Therm' and 'Mr Therm *burns* to serve you'.⁵⁹⁷ Similarly, *Woman* contained advertisements for the 'Supermaid' mop and 'Newmaid' vacuum cleaner in 1956 and 57 respectively.⁵⁹⁸ This equation of domestic appliances with servants first developed during the inter-war period, when the demise of domestic service began.⁵⁹⁹ However, aside from these examples, there is little indication that such meanings were widespread in these publications during the post-war period.

Domestic service is a notable absence in these magazines. This may reflect the timing of changes in servant keeping, which was largely before the 1950s, but it is still a surprise considering the importance placed on domestic service in the literature on women and domesticity. For instance, Giles emphasizes the legacy of service on middle- and working-class women, showing the diverse ways in which it affected their subjectivities and contributed to a class-striated feminine modernity.⁶⁰⁰ The decline of service resulted in massive changes that were part of the broader re-conceptualizations of social class in the post-war period. For middle-class women now responsible for actually undertaking their own housework, this was often understood as a downwards

⁵⁹⁴ Gill Jones and Christ D Martin, "'The 'Young Consumer' at Home: Dependence, Resistance and Autonomy', in Hearn and Roseneil (eds.), *Consuming Cultures*, p.17.

⁵⁹⁵ 'The Helpful Heart', *Outlook* 10/1960, pp.2-3,5,19.

⁵⁹⁶ Hotpoint advertisement, *H&C* 09/1954, p.312.

⁵⁹⁷ Gas Council advertisements, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.26; *H&C* 05/1954, p.158; 10/1956, back cover; 04/1957, back cover.

⁵⁹⁸ Newmaid advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.64; Supermaid advertisement, *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.44.

⁵⁹⁹ Warden, 'Powerful Women', p.140.

⁶⁰⁰ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.66-67,76,78,99.

move that created dissatisfaction.⁶⁰¹ The impact on working-class women was different. As Webster comments,

it represented collective progress, a transformation of the world of domesticity, where service is a bygone misery, a “station in life” and an experience of exploitation which they no longer have to endure or resist. The individual movement away from domestic service could also give “my own home” particular meanings.⁶⁰²

The *Outlook* sample barely remarks upon this ‘transformation’, despite the WCG’s status as an organization for working-class housewives. Only short stories referred to domestic service; outside syndicates provided the fiction, therefore the Co-operative, working-class, gendered perspective of the editorial content was not as evident. Even within fictional examples, remarks were largely limited to the occasional mention of a ‘daily’ rather than residential service. Furthermore, one 1960 story allied service with a specifically classed (and imperialist) experience that was no more: a retired colonel, portrayed as out-of-touch with the modern world, briefly remembers having servants in India.⁶⁰³ This suggests that service – like colonialism – was part of a vision of the past that did not feature in visions of the modern in this magazine.

The social class backgrounds of Guildswomen and many NFWI members means they were more likely to have been servants rather than servant-keepers in the past. As a result, a different, albeit closely related, discourse was more prevalent in appliance advertisements. For example, the Gas Council presented Mr Therm as a help to housewives, with appeals such as ‘Look at what he offers you!’ and claims that ‘Mum’s work is never done so quickly as when Mr Therm’s around’.⁶⁰⁴ In addition, Mr Therm was gendered male, distinguishing him from a more traditional washerwoman figure associated with service. The effect was similar – the appliance assisting the housewife in her tasks – but the meanings connected to *help* compared to *servant* were different. For women who may have first-hand experience of being servants, a seemingly more egalitarian discourse of help was perhaps more appropriate.

Numerous other manufacturers made similar assertions of helping the housewife; at one stage, *H&C*’s advertorial page – promoting advertisers in an editorial-style item – was even entitled ‘Let Us Help You Say Our Advertisers’.⁶⁰⁵ *Outlook*’s

⁶⁰¹ Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.360; Ravetz, ‘View’, p.189; Sparke, *Pink*, p.168; Summerfield, ‘Women’, pp.60-61; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.115-120,150-157; Winship, *Inside*, p.43; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, p.108.

⁶⁰² Webster, *Imagining*, p.154.

⁶⁰³ ‘Hi, Colonel!’, *Outlook* 10/1961, pp.40-42,44-46.

⁶⁰⁴ Gas Council advertisement, *H&C* 05/1954, p.158, 04/1957, back cover.

⁶⁰⁵ For examples, see: Fillery advertisement, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.8; ‘Let Us Help You Say Our Advertisers’, *H&C* 04/1961, p.150.

consumer column regularly described goods – all CWS or at least available in Co-operative stores – as helpful or solving some domestic difficulty. In 1954, for instance, the Home Editor wrote that a new type of handle holder would help housewives to keep their cupboards tidy, while in 1960, a wall-mounted tin opener was described as ‘a real help’.⁶⁰⁶ The perception of products as helping housewives linked to claims that appliances ended drudgery, a discourse continuing from the inter-war years.⁶⁰⁷ As Scott demonstrates, creating the conditions for ‘easy housework’ – hence ending drudgery – was at the heart of WCG understandings of modernization in the 1930s and 40s, with labour-saving devices an integral part of the modern home.⁶⁰⁸ Throughout the 1950s and 60s, such ideas were prevalent in all three publications. The notion of ‘ease’ with housework translated into product names; Morphy Richards, for example, advertised their ‘Easisteam and Spray Iron’ in *Woman*.⁶⁰⁹ There were more generic claims too. CWS advertising for both electrical and non-electrical products used phrases such as ‘designed to lighten the housework’ and ‘Say “Hello” to the Invincible 6021 and “Goody-bye” to dust and dirt’.⁶¹⁰

Mr Therm advertisements in *H&C* and *Woman* used similarly broad terms, with vague declarations such as ‘He makes such easy work of washday’ and ‘Wash day is child’s play’.⁶¹¹ Other examples outlined specific ways in which Mr Therm appliances reduced the labour involved; in April 1957, for instance, the advertisement proclaimed ‘So away with your pots and pans, kettles and cans – away with back-breaking drudgery’.⁶¹² Such statements relate to notions of domestic appliances as servants. However, this was not simply about domestic appliances replacing service: it also explicitly acknowledged the hard work of those women who had undertaken older forms of washing, in their own or others’ households. At the same time, ‘a hard day’s wash’ and other arduous tasks could now be eliminated for all women and relegated to the past, just as the experience of service was no more: ‘But Mondays nowadays bring no backache or bad temper or that “it-gets-me-down” feeling. Mr Therm can make “black Monday” an out-of-date bogey’.⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁶ ‘Tops in the Shops’, *Outlook* 03/07/1954, p.23; ‘Successful Shopping’, *Outlook* 10/1960, pp.16-17.

⁶⁰⁷ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.20-21.

⁶⁰⁸ Scott, ‘Workshops’, pp.172-173.

⁶⁰⁹ Morphy Richards advertisement, *Woman* 05/10/1968, p.6.

⁶¹⁰ CWS advertisements, *Outlook* 10/1961, p.32; 10/1962, p.38; 10/1963, p.28.

⁶¹¹ Gas Council advertisements, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.26; *H&C* 05/1954, p.158; *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.18.

⁶¹² Gas Council advertisement, *H&C* 04/1957, back cover.

⁶¹³ Gas Council advertisements, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.26; *H&C* 05/1954, p.158; 04/1956, back cover.

Due to these nuances, the Gas Council and other manufacturers appealed to both the former servant-keeping classes *and* the former servants. Advertisements united the groups through the common aim of reducing the arduousness of domestic chores and the time spent on them. Manufacturers had marketed the concept of ‘labour-saving’ since the inter-war period⁶¹⁴, reflecting the desire for easier housework articulated by the WCG and other women’s organizations.⁶¹⁵ Historical accounts highlight the fallacy of this labour-saving notion: many appliances and household devices failed to reduce the burden of housework because expected standards rose.⁶¹⁶ Journalists writing for these magazines similarly recognized the erroneous nature of supposedly labour-saving appliances. Previewing the 1957 ‘Festival of Women’, *Outlook*’s Editor asked ‘Have we really achieved emancipation from the drudgery of the home, or have we accepted higher standards along with labour-saving equipment, and burdened ourselves just as heavily as our mothers?’⁶¹⁷ In contrast, advertisements perpetuated the fallacy, often showing women in outfits that were highly impractical for housework – such clothing encouraging the myth that housework is not ‘real’ work.⁶¹⁸ A number of CWS advertisements, for instance, contained an illustration of a vacuum cleaner alongside a young woman with a cinched waist and a full skirt, highly reminiscent of Christian Dior’s New Look – a style widely used in advertising of the period.⁶¹⁹

As well as ending drudgery by making housework less physically arduous, advertisers promoted supposedly labour-saving appliances as time-saving. Again, literature on household technology argues that the notion of time-saving is a myth because standards surrounding cleaning increase to fill the time available.⁶²⁰ A 1954 Gas Council advertisement (Figure 3.1) hints at this rise in expectations: the illustrations show a range of activities to occupy this free time, including – as the headline stated – ‘other jobs’. However, the emphasis subtly shifts in later advertisements. Those from 1957 and 1958 also pictured children in images of domestic harmony, implying that these appliances contributed to a happy family life (see Figure 3.2). The inclusion of

⁶¹⁴ Scott, *Feminism*, p.256.

⁶¹⁵ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.81; Thane, ‘Women’, p.130.


⁶¹⁶ Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.358; Sparke, *Pink*, p.200; Winship, *Inside*, p.55; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, pp.107,159-160.

⁶¹⁷ ‘Festival of Women’, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, pp.16-17.

⁶¹⁸ Peter McNeil, “‘Put Your Best Face Forward’: The Impact of the Second World War on British Dress”, *Journal of Design History* 6 (1993), p.295; Turim, ‘Designing’, pp.222-223; Victoria Kelley, “‘The Virtues of a Drop of Cleansing Water’: Domestic Work and Cleanliness in the British Working Classes, 1880-1914”, *Women’s History Review* 18 (2009), p.725.

⁶¹⁹ For example, see: CWS advertisements, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, back cover; 10/1959, p.37; McNeil, ‘Best Face’, p.295; Turim, ‘Designing’, pp.217,222.

⁶²⁰ Cockburn and Fürst-Dilić, ‘Introduction’, p.13; Harrison, *Seeking*, p.30; Putnam, ‘Introduction’, p.13; Ravetz, ‘A View’, p.201; Warden, ‘Powerful Women’, p.140.



leave the laundry

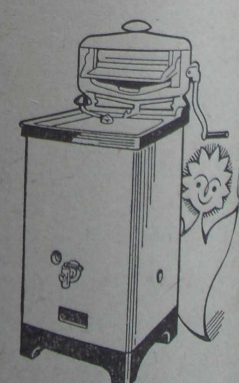
to Mr. Therm and have time for other jobs

It's Monday morning again—and that means washday. But Mondays nowadays bring no backache or bad temper or that 'it-gets-me-down' feeling. Mr. Therm can make 'black Monday' an out-of-date bogey. He makes such easy work of washday that you have plenty of time and energy for other jobs or recreation.

Look at what he offers you! A choice of handy, handsome gas washing machines which give you gallons of hot or *boiling* (that's important!) water quickly, cleanly and economically. Some of them have power-driven agitation and wringing, in others you merely work the built-in agitator for a few minutes and turn the wringer handle. And that's not all! One of Mr. Therm's gas-heated drying cabinets saves clothes-line space and makes you independent of the weather.

Good - it's GAS!

Issued by the Gas Council 158 THE GAS INDUSTRY MAKES



For demonstration and details of easy terms call at your gas showrooms.

... or Tatti has the charm of the Handic information included in the lace on p. 16

“W Sh A

B W A F W Is

SO wrote Sir G Skit on Will introduction of painter, who liv the Lady Harv shows her Tatti

Tatting is a Laces of the 16 In Knot-work its own thread. Frivolité imple Oriental name miss it was “T work, yet it is much crochet a ent on its neig below and in it to come. One s many more, bu ous name of t knot complete is not disarrang

For many ye knots over a le with very fine c pearls or picot appearance and about 1850 a M from a skein to thread always was a wonderfu A crochet hook

The difficulti quered the kna Stitch from the firm jerk, and the oval, there Tatting has onl

Courtesy: D.M.C. Thr

Figure 3.1 1954 Gas Council advertisement⁶²¹

⁶²¹ Gas Council advertisements, *H&C* 05/1954, p.158. Also shown in: *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.26.



Clean as a whistle!

and as quick as a wink! Mum's work is never done so quickly as when Mr. Therm's around. Hot water isn't a luxury, you know, it's a vital necessity! But why get it the hard way when you can have all you want *constantly, instantly and endlessly?* And **ONLY** Mr. Therm can do that, don't forget!

So away with your pots and pans, kettles and cans—away with back-breaking drudgery—that's no way to hot water health and comfort. Save on fuel, fuss and finance at the turn of a tap—that's *real* economy!

Let Mr. Therm solve *your* hot water problem at your Gas Showrooms—now! See his Variety Show of water heaters (for the bath too)—all on the easiest possible terms.



Mr THERM *burns* to serve you

THE GAS INDUSTRY MAKES THE **BEST** USE OF THE NATION'S COAL. Issued by the Gas Council

HOME AND COUNTRY (Regd. Trade Mark). 156 P.

Figure 3.2 1957 Gas Council advertisement⁶²²

⁶²² H&C 04/1957, back cover.

children combined contemporary conceptions of the maternal role and the theories of John Bowlby with more general ideas about rational housekeeping. Ludi Laermans and Carine Meulders assert that ‘In saving the housewife’s time and energy, rational housekeeping was a prerequisite for “emotional homemaking”. The time and energy saved were invested in cherishing husband and children, in creating an affectionate and protective family life’⁶²³; discussing the Netherlands, Freddie Floré similarly notes that the rationalization of household work was not to create isolated leisure but family leisure time.⁶²⁴ This reiterates the importance of women’s relational identities: in addition to the roles of bride, housewife and consumer, advertisements constructed women as mothers. These were not exclusive roles; the same advertisement often incorporated different identities. Women’s familial position was particularly crucial, though: as Chapter Four explores, the concept of the happy family and happy home life were central to post-war British society.

Also invoking the importance of the maternal role, the Mr Therm advertisements featuring babies had a noticeably different tone. Appearing in 1955, these advertisements used the baby as the narrator; aside from general product information, the text read as the baby’s thoughts or words. The address to the imaginary mother was condescending, with headlines such as ‘It’s stating the obvious but’ and ‘Your ignorance appalls me!’ In stark contrast to the housewife-as-expert discourse visible elsewhere in *H&C*, these advertisements implied that the baby was more knowledgeable than the mother was, as most apparent in the April 1956 example:

How often have I said that you are always irritable on Mondays after a hard day’s wash? It is so unnecessary when a gas washing machine will do it all for you in an hour or so. They tell me there are new gas/electric washing machines that are the last word.⁶²⁵

As well as reiterating labour- and time-saving claims, this passage positioned the mother as out-of-touch with *the latest* – modern – developments; an unspecified ‘they’ – presumably scientists or engineers, represented by the baby – are knowledgeable experts, she is out-dated and in need of guidance.

This construction of the mother and housewife as ignorant was not common. Other appliance advertisements offered a contrasting tone, with assertions such as ‘Servis agree with Mum’⁶²⁶ – an example from *Woman*, indicating that understandings

⁶²³ Laermans and Meulders, ‘Domestication’, p.126.

⁶²⁴ Freddie Floré, ‘Promoting Catholic Family Values and Modern Domesticity in Postwar Belgium’, in Heynen and Baydar (eds.), *Negotiating Domesticity*, p.92.

⁶²⁵ Gas Council advertisement, *H&C* 04/1956, back cover.

⁶²⁶ Persil advertisement, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.18.

of the housewife as educated and skilled were present on its pages and not just in *H&C* and *Outlook*. There were, however, notable differences between the organizational periodicals and the mainstream women's press. *Outlook* was unusual because of its Co-operative links. *H&C* was unusual because the majority of appliance advertising – from the Gas Council, Calor Gas and Hoover – appeared in the 1950s. Hoover, for instance, only used *H&C* in 1954 and 55, but continued to advertise in *Woman* as late as 1969.⁶²⁷ This reflects the greater attraction of a mass-circulation weekly for advertisers compared to a smaller monthly title. The 1960s shift is also related to the wider marginalization of the housewife, seen in housing and the consumer movement: while retaining some importance, the housewife of the NFWI and WCG was no longer as significant.

Outlook contained evidence of this shift too. At the same time as articles on consumer education continued to reiterate WCG and Co-operative contributions, editorial recommendations of CWS items used the authority and prestige that accompanied official endorsement from other consumer organizations. In 1960, for instance, the 'Come Shopping' column mentioned CoID approval of some tumblers.⁶²⁸ 'Come Shopping' is a title strikingly similar to the 'Come Co-operative Shopping' slogan used in many early 1960s CWS advertisements.⁶²⁹ This advertising campaign featured the face 'Mary Lauren'⁶³⁰, who – in an era when the consumer movement increasingly emphasized expertise and professionalism – functioned as an expert guide, helping consumers with their purchases. Notably, Lauren's face was an illustration not a photograph, suggesting that she was a fictional persona. What is crucial is that CWS tried to draw on the social capital associated with the professional expert.

Mary Lauren was not the sole figure depicted as a professional expert. References to appliances and other goods clearly demonstrate a move away from the housewife-as-expert discourse in favour of professional expertise. Although attitudes were rarely as condescending as in the earlier Mr Therm baby example, many contributors to the magazines understood the consumer – conceived as a woman, or more specifically, a housewife – as in need of advice in order to successfully negotiate the new landscape of consumer culture. Women's magazines had a crucial role in such education.⁶³¹ In *Woman*, Edith Blair, the Home Editor, served as the magazine's own

⁶²⁷ Hoover advertisements, *H&C* 04/1954, p.164; 05/1955, p.124; *Woman* 27/09/1969, p.36.

⁶²⁸ 'Come Shopping', *Outlook* 04/1960, pp.26-27.

⁶²⁹ 'Come Shopping', *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.28,30, 04/1960, pp.26-27, 04/1962, p.28; CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1961, p.15.

⁶³⁰ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1960, p.7.

⁶³¹ Winship, *Inside*, pp.42-43.

professional expert. The headlines used in articles attributed to Blair underline this by drawing on the language used by professional bodies within the consumer movement. 'Household Shopping Guide' is reminiscent of CAC's *Shopper's Guides* and 'Edith Blair Tests and Tells', appearing throughout the 1950s, invoked the comparative testing found in the *Shopper's Guides* and CA's *Which?*.⁶³²

During the 1960s, other *Woman* writers provided additional advice on household goods; Angela Talbot's column, for example, combined etiquette queries with guidance on domestic consumption under the heading 'How It's Done'.⁶³³ Rather than simply detracting from Blair's authority, these contributors enhanced the *magazine's* status as an expert and provider of education to readers. The experts writing for the organizational publications were not so prominent. In *H&C*, Gundrey's replacement as Home Editor was not a well-known journalist (see Chapter Two). In *Outlook*, Mary Holmes received the accreditation for some of the home and consumer pages, but the 1950s Home Editor was Susan Ingram (from late 1959, credit switched to an anonymous 'Home Editor'⁶³⁴). Ingram's column positioned her as an expert available to provide assistance, with sub-titles such as 'Susan Ingram helps you to ease wear and tear on the nerves this year'.⁶³⁵ However, *Outlook's* home pages did not present the magazine itself as the solution to problems in the same forceful manner as *Woman* did via Blair and her expert status.

Neither *H&C* nor *Outlook* contained a single figure that was as prominent as Blair, but their writers still featured as professional experts. As Chapter Two established, understandings of professional expertise in these publications did not depend on a dichotomy of amateur versus professional. Instead, the writers sometimes used the challenging of industry to assert themselves as experts. In April 1956, for instance, *H&C's* Gundrey discussed how coloured kitchen appliances were 'gay, but except by accident, never matching' and asked 'Why is collaboration in this matter so impossible?'.⁶³⁶ *Outlook's* Holmes voiced similar criticisms two years later, claiming that 'there seems to be no liaison between the architect and the manufacturers of labour-saving appliances...[I] hoped to see good planning and modern labour-savers in much more common use long before this'.⁶³⁷ Such comments indicate the conflict between

632 'Household Shopping Guide', *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.21; 'Edith Blair Tests and Tells', *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.47; 29/09/1956, p.42; 07/06/1958, p.49; 12/09/1959, p.46.

633 For example, see: 'How It's Done', *Woman* 12/12/1964, p.10.

634 'Come Shopping', *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.28,30.

635 'Around the House', *Outlook* 01/01/1955, pp.22-23.

636 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1956, p.147.

637 'Electricity in a Woman's World', *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.41-42.

different elements of the magazines. While advertisements for household appliances used certain discourses, editorial content raised other ideas and arguments – and readers’ input provided an additional layer. These three elements – producers, advertisers, readers – were not necessarily in harmony. Tensions and contradictions abounded, though there were also unifying themes. An emphasis upon the modern was one such commonality, as the final section of this chapter demonstrates.

Domestic appliances and the modern

Expertise was not the only signifier of the modern visible in representations of domestic appliances. As mentioned, the concept of labour-saving – however mythical it transpired to be – was crucial to NFWI and WCG ideas of the modern because of its association with the end of drudgery and notions of the modern home. Other constructions of the modern were apparent too. For example, advertisers used languages of the modern to publicize their goods: Radiation New World Cookers was a brand name that invoked the modernity of the nuclear age; conversely, a freezer manufacturer claimed ‘Helifrost brings the ice-age up to date!’⁶³⁸ International references were also significant to ideas of the modern, with different countries associated with certain ‘modern’ values and characteristics. The assertion of an international link was an attempt to align the product with the symbolic capital of that country and its associations. The constellation of international references that this created within *H&C* and *Outlook* added a cultural capital aspect to this as well: these depictions helped to educate readers in the associated meanings of different countries.

The USA was a huge economic and cultural influence on Britain in the twentieth century, especially in the post-war decades.⁶³⁹ While some welcomed the special relationship, others condemned supposed ‘Americanization’ as shorthand ‘for commercial, crass, cultureless culture’.⁶⁴⁰ Reactions to US influence in *H&C* and *Outlook* are difficult to discern, with limited and often only brief allusions; *Outlook*’s ‘Successful Shopping’ column, for instance, simply described Glamorene Carpet Shampooer as popular in America.⁶⁴¹ Attitudes appear largely favourable due to the association of the USA with one specific aspect of the modern: technology. The USA’s

⁶³⁸ Radiation New World Cookers advertisement, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.72; Helifrost advertisement, *H&C* 10/1963, p.357.

⁶³⁹ Andrews and Talbot, ‘Introduction’, p.6; Conekin et al, ‘Introduction’, p.19.

⁶⁴⁰ Conekin, *Autobiography*, p.214. See also: Conekin, *Autobiography*, p.156; Richards, *Films*, pp.166-167; Sparke, *Pink*, p.217; Water, ‘Strangers’, p.215.

⁶⁴¹ ‘Successful Shopping’, *Outlook* 10/1960, pp.16-17.

reputation as a leader in technological innovation, particularly in relation to labour-saving appliances and gadgets, meant the label ‘American’ or ‘American-style’ carried positive connotations of reducing drudgery and saving time.⁶⁴² In France, there was concern that their homes compared poorly to American homes in terms of appliances and the surprise articulated in *H&C* that British packaging had advantages over its US counterparts – ‘Can it be that Britain...is ahead of the USA in some aspects of packaging?’ – suggests that this unfavourable comparison was shared in Britain.⁶⁴³

Other countries were at the forefront of different aspects of the modern. The Scandinavian countries, for example, were the vanguard of modern design. ‘Scandinavia’ became synonymous with high quality, mid-century modern style: as the description of a ‘Danish Teak Spice Rack’ in *H&C* claimed, ‘This Spice Rack is a really first-class example of the excellence of Scandinavian design’.⁶⁴⁴ This spice rack illustrates the role of magazines in trying to help readers acquire symbolic capital; as the publication’s April 1969 reader offer, the promotion allowed readers to purchase this ‘first-class example’ of modern design for a greatly reduced price (47/6 rather than 75/6). Italy was also emblematic of post-war design.⁶⁴⁵ Ingram’s 1955 recommendation of a stovetop coffee pot, which she describes as an ‘Italian coffee machine’⁶⁴⁶, alludes to the ‘continental sophistication’, culture and cosmopolitanism associated with Italy and France.⁶⁴⁷

Such references were part of Britain’s international re-positioning in the post-war period, with some seeing Europe as ‘Britain’s proper place’.⁶⁴⁸ Moreover, these countries symbolized desirable traits for products and the magazines to be aligned with: ‘at a cultural level the European faces of modernity – at times Scandinavian, at other moments French and Italian – played a major role in shaping the views of many post-war arbiters of taste and aesthetic judgement’.⁶⁴⁹ Crucially, this connection between ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘the continent’ located cosmopolitanism at a reasonable distance away: in close proximity but not within Britain itself, hence avoiding mention of the increasing cosmopolitanism that accompanied large-scale immigration to Britain from

⁶⁴² Browne, ‘Decisions’, pp.135,137; Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.355.

⁶⁴³ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 04/1960, p.147; Eleb, ‘Modernity’, p.506; Pulju, ‘Consumers’, p.76.

⁶⁴⁴ Country Shopping Service, *H&C* 04/1969, p.154; Sparke, ‘An Introduction’, p.149; Sparke, *Pink*, pp.190-191.

⁶⁴⁵ Sparke, ‘An Introduction’, p.145.

⁶⁴⁶ ‘Tops in the Shops’, *Outlook* 09/04/1955, p.23.

⁶⁴⁷ Mort, ‘Striptease’, pp.28,44,48. See also: Anne M Cronin, ‘Advertising Difference: Women, Western Europe and “Consumer-citizenship”’, in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, p.170; Theocharopoulou, ‘*Polykatoikia*’, pp.73-74.

⁶⁴⁸ Conekin, *Autobiography*, p.187.

⁶⁴⁹ Conekin et al, ‘Introduction’, p.18.

the 1950s. As Mort notes, a range of anxieties and far less favourable attitudes surrounded this domestic aspect of cosmopolitanism.⁶⁵⁰

A 1962 *Outlook* discussion of vinyl flooring highlights the multifaceted nature of both the modern and these international references. The Home Editor commented that this flooring had been popular since it arrived from America, positioning the USA in the forefront of technology. However, continental Europe received the credit for design, with Italy the supposed inspiration.⁶⁵¹ This example accentuates the importance of science (technology) *and* aesthetics (design) in constructions of the modern; as Mass-Observation observed, women felt their homes ‘should be aesthetically furnished...and practical to run’.⁶⁵² Many advertisers emphasized technology and design too: CWS ‘easy-pour’ aluminium saucepans were ‘Approved for “Design Review”’ by CoID, while Hotpoint claimed theirs was ‘The only twin-tub with brains as well as beauty’.⁶⁵³

The concept of design was not the only signifier of a modern aesthetic. Colour was key, from bottle openers in ‘pastel shades’ to oil burners in ‘moss green and sky blue’.⁶⁵⁴ Colour was characteristic of the modern because of its links to particular ‘modern’ traits such as happiness. As Chapter Four explores further, contributors to the magazines communicated such meanings by using certain adjectives in conjunction with colour descriptions; *gay*, for example, appeared regularly: ‘Go *gay* in your kitchen...*gay* colours make brighter work’; ‘Many old kitchen friends making a new appearance in *gay* colours’.⁶⁵⁵

Similarly, understandings of science took various forms. Automatic mechanization – a technological development therefore part of the scientific discourse – was consistently presented as advantageous, as shown by claims in a 1959 Acme advertisement: ‘You simply close the special safety lid which *automatically* starts the electric motor’ and ‘The motor *automatically* stops’.⁶⁵⁶ Similarly, a 1962 *Outlook* fan heater recommendation noted that ‘an automatic safety device prevents over-heating’.⁶⁵⁷ A 1966 *Outlook* reader letter indicates the benefits associated with automation. Mrs Sarah Donaldson includes her cooker’s ‘automatic timer’ alongside items such as ‘our fridge’ as the ‘advantages of to-day’s easy-to-run homes’⁶⁵⁸, suggesting that scientific

⁶⁵⁰ Mort, ‘Scandalous’, p.108.

⁶⁵¹ ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.28.

⁶⁵² Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.344.

⁶⁵³ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 06/10/1956, p.21; Hotpoint advertisement, *Woman* 12/12/1964, p.40.

⁶⁵⁴ ‘Tops in the Shops’, *Outlook* 03/07/1954, p.23; ‘Today in the Kitchen’, *H&C* 10/1958, pp.297-298.

⁶⁵⁵ Addis advertisement, *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.64; ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 04/1956, p.147.

⁶⁵⁶ Acme advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, back cover.

⁶⁵⁷ ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.28.

⁶⁵⁸ Mrs Sarah Donaldson, *Outlook* 10/1966, pp.29-30.

innovations such as automation were understood as critical factors behind the development of supposedly labour-saving appliances and the end of drudgery. Allusions to the positive impact of science upon domestic tasks reinforce this suggestion. *H&C*'s Denman column listed a course called 'Science: the Housewife's Friend'⁶⁵⁹, while *Outlook*'s Home Editor commented in the early 1960s that 'In recent years there has been a great deal of scientific research into domestic equipment – all aimed at making the housewife's work just that much easier'.⁶⁶⁰

Cleanliness was another aspect to understandings of science, with its origins in the nineteenth century medical-hygienic discourse that linked it with science, hygiene and health.⁶⁶¹ In the inter-war years, cleanliness was crucial to social status and notions of the 'good housewife'. It held particular significance for working-class women: because of widely held prejudices linking the working classes with lack of hygiene, to these women modernity meant cleanliness, health and belonging.⁶⁶² Laermans and Meulders argue that the symbolism of cleanliness declined in the post-1945 period, with the introduction of automatic washing machines meaning it 'lost its distinctive power, having become too common'.⁶⁶³ However, evidence from these publications shows that cleanliness retained some of its earlier meanings even into the 1960s. The concept of 'clean' remained most apparent in advertising for appliances, regularly promoted with phrases such as 'You get super-cleaning suction', 'And gets it even cleaner... Yes cleaner' and 'Hotpoint washes cleanest because it cannot tangle clothes'.⁶⁶⁴

Editorial content presented appliances as solving related problems of hygiene too. *H&C*'s report on a government campaign, mentioned earlier, included use of pressure cookers amongst the 'simple rules' for housewives to observe in order to 'protect themselves and their families from food poisoning'.⁶⁶⁵ Also in relation to food poisoning, Ingram commented in 1957 that 'unless you have a refrigerator fish should be eaten the day it is bought'.⁶⁶⁶ This positioned refrigerators as a hygienic method of

⁶⁵⁹ Denman College column, *H&C* 10/1958, p.309; Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.140.

⁶⁶⁰ 'Come Shopping', *Outlook* 04/1962, p.28.

⁶⁶¹ Laermans and Meulders, 'Domestication', p.120.

⁶⁶² Giles, *Parlour*, p.161; Kelley, 'Virtues', pp.720-721,724; Mark Swenarton, 'Having a Bath – English Domestic Bathrooms 1890-1940', in Design History Conference Papers, *Leisure in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1976), p.96.

⁶⁶³ Laermans and Meulders, 'Domestication', p.121.

⁶⁶⁴ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1960, p.38; Acme advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, back cover;

Hotpoint advertisement, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.18.

⁶⁶⁵ 'Aberdeen and After', *H&C* 04/1965, p.137.

⁶⁶⁶ 'Around the House', *Outlook* 13/07/1957, pp.8-9.

storage, as well as convenient; prior to the widespread ownership of refrigerators, frequent shopping trips were needed in order to buy fresh food.⁶⁶⁷

During the 1960s, new man-made materials such as Teflon began to feature more prominently as part of this science discourse.⁶⁶⁸ Britain had made an important contribution to this field: as Conekin notes in relation to the Festival of Britain, these were ‘a fitting topic in the Festival’s celebration of British achievements in 1951, as the British had developed numerous new materials during and just after the war ranging from plastics to plywood’.⁶⁶⁹ This sense of national pride in such scientific discoveries helped to construct Britain as *part* of the modern, positioning the nation alongside its European neighbours and the USA, rather than simply aligning with aspects of the modern associated with other countries.

Plastics were the most noticeable synthetic material mentioned in these magazines; in one article, Ingram promoted three plastic items: a trug, paper towel dispenser and recipe chart.⁶⁷⁰ As with clothing fabrics (see Chapter Five), specific firms were influential: *H&C*’s ‘Home Affairs’ and *Outlook*’s ‘Come Shopping’ endorsed the Melaware brand, which made products such as tableware from melamine plastic.⁶⁷¹ These publications portrayed plastics positively, with no suggestion that they were unhygienic or even poisonous (fears that some Italian housewives had⁶⁷²); a Denman course summary even went as far as describing plastic as part of ‘Modern Trends in the Arts’, stating ‘Plastic art will be considered as part of the movement to improve designs in our homes’.⁶⁷³

The widely levelled criticism of poor quality was alluded to in *Outlook*’s 1957 ‘News In Plastics’ report. However, the writer observed that the improvements to nylon would happen to plastics too, so ‘that all household objects in this material will be less brittle’.⁶⁷⁴ This article included objects commended by CoID, an organization highly critical of plastics; these items must have escaped condemnation by not denying their supposedly ‘inauthentic’ nature.⁶⁷⁵ As well as kitchen and tableware, the report

⁶⁶⁷ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.26.

⁶⁶⁸ ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.28; Tower advertisement, *Woman* 02/12/1967, p.24.

⁶⁶⁹ Conekin, *Autobiography*, p.126.

⁶⁷⁰ ‘Tops in the Shops’, *Outlook* 04/1958, p.15.

⁶⁷¹ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1962, pp.371-372; ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1960, pp.26-27.

⁶⁷² Arvidsson, ‘Therapy’, p.256.

⁶⁷³ Denman College course list, *H&C* 04/1962, p.133.

⁶⁷⁴ ‘Mary Holmes’ Notebook’, *Outlook* 10/1957, p.46; Penny Sparke, ‘Introduction: On the Meanings of Plastics in the Twentieth Century’, in Penny Sparke (ed.), *The Plastics Age – From Bakelite to Beanbags and Beyond* (New York, 1993), p.8; Penny Sparke, ‘Introduction to Part Two – Plastics and Modernity 1915-1960’, in Sparke (ed.), *The Plastics Age*, p.38; Clare Catterall, ‘Perceptions of Plastics: a Study of Plastics in Britain, 1945-1956’, in Sparke (ed.), *The Plastics Age*, p.67.

⁶⁷⁵ Sparke, *Pink*, p.218; Catterall, ‘Perceptions’, pp.69-71.

described an ovoid pendant lampshade: ‘the design is modern in the best sense, the colours gay, the shade durable and easily cleaned’.⁶⁷⁶ In this description, we see several key signifiers of the modern: design, colour and hygienic labour-saving. Mid-1950s *H&C* and *Woman* descriptions of laminated plastic such as Formica used similar terms: ‘heat-and-stain resistance’; ‘This modern laminated plastic banishes work and brings beauty and ease into your home...It is made in over fifty colours and designs’.⁶⁷⁷

Chapter Four further considers the role of synthetic materials in representations of the modern home, along with a number of other themes established in this exploration of domestic goods. This chapter has demonstrated that the distinctive perspectives of organizational periodicals remained visible; the presence of freezers indicated the rural modernity that characterized *H&C*, while CWS domination of advertising in *Outlook* reinforced its Co-operative version of the modernity. Their gendered perspectives also continued to be fundamental. The housewife was an especially significant figure as she was the envisioned user of domestic goods, with constructions reflecting post-war reconfigurations of social class: the promotion of appliances as domestic ‘help’, as seen in advertising, embraced both former servants and former servant-keepers.

Visions of the modern home reveal understandings of modern womanhood in other ways too. Despite some skepticism about notions of ‘labour-saving’, the magazines featured the idea that electricity and electrical appliances ended drudgery by making homes easier to clean and hence suggested that the work undertaken by the modern housewife was no longer as physically arduous. As a result, she had more time to dedicate to emotional homemaking; the contemporary accentuation of women’s roles as mothers was clearly apparent in many 1950s advertisements. The marginalization of the housewife-as-expert discourse was again visible, with greater emphasis on professional expertise: that of individuals (Home Editors), groups (CoID) and the magazines themselves (notably *Woman*). Another theme from previous chapters was the role of an international outlook. Advertisements and editorial content articulated distinct connotations attached to the USA, Scandinavia and Italy. Collectively this created an image of cosmopolitanism that avoided reference to immigration into Britain; individually, each country signified a different aspect of the modern. Design was important, as was colour and the scientific discourse, which had several facets: technology, synthetic materials, hygiene and cleanliness were all crucial notions.

⁶⁷⁶ ‘Mary Holmes’ Notebook’, *Outlook* 10/1957, p.46.

⁶⁷⁷ ‘Domestic Diary’, *H&C* 05/1954, pp.182-183; Formica advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.62; Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.142.

We have also seen the role that the disparate factions within each magazine played in *H&C* and *Outlook*'s visions of the modern home. Both their producers (represented in the editorial content) and their advertisers presented the modern home as a means of acquiring and accumulating social capital, but they offered different ways for the reader to invest. The advertisements largely promoted appliances, reflecting the importance of domestic goods ownership in defining the modern home. However, the publications' Home Editors showed awareness that this definition excluded many readers who for various reasons did not own such appliances. The Home Editors negotiated this stress on appliances by featuring smaller, less expensive items on their home pages. These gadgets did not have the same level of symbolic capital as larger goods such as washing machines, but they were a compromise that was more accessible to many readers. Reading the periodicals was another way of investing. Depictions of the modern home implied an alignment between the modern characteristics identified, such as cosmopolitanism, and the magazines themselves. This investment worked purely internally, within the worlds of *H&C*, *Outlook* and their organizations, as neither magazine had sufficient symbolic capital to bestow legitimacy outside of their own pages. More importantly, though, the publications gave advice and guidance designed to enable readers to acquire cultural capital. The magazines were cultural intermediaries: their visions of the modern home provided a form of education, helping readers to develop the 'right' knowledge to create their own modern home.

Chapter Four

The Role of Interior Design and Décor in the Modern Home

‘Cottage or contemporary’ was the description given to wallpaper showing ‘fruits...with stripe colours’ in *H&C*’s October 1958 ‘Home Affairs’ column.⁶⁷⁸ The previous year, *Outlook*’s Editor discussed décor styles on display at the forthcoming Festival of Women, commenting that the event’s co-ordinating designer ‘has tried to interpret contemporary feminine taste, and believes that it is emphatically opposed to “the mood of the pallid pastel”’.⁶⁷⁹ These statements indicate the varied styles encompassed under the term ‘contemporary’. As the previous chapter established, there were differing versions of the modern décor and design: as well as the ‘good taste’ of CoID, there other interpretations of ‘contemporary’, including a ‘feminised model of modernity’.⁶⁸⁰

Interior design was a vital aspect of constructions of the modern home in these magazines and an additional facet to understandings of the modern. This chapter demonstrates that one single ‘modern’ style was not dominant in *H&C* and *Outlook*. Instead, writers and advertisers positioned a range of styles as modern in one way or another. For example, a manufacturer might label a fabric as modern because of its colour; as seen in relation to goods and appliances, colour was a key feature in notions of the modern home. The chapter introduces other traits that the magazines portrayed as signifiers of a modern home, such as warmth, lightness and brightness, illustrating the different facets of the modern emphasized in terms of interior decoration compared to household goods and reinforcing the argument that each periodical included multifarious visions of the modern.

The chapter continues to contend that contributors to *H&C* and *Outlook* negotiated ideas of the modern in order to incorporate their rural and working-class readers into the versions of modernity offered in the magazines, hence the publications contained distinctive representations of design and decor. The chapter begins by outlining the approach to décor in these magazines before exploring the ways in which the magazines presented creating a modern home: in addition to the domestic consumption seen in Chapter Three, home-crafts and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) were crucial. The second section further investigates women’s roles in making a modern home; again, the breadth of roles and identities is central, with housewife reader

⁶⁷⁸ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1958, pp.323,325,326.

⁶⁷⁹ ‘Festival of Women’, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, pp.16-17.

⁶⁸⁰ Sparke, *Pink*, pp.188-189.

positioned – amongst other things – as a producer *and* consumer.⁶⁸¹ The final section focuses upon how representations of décor within the publications contributed to constructions of the modern.

Interior design was not an area of widespread NFWI and WCG involvement, probably because decoration was largely an individual matter. In contrast to clear (albeit complex) involvement in consumer issues, the magazines only alluded to organizational activities. For instance, Denman course listings included ‘Colour and Design in the Home’ and ‘The Interior Decoration of our Homes’, implying some internal design education but there is no further evidence of this in the magazines.⁶⁸² Upon first impression, this lack of organizational activity appears to translate into lack of concern for interior décor in *H&C* and *Outlook*. Many women’s magazines published articles on decorating and furnishing one’s home, such as *Woman*’s 1955 ‘Decorating a Place of Your Own’ and its twenty-four page pullout entitled ‘The *Woman* Book of Floors, Walls, Windows’ in 1969.⁶⁸³ Neither *H&C* nor *Outlook* contained comparable pieces, instead providing interior decoration guidance in the regular home column and focusing on specific aspects of décor, such as ‘The Choice and Care of Curtains’ and ‘A New Carpet for Spring’.⁶⁸⁴

Colour was a factor behind these different approaches to interior design; as investigated in Chapter One, use of colour was not widespread in the organizational publications and large-scale interior design items, as seen in *Woman*, relied upon visual stimulus.⁶⁸⁵ These differences echo each title’s relationship with advertisers. Due to its high circulation, *Woman* attracted far more advertising than *H&C* or *Outlook*, particularly for expensive items such as furniture and carpets. *Woman* also gave advertisers more opportunities for tie-ins and promotions; a 1963 article called ‘The Family Room’, for instance, coincided with a furniture exhibition.⁶⁸⁶ *Outlook* contained little advertising or editorial content about furniture or carpet and the examples found continued the pro-Co-operative policy.⁶⁸⁷ *H&C* was similarly reticent, although

⁶⁸¹ Sparke, ‘Introduction’, p.3.

⁶⁸² Denman College listings, *H&C* 09/1954, p.327; 10/1960, p.367; 10/1964, pp.350-351.

⁶⁸³ ‘Decorating a Place of Your Own’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.7; Next week’s contents, *Woman* 27/09/1969, p.27; Sparke, *An Introduction*, p.154;

⁶⁸⁴ ‘Around the House’, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, pp.10-11; 04/1958, pp.20-21; ‘Home Affairs’ *H&C* 10/1965, pp.388-389.

⁶⁸⁵ Hackney, ‘Use’, p.28.

⁶⁸⁶ ‘The Family Room’, *Woman* 26/01/1963, pp.16-17.

⁶⁸⁷ ‘Guide to Good Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.16-17.

commercial pressures were occasionally apparent; an advertisement for Liden furniture appeared within six months of an endorsement in 'Home Affairs'.⁶⁸⁸

These issues again draw attention to industrial and commercial influences. The approach to interior design and decoration in the organizational magazines reinforces the earlier finding that subjects emphasized in contemporary accounts or later historical work were often absent from the pages of *H&C* and *Outlook*. For example, housing design changed enormously in the post-war period, with developments such as the decline of domestic services resulting in alterations to kitchen arrangements.⁶⁸⁹ NFWI and WCG involvement in housing issues had previously included a concern for layout as women's responsibility for domestic chores meant that the unsuitability of design and layout particularly affected them.⁶⁹⁰ Changes were alluded to in *H&C*, with the observation that housewives were subjected to a 'bombardment of advice...explaining how they may plan, re-arrange, re-shape, re-equip their kitchens'.⁶⁹¹ However, only *Woman* contained articles about the kitchen in terms of layout and use of space.⁶⁹² The 'revolution in domestic interior design that transformed kitchens and bathrooms' is difficult to discern in *H&C* and *Outlook* because of the absence of large interior design articles and limited support/pressure from relevant advertisers, both of which hindered representations of important innovations such as the fitted kitchen.⁶⁹³

The mid-twentieth century demise of the parlour – another development affecting housing layout and a key historical theme – received scant consideration too, mentioned only obliquely in a *Woman* reader's letter about her family's use of their 'front room'.⁶⁹⁴ Similarly, the rise of open-plan design features prominently in literature on post-war housing but was not widely acknowledged in these magazines. Images from *Woman* indicate a modest shift, with advertisements and articles depicting combined sitting and dining areas.⁶⁹⁵ The only reference to open-plan in the organizational publications was in 'Ancient and Modern', a 1963 *Outlook* short story in

⁶⁸⁸ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 10/1968, p.399; Liden advertisement, *H&C* 04/1969, p.180.

⁶⁸⁹ Attfield, 'Pram Town', pp.215-238; Burnett, *History*, p.280; Darling, 'The House', p.134.

⁶⁹⁰ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.88,91-92; Scott, 'Workshops', pp.174-175; Putnam, 'Introduction', p.11; Ravetz, 'View', pp.185-205; Joan Rothschild and Victoria Rosner, 'Feminisms and Design: Review Essay', in Rothschild (ed.), *Design and Feminism*, pp.11; Scott, 'Workshops', p.176; Susana Torre, 'Expanding the Urban Design Agenda: A Critique of the New Urbanism', in Rothschild (ed.), *Design and Feminism*, p.39.

⁶⁹¹ 'Today in the Kitchen', *H&C* 10/1958, pp.297-298.

⁶⁹² 'The Family Room', *Woman* 26/01/1963, pp.16-17; Keeble, 'Domesticating', pp.103,108-109.

⁶⁹³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, p.107. See also: Browne, 'Decisions', p.142.

⁶⁹⁴ Miss JE, *Woman* 07/06/1958, pp.3-4; Attfield, 'Empty', p.85; Madigan and Munro, 'Ideal Homes', p.28; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, The Parlour.

⁶⁹⁵ Lebus advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.5; 'Make Your Dream Home Come True', *Woman* 19/03/1960, pp.24-25.

which the protagonist states that an architect designed her new open-plan house.⁶⁹⁶

Outside of fiction, this individual, architect-designed option was clearly limited to those with considerable financial means.

Once more, the organizational periodicals – and to an extent, even *Woman* – did not simply reiterate the values of the dominant symbolic economy or the priorities of later literature. Instead, contributors to the magazines negotiated different constructions of modern interior design and decoration. For example, those writing for the organizational periodicals were reasonably attentive to issues of cost. Their Home Editors recognized the financial restrictions hindering the purchase of expensive items such as furniture. In 1959, Ingram lamented ‘Don’t you sometimes wish you could scrap every item of furniture and start all over again? I know I do, very often, but mostly it is just wishful thinking’⁶⁹⁷; a decade later *H&C*’s Home Editor commented that ‘the only new piece of furniture I have ever bought was a double bed. And I am not alone in this’.⁶⁹⁸ As the level of advertising pressure on *Woman* – the only one of the three to contain regular furniture advertisements – was far greater than that on *H&C* and *Outlook*, these Home Editors perhaps had more freedom than *Woman*’s Edith Blair did to make such remarks.

Social class was another factor behind such comments. We have seen that the differing class composition of the NFWI and WCG memberships affected representations of domestic service in appliance advertising; it also influenced interiors, design and layout. The growing number of references in the 1960s to expensive housing alterations in *H&C* compared to *Outlook* mirrored the WI’s increasingly middle-class nature. This is most evident in the later discussion of renovation, but was visible in terms of home extensions too: some 1960s *H&C* advertisements promoted additions such as a ‘sun lounge’ and one ‘Home Affairs’ column mentioned adding an extension (the latter probably reflecting pressure to include endorsements of advertised goods in editorial content).⁶⁹⁹

On the whole, however, rather than expensive alterations or issues of layout that might only affect readers living in new houses, the organizational magazines presented design and décor advice tailored to the circumstances of readers, many of whom were working-class. In particular, these periodicals focused upon assisting women readers in creating and making their own interiors. Home-crafts were crucial to this, forming an

⁶⁹⁶ ‘Ancient and Modern’, *Outlook* 04/1963, pp.2-3,14-15,21.

⁶⁹⁷ ‘About the House’, *Outlook* 04/1959, pp.40-41.

⁶⁹⁸ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 04/1969, p.171.

⁶⁹⁹ For example, see: Denham Horticultural Buildings, *H&C* 04/1963, p.146. ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 04/1966, p.163.

integral part of the modern home as conceptualized within these publications. Home-crafts were a popular activity for women and an important element of women's magazines, with covers publicizing craft-related contents to attract readers.⁷⁰⁰ Hackney shows the significance of crafts to women's magazine culture in the inter-war years, positioning home-craft as part of an 'intersecting network of discourses' that included interior design.⁷⁰¹ Her work shares numerous points of contact with other research that informs this study; she argues, for instance, that home-craft contributed to 'a distinctly feminine modernity'.⁷⁰²

Hackney distinguishes between handicrafts and home-crafts. The former needed high levels of skill and commitment; the latter were 'a consumer craft' requiring minimum skill – 'Editors underlined its therapeutic and relaxing qualities'.⁷⁰³ Although this distinction is useful, judgements based on perceptions of skill have often led to the devaluation of all craft activities.⁷⁰⁴ Moreover, the two activities overlapped, hence this study uses the term home-handicrafts. Home-handicrafts had links to other activities, sometimes converging with home-dressmaking: a 1969 *H&C* advertisement promoted a book of 'crochet patterns for wardrobe and home' and an article on 'Leathercraft' in the same issue asked 'Have you every thought of making a garment in leather?'.⁷⁰⁵

Readers wrote to *Outlook* about their crafting projects, including woodwork, making doll's clothes and patchwork.⁷⁰⁶ The latter correspondent thanked other readers who had sent her scraps of material, intimating a culture of craft activities outside of the magazine. There is no suggestion, though, that craft was a component of the Guild's organizational identity. In contrast, *H&C* clearly displays the place of handicrafts in the NFWI's collective organizational culture. Along with listings for Denman courses such as 'Staging and Displaying of Handicrafts' and 'Methods of Teaching (Handicrafts)', there were articles by the Institute's Handicrafts Sub-Committee and reviews of craft-related events and publications.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁰ Langhamer, *Leisure*, pp.177-178.

⁷⁰¹ Hackney, 'Use', p.23.

⁷⁰² Hackney, 'Use', p.26.

⁷⁰³ Hackney, 'Use', p.25.

⁷⁰⁴ Claire Colebrook, 'Introduction', *Feminist Theory* 7 (2006), p.135; Hackney, 'Use', p.24; Llewellyn Negrin, 'Ornament and the Feminine', *Feminist Theory* 7 (2006), p.227; Sparke, *Pink*, pp.150-153,184-185.

⁷⁰⁵ 'Leathercraft', *Crochet Classics* advertisement, *H&C* 10/1969, pp.389,403.

⁷⁰⁶ Mrs A Garrett, *Outlook* 02/ 01/1954, pp.6-7; Miss RB Barwood, 14/07/1956, p.11.

⁷⁰⁷ Denman College column, *H&C* 04/1956, p.133; 'Frivolite', *H&C* 05/1954, pp.159,161; 'From Our Notebook', *H&C* 10/1962, p.337; review of Embroiders' Guild journal, *H&C* 10/1966, p.389.

Handicrafts were fundamental to the organization's re-evaluation of domesticity.⁷⁰⁸ In both NFWI culture and the magazines that Hackney explores, such activities represented a re-negotiation of the meanings surrounding traditionally feminine skills and an assertion of their value and worth.⁷⁰⁹ This re-negotiation was largely limited to *within* the organization and the publications and did not enhance the social capital of home-handicrafts outside of these spaces. The level of condescension directed at such activities highlights their lack of legitimacy and symbolic capital. Paul Greenlagh, for instance, describes WI handicrafts as 'a vision of craft void of the original political commitment, a vernacular ruralism with pretensions to decorative art' – comments exposing a craft hierarchy that excludes and undermines amateur practice.⁷¹⁰ The *H&C* request for City and Guilds 'success stories' in crafts indicates a desire to repudiate such critiques.⁷¹¹ However, the success of such challenges was unlikely due to the prominence of professionalism in the post-war period. As seen in relation to consumer education, the shift away from amateurism to formalized professions marginalized the organizations' alternative framework for understanding professionalism and expertise.

Notions of professionalism and expertise were evident in relation to DIY too, with tradesmen concerned about amateur involvement in home repairs and alterations.⁷¹² In contrast, some manufacturers actually utilized the widely held amateur/professional dichotomy in order to promote their products; Stadex insisted that professional decorators used their wallpaper paste, while 'Rufflette Deep-Pleat' drapery tape claimed to bring 'a professional touch' to homemade curtains.⁷¹³ DIY emerged as 'part of the culture of post-war reconstruction, domesticity and then late 1950s consumerism; of people building a better world in the aftermath of World War Two'.⁷¹⁴ As well as specialist publications and television shows, women's magazines included DIY advice.⁷¹⁵ This rise of DIY further relegated home-handicrafts to a marginal position: in terms of the dominant symbolic economy, DIY had more value than crafts due to its association with home-ownership⁷¹⁶ – a prized value in post-war British society, albeit one not shared by these publications, as Chapter Two explored.

⁷⁰⁸ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.69-76.

⁷⁰⁹ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.67-68,81; Hackney, 'Use', pp.32,35.

⁷¹⁰ Hackney, 'Use', p.24.

⁷¹¹ 'Notes from Headquarters', *H&C* 10/1962, p.365.

⁷¹² Johnson, 'Do-It-Yourself', p.70; Oram, 'Constructing', p.180.

⁷¹³ Stadex advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.70; 'New from Our Advertisers', *H&C* 04/1958, p.128.

⁷¹⁴ Browne, 'Decisions', p.131.

⁷¹⁵ Browne, 'Decisions', p.131; Holliday, 'Truths?', p.65; White, *Magazines*, p.162.

⁷¹⁶ Gurney, 'Friends', p.52.

The boundaries between DIY and home-handicrafts can be difficult to decipher.⁷¹⁷ *H&C* and *Outlook* had columns entitled ‘Do It Yourself’ that covered topics closely connected to home-handicrafts and home-dressmaking, such as repairs to upholstery and making a skirt.⁷¹⁸ Such broad definitions of DIY abounded in the 1950s – when the concept was still in its infancy – but continued into the 1960s; in 1965, for example, an advertisement for ‘Do It Yourself’ Christmas crackers appeared in *H&C*.⁷¹⁹ The difficulties inherent in categorizing DIY and home-handicraft activities are further apparent in relation to consumption. Although DIY and home-handicrafts were about making and producing, they were part of post-war consumer culture, as the level of commercialization surrounding both activities shows. The regular endorsement of craft items in *H&C*’s advertorial column mirrored the tie-ins and product placement that Hackney found.⁷²⁰ Furthermore, every issue of *H&C* included an enormous number of home-handicraft-related advertisements. Claims of links to the organization suggest that the NFWI handicraft culture was a major attraction for advertisers; Bell Publishers, for example, described one author as a ‘WI craftswoman’ and Jackson’s Stores advertised the official Institute jubilee rug kit.⁷²¹ These claims were treated with some scepticism but the magazine’s producers were keen to not jeopardize the presence of such advertising; in 1962, the Editor and publishing sub-committee vetoed the publication of a reader’s letter implying ‘that books written by WI craftswomen were suspect’.⁷²²

Outlook lacked a comparable level of home-handicrafts advertisements, probably because of CWS domination and the lack of association between the Guild and home-handicrafts. However, the commercialization surrounding DIY was clear.⁷²³ All three magazines included DIY-related advertisements. Again, *Outlook* featured only advertisements and endorsements of CWS or Co-operative-stocked products.⁷²⁴ *H&C*, on the other hand, contained advertisements by Dulux, the paint manufacturer, and a number of other firms offering demonstrations, lectures and films about DIY and home

⁷¹⁷ David Johnson ‘The History and Development of Do-It-Yourself’, in Design History Conference Papers, *Leisure in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1976), p.69; Hackney, ‘Use’, p.23; Sparke, *Pink*, p.171.

⁷¹⁸ ‘Do It Yourself’, *H&C* 04/1958, p.113; *Outlook* 04/1959, p.12.

⁷¹⁹ Newall’s advertisement, *H&C* 10/1965, p.390.

⁷²⁰ ‘Let Us Help You Say Our Advertisers’, *H&C* 04/1961, p.150; ‘Advertising Extra’, *H&C* 10/1966, p.390; Hackney, ‘Use’, p.25.

⁷²¹ Bell Publishers advertisement *H&C* 10/1962, p.364; Jackson’s Stores advertisement, *H&C* 10/1965, p.378.

⁷²² *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 26/10/1962.

⁷²³ Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.142.

⁷²⁴ For examples, see: CWS advertisements, *Outlook* 04/1958, p.23; 10/1958, p.20; ‘Housewife’s Choice’, *Outlook* 10/1956, p.30; ‘Guide to Good Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.16-17.

decoration.⁷²⁵ The presence of such advertising reinforces the position of DIY and home-handicrafts as *part* of consumer culture, not divorced from it. It also accentuates the extent to which the modern home was both purchased *and* homemade. This, and the responsibilities of women for consuming and producing the modern home, is the focus of the following section.

Creating a modern home

Within these publications, domestic appliances and particular aesthetics were not the only elements of the modern home; how the modern interior was constructed was an additional factor, with home-handicrafts and DIY central to this. Furthermore, understandings of what constituted ‘modern’ varied depending on the room. For example, Chapter Three investigated the modern associations of cleanliness and hygiene, facets of the scientific discourse. Contributors to these magazines heavily emphasized cleanliness and hygiene in relation to rooms where such traits were most desirable, namely the kitchen and bathroom. In April 1962, for instance, ‘Come Shopping’ recommended a linen box for bathrooms on the basis that it was made of plastic, hence easy to clean.⁷²⁶

Aligning rooms with specific meanings was not new in the post-war period; Hamlett asserts that nineteenth-century decorating advice positioned the dining room as ‘masculine’, with plain, dark designs, and the drawing room as ‘feminine’, with more floral and frivolous décor⁷²⁷, while Hackney notes that inter-war magazine advice ascribed the bedroom as a feminine space.⁷²⁸ This gendered association is apparent in ‘Frills and Furbelows’, a 1957 *Woman* article in which three female actors describe their ideal dressing-table to the magazine’s Home Editor; Julie Andrews’s description states ‘White embroidered muslin to drape deliciously, a deep rose satin petticoat to show below because it’s a flattering colour’. Such comments epitomized perceptions of contemporary feminine taste, as did the piece’s visuals: set on a pale blue background, pink and white dominate and, in accordance with the ‘furbelows’ of the title, all three dressing-tables were heavily laden with fabric.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁵ Dulux advertisement *H&C* 04/1955, p.138; 10/1955, p.364; Frank Walker advertisement, *H&C* 04/1955, p.150; Skarsten advertisement, *H&C* 04/1958, p.126; 04/1959, p.126; Sound Services advertisement, *H&C* 04/1964, p.124.

⁷²⁶ ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.28; Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.140; Morley, ‘Homemakers’, p.95; Sparke, *Pink*, p.201.

⁷²⁷ Hamlett ‘Nicely’, pp.159-160.

⁷²⁸ Hackney, ‘Use’, pp.27,29.

⁷²⁹ ‘Frills and Furbelows’, *Woman* 23/03/1957, pp.36-37.

Despite the gendered perspectives of the magazines, such specific gender connotations were rare. In all three, the concern was less about creating ‘feminine’ rooms and more about women’s contribution to creating a modern interior throughout the house. *H&C* and *Outlook* depicted women involved in all areas of DIY, from physically demanding jobs widely regarded as men’s activities to those tasks associated with women, such as sewing and making soft-furnishings.⁷³⁰ It is clear that contributors believed readers undertook such tasks: *H&C* and *Woman’s* Home Editors gave instructions on measuring for material and there were advertisements for fabric; only occasionally in the 1960s did some advertisements for ‘ready-made’ covers and curtains appear.⁷³¹ Upholstery and soft-furnishings formed part of the Institute’s home-handicraft culture (Denman College ran courses on such subjects⁷³²) and this attracted advertisers (in 1960, ‘Upholstery in the Home’, a book by Institute instructors, received publicity in the magazine – and the book’s publishers advertised in the same issue⁷³³). *Outlook*, on the other hand, included advice on selecting and caring for items such as curtains⁷³⁴, but little in terms of advertising or recommendations for soft-furnishing fabrics. This was probably due to the magazine’s Co-operative status: in contrast to the dearth of soft-furnishing references, household textiles retailed by CWS, such as bed linen and towels, were heavily endorsed and advertised.⁷³⁵

This attention to soft-furnishings and textiles did not preclude interest in other DIY activities. For instance, two *Outlook* articles advised on hanging wallpaper, as did Mrs Wilcox in a 1960 reader’s letter.⁷³⁶ Thus, the ‘image of an active, autonomous modern female home-maker’ that Hackney found in inter-war women’s magazines continued in these publications.⁷³⁷ At the same time, the meanings attached to DIY advertisements were ambiguous⁷³⁸, supporting Hackney’s claim that post-war DIY advertisements presented more ‘stereotypically passive, decorative women’.⁷³⁹ A 1961 Crown advertisement in *Woman*, for example, showed a woman hanging a wallpaper strip, indicating either (or possibly both) ‘an active, autonomous modern female home-

⁷³⁰ Floré, ‘Promoting’, pp.94-95; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting, Doing It Yourself*; Cross, ‘Suburban’, pp.116-117; Miller, ‘Appropriating’, pp.51-52; Oram, ‘Contemporary’, p.186.

⁷³¹ ‘Edith Blair’s Home Measuring Guide’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, pp.8-9; ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1962, pp.371-372; Customagic advertisement, *Woman* 24/02/1962, p.80; Zedette advertisement, *H&C* 04/1968, p.138; Witney advertisement, *Woman* 27/09/1969, p.66.

⁷³² For example, see: Denman College column, *H&C* 05/1954, p.177.

⁷³³ Book review and advertisement, *H&C* 04/1960, pp.142,145.

⁷³⁴ ‘Around the House’, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, pp.10-11.

⁷³⁵ For examples, see: Covers, *Outlook*, 02/01/1954; 06/11/1954; 14/01/1956; 12/01/1957.

⁷³⁶ ‘Wallpaper Comes Back with a Flourish’, *Outlook* 02/01/1954, pp.16-17,27; ‘What’s New in Wallpaper for 1956’, *Outlook* 14/01/1956, pp.12-13; Mrs Wilcox, *Outlook* 10/1960, pp.36-37,39.

⁷³⁷ Hackney, ‘Use’, p.23.

⁷³⁸ Browne, ‘Decisions’, pp.137,139,140.

⁷³⁹ Hackney, ‘Use’, p.23.

maker' or the policy of wallpaper manufacturers to use women demonstrators in order to make the task look easy.⁷⁴⁰ Other advertisements combined similar images of an active woman decorating her home with somewhat condescending promises of simplicity: 'Dawn is designed for you to lay on any floor with ease and speed you never dreamed of'.⁷⁴¹

Wallpapering and laying flooring fell under what Browne describes as 'the softer areas of painting, decorating, tiling and applying plastic coverings'.⁷⁴² However, the editorial content of the organizational periodicals also challenged the gendered division of DIY tasks. *H&C*'s 'Make Your Own' articles gave instructions for activities associated with men, such as making items like shelves and wall-hooks.⁷⁴³ During the mid-1950s, *Outlook*'s 'Editor's Page' twice accentuated the wide range of DIY activities undertaken by women, referring to 'the immense variety of things the present-day mother of a family has to know about and be able to do', including 'decorator...and handyman. She ought also to have a working knowledge of electricity, plumbing, pointing and carpentering'.⁷⁴⁴

In *H&C* and *Outlook*, depictions of men sharing these responsibilities were rare. This reflects the general absence of men from their pages and the relative lack of imagery in these publications. Moreover, it is possible that these magazines, especially *H&C*, did not distinguish DIY from the more 'feminine' tradition of home-handicrafts. This emphasis on specifically women's contribution to creating the modern interior is stronger in the organizational periodicals than in *Woman*, which contained many advertisements and articles showing married couples involved in DIY activities together.⁷⁴⁵ Broader changes in home-ownership, leisure patterns and relationship mores meant that men were increasingly involved in creating their homes; as Langhamer notes, "'Home-making" in its most literal form became a significant pastime for some, though not all, men...within a mode of companionate marriage'.⁷⁴⁶ This translated into a discourse of marital 'togetherness', with the covers of 1950s DIY magazines picturing couples doing DIY tasks together and even national competitions

⁷⁴⁰ Crown advertisement, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.74; Johnson, 'Do-It-Yourself', p.69.

⁷⁴¹ Dawn advertisement, *H&C* 10/1960, p.372.

⁷⁴² Browne, 'Decisions', p.137.

⁷⁴³ 'Make Your Own', *H&C* 04/1959, p.132; 10/1959, p.297; 04/1960, p.147.

⁷⁴⁴ 'Editor's Page', *Outlook* 08/05/1954, p.1; 12/01/1957, p.1.

⁷⁴⁵ For example, see: 'Improving What You've Got', 'Make Your Dream Home Come True', Walpamur advertisement, *Woman* 19/03/1960, pp.23,24-25,57.

⁷⁴⁶ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.354; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.73-74.

to find the ideal DIY couple.⁷⁴⁷ Advertisements for Duralay underlay in *H&C* and *Outlook* incorporated such images: although the woman was often inactive (sitting on a step, leaning on a sideboard) and the man was active (laying the flooring), a sense of ‘togetherness’ was still conveyed, as in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1 A rare example of ‘togetherness’ in *H&C* and *Outlook*⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁷ Browne, ‘Decisions’, pp.133-134,142; Johnson, ‘Do-It-Yourself’, p.70; Cross, ‘Suburban’, pp.116-117; Sparke, *Pink*, p.171; Sparke, *An Introduction*, p.154.

⁷⁴⁸ Duralay advertisement, *H&C* 10/1964, back cover. Image also shown in: *Outlook*, 04/1961, p.28; *H&C* 10/1963, back cover.

Aside from these examples, notions of marital togetherness via DIY – representing the modern ideal of companionate marriage⁷⁴⁹ – were hardly visible in the NFWI and WCG magazines. Furthermore, even references acknowledging men’s involvement in DIY did not necessarily imply that couples would undertake such tasks together or that the women would be passive: ‘If you like doing jobs about the house *or* your husband is a handyman then there is only the price of the flooring’.⁷⁵⁰ This comment, from *Outlook*’s Home Editor, intimates that financial costs motivated DIY. Ultimately, the pages of a magazine cannot reveal the personal motivations – finance, creativity, enjoyment⁷⁵¹ – behind DIY (or even whether readers actually undertook such tasks). We can ascertain, though, why these publications publicized the creation of a modern interior so heavily – and ‘the gaze’ is central.

Scholars often discuss ‘the gaze’ in relation to appearance. Male approval is one element, with Skeggs stating that the women she interviewed were ‘concerned to be seen as desirable. To be fancied was a validation of themselves’.⁷⁵² There is also a strong sense that women dress for a less gender-specific gaze; Linda Scott says that ‘when we dress in what we believe is an appropriate manner for *any* occasion, we are invoking the expectations of others...[who] may be our bosses, our mothers, our friends, or our lovers. The motivation to dress, therefore is better described as directed toward the “social gaze”’.⁷⁵³

The concept of the social gaze is a useful tool for understanding the desire to create a modern home. The modern interior had symbolic capital: it was a legitimate aesthetic style, sanctioned by the design establishment; as Sparke observes, by 1960 references to ‘contemporary’ design were appearing in women’s magazine fiction, hinting ‘at the instant social status that accompanied the purchase of such items’.⁷⁵⁴ Representations of the modern home in these publications were an attempted demonstration – directed towards to the social gaze – that these magazines were allied with the modern and included in visions of the post-war world. The representations also

⁷⁴⁹ Janet Finch and Penny Summerfield, ‘Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage, 1945-1959’, in David Clark (ed.), *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change: Writings for Jacqueline Burgoyne* (London, 1991), p.17; Summerfield, ‘Women’, pp.59-60; Langhamer, *Leisure*, p.139.

⁷⁵⁰ Emphasis mine. ‘About the House’, *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.36-37.

⁷⁵¹ Macdonald and Porter *Putting*, Doing It Yourself; Browne, ‘Decisions’, pp.137,142,144; Hackney, ‘Use’, pp.29,33-35; Johnson, ‘Do-It-Yourself’, p.70; Langhamer, *Leisure*, p.179; Oram, ‘Constructing’, p.180.

⁷⁵² Skeggs, *Formations*, pp.111-112.

⁷⁵³ Linda M Scott, *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism* (Basingstoke, 2005), p.227. See also: Moseley, ‘Respectability’, pp.474-476,481-482,485-488; Angela Partington, ‘Popular Fashion and Working-class Affluence’, in Ash and Wilson (eds.), *Chic Thrills*, p.156; Wax, ‘Themes’, p.593.

⁷⁵⁴ Sparke, *An Introduction*, p.154.

offered readers guidance in acquiring the cultural capital needed to create their own modern homes.

Of course such efforts were limited – due to the marginalization of the housewife and women’s organizations – and were unlikely to have impact outside the magazines’ pages. Even so, a network of closely related discourses link DIY with the notion of the gaze and social capital. There was, for instance, an increasing emphasis on ‘improvement’.⁷⁵⁵ All three magazines communicated this through articles such as ‘Improving What You’ve Got’ and advertising copy such as ‘Always a Room for Improvement’ and ‘If your group is interested in seeing what can be done to improve the home...’.⁷⁵⁶ ‘Improvement’ had several meanings. An ‘improvement’ from ill health and poverty was important to the concept of home.⁷⁵⁷ From the initial post-war years to the late twentieth century, there were moral overtones linking DIY and home ‘improvements’ to the notion of ‘improving’ leisure.⁷⁵⁸ There was a sense that DIY and home ‘improvements’ improved selves, apparent in the clothes pictured in DIY advertisements, with specifically modern dress styles used to suggest that those undertaking DIY were modern too. The Crown wallpaper advertisement mentioned previously showed a woman in cropped trousers – iconic of ‘the American-influenced Beatnik look, the look that signified youth’.⁷⁵⁹ Such clothing styles also had connotations of the Parisian Left Bank⁷⁶⁰, hence alluded to the Continent and its associations of modernity, as outlined in Chapter Three. Cropped trousers featured in some Duralay advertisements too (see Figure 4.1), while a 1963 Duralay advertisement pictured white stiletto heels – another item symbolic of modern clothing.⁷⁶¹

This alignment with youth and international references reinforced understandings of DIY and its proponents as modern and hence underscored the symbolic capital of DIY. A related discourse that further emphasized the construction of one’s own modern interior (therefore modern home and modern self) and the prestige of the modern was renovation. Whereas ‘improvements’ could be piecemeal, renovation was a much larger undertaking and the financial and other difficulties involved meant it was not a widespread concept in these magazines. Those examples that did mention renovation reveal its symbolic capital. In a 1959 *Outlook* short story, it

⁷⁵⁵ Macdonald and Porter *Putting*, ‘Doing It Yourself’; Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.132.

⁷⁵⁶ ‘Improving What You’ve Got’, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.23; Rosebank advertisement, *H&C* 10/1957, p.298; Sound Services advertisement, *H&C* 04/1964, p.124.

⁷⁵⁷ Giles, *Parlour*, p.49.

⁷⁵⁸ Holliday, ‘Truths?’, p.73; Langhamer, *Leisure*, p.19.

⁷⁵⁹ Crown advertisement, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.74; Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.139.

⁷⁶⁰ Rachel Moseley, *Growing Up With Audrey Hepburn* (Manchester, 2002), p.43.

⁷⁶¹ Duralay advertisements, *Outlook*, 04/1961, p.28; 10/1963, p.14.

represented aspiration and affluence, with the refurbishment of property signifying the character's social status and wealth.⁷⁶² Official endorsement – enhancing this capital – became increasingly prevalent in the 1960s⁷⁶³, but was visible in the earlier decade; in 1955, Mrs A Allan advised other *Outlook* readers with old homes that a local council grant was obtainable to pay half towards certain alterations.⁷⁶⁴

Renovation was largely associated with owner-occupation; the restrictions imposed upon tenants, especially council tenants, made large-scale alterations difficult.⁷⁶⁵ At the same time, the act of renovation enhanced a sense of ownership – a feeling that did not necessarily correspond with one's form of tenure (see Chapter Two). A *H&C* series about renovation, for instance, was called 'Ours' and the proposed changes were described as 'Our Plan' rather than simply 'new plan'.⁷⁶⁶ As with DIY generally, renovation highlighted the role of occupants in the transformation process: 'It was a drab, neglected house – but one young couple saw beyond the peeling paint to the home it might be'.⁷⁶⁷

This sense of transformation underlines many depictions of DIY, home-handicrafts and related discourses of improvement and renovation, articulating a move from old to new, a way of modernizing older homes (and their occupants). The construction of one's own modern interior therefore represented a rejection of the old and an embrace of the new, as epitomized by ideas of the modern. This shift from old to new signaled a reaction against WW2 and austerity, with the modern home at the heart of this response. In the inter-war period, the modern home stood for belonging and safety⁷⁶⁸; these meanings took on an added poignancy following the deprivations and difficulties experienced in the years after 1939. Langhamer, for instance, comments that 'It is not, perhaps, surprising that at the height of war, individual men and women looked to "home" as the centring value in their lives'.⁷⁶⁹ Evidence from these magazines indicates that the desire was specifically for modern homes – 'improved' older properties, not necessarily new houses. This reflects the wartime legacy of hope for a better future: as Conekin notes, organizers of the Festival of Britain 'were

⁷⁶² 'The Man on the Joy-Wheel', *Outlook* 04/1959, pp.18-19,21,46.

⁷⁶³ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.158.

⁷⁶⁴ Mrs A Allan, *Outlook* 01/01/1955, pp.8-9.

⁷⁶⁵ Oram, 'Constructing', p.188 footnote 9.

⁷⁶⁶ "'Ours" Part I', *H&C* 05/1954, pp.165,167.

⁷⁶⁷ 'Coming Next Week', *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.31.

⁷⁶⁸ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.47-64.

⁷⁶⁹ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.343.

attempting to build a vision of a brighter future...that was clean, orderly and modern after the dirt and chaos of the war'.⁷⁷⁰

Constructing one's own modern interior via DIY and home-handicrafts symbolized building a better future, not just for oneself but also for one's family. Increased prominence of the family was an additional aspect of the wartime legacy, with a wide range of literature arguing that one effect of WW2 was the family became a central bastion in images of post-war Britain.⁷⁷¹ Furthermore, happiness was a key feature in visions of the post-war family; as Langhamer observes, 'the view that "a happy home and family life is the bulwark of a Nation" might indeed be taken as *the* blueprint for postwar reconstruction in Britain'.⁷⁷² Depictions of happy families figure in representations of the modern home and modern interior in these publications; as we have seen, appliance manufacturers used such pictures in their advertisements. Other firms used the adjective 'gay' to denote happiness in relation to the making of a modern interior: a 1963 CWS paintbrush advertisement, for instance, showed a woman gesturing towards a newly decorated room and stated 'Designed to give you a better, brighter job in double gay-time'. This advertisement also presented happiness as part of the modern, positioning it alongside other signifiers and within languages of modernization: 'Gay contemporary brushes'; 'Colourful contemporary efficient'.⁷⁷³

Scholars recognize the impact that the post-war emphasis upon the family had on understandings of women's roles: Giles contends that the family became the site for women's post-war citizenship, while Webster highlights the emotional significance attached to domestic tasks such as washing and cleaning.⁷⁷⁴ Evidence from these magazines indicates that creating a modern home for one's family was a vital aspect of women's roles. For example, the concept of 'family leisure' also characterized images of the post-war family, with the living room as 'the space where family life would be lived to the fullest'.⁷⁷⁵ Home-based family leisure required servicing by domestic work, usually undertaken by the wife and mother, hence placed demands upon women.⁷⁷⁶ A 1969 Hammond Organ advertisement in *H&C* conveyed this through a photograph of a father, son and daughter making music with an organ, guitar and singing – the mother is

⁷⁷⁰ Conekin, 'Here', p.238. For discussion of the wartime legacy, see also: Conekin, *Autobiography*, p.216; Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xx; McCrindle and Rowbotham, *Dutiful*, p.7; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.1,5-7.

⁷⁷¹ Beaumont, 'Housewives', p.64; Heron, 'Introduction', p.5; Johnson, 'Worms', p.486; Sparke, *Pink*, p.166; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.xiv-xvi,72; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, p.124.

⁷⁷² Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.345.

⁷⁷³ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1963, p.130; Browne, 'Decisions', p.142.

⁷⁷⁴ Giles, *Parlour*, p.91; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.92-93.

⁷⁷⁵ Langhamer, *Leisure*, p.139.

⁷⁷⁶ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.353; Cieraad, 'Introduction', p.7.

entering the room with a tea tray. The advertisement also indicates contemporary concerns about the Divorce Reform Act of the same year, asking ‘What does it take to keep a family together?’⁷⁷⁷

Whereas Home Editors and advertisers envisioned the bride and the housewife as the consumers of domestic appliances, they portrayed electrical entertainment goods as ‘family’ items. In October 1960, *Outlook*’s ‘Successful Shopping’ column noted that a new record player would make a good family Christmas gift and described a small fireside chair as ‘an asset when all gather round to watch television’.⁷⁷⁸ Considering the huge growth in ownership of such items from the 1950s⁷⁷⁹, these magazines contained surprisingly few references to them.⁷⁸⁰ This absence may reflect women’s perceived lack of interest in such goods. Reviewing a publication about stereos and televisions in 1968, *H&C*’s Home Editor commented that it ‘really seems angled towards the men...Most women I know are quite content as long as they can see some sort of picture, and hear voices and music without too much distortion’.⁷⁸¹ These remarks disassociated women from the consumption of certain modern technologies, further suggesting that they were only the imagined consumers of goods that assisted their domestic responsibilities – not items for their own leisure and entertainment.

Another aspect to women’s roles was creating a comfortable home for her family. Although comfort had a powerful cultural meaning during the inter-war years⁷⁸², the wartime and austerity legacy⁷⁸³ was again influential; Zweiniger-Bargielowska stresses ‘the significance of women’s housewifery skills in preserving customary domestic comforts...for their families during the exceptional circumstances of wartime and post-war austerity’.⁷⁸³ The poignancy and popular appeal of comfort continued in the later post-war years, remaining a key quality in relation to the family and home.⁷⁸⁴

Comfort was not mutually exclusive from other values associated with modernity. Langhamer notes that the *Coal Is Our Life* study ‘found that cosiness, “a combination of warmth and comfort”, was the most important quality of the “ideal”

⁷⁷⁷ Hammond advertisement, *H&C* 10/1969, p.397; Langhamer, *Leisure*, p.139.

⁷⁷⁸ ‘Successful Shopping’, *Outlook* 10/1960, pp.16-17.

⁷⁷⁹ Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Basement Parties; Sparke, *An Introduction*, pp.145,154.

⁷⁸⁰ For examples, see: ‘Our Cover Story’, *Outlook* 03/07/1954, p.15; Dansette advertisement, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.79.

⁷⁸¹ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 04/1968, p.156.

⁷⁸² Giles, *Parlour*, p.68.

⁷⁸³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, p.105.

⁷⁸⁴ Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.344.

home, followed by tidiness and cleanliness'⁷⁸⁵, while other historical accounts argue that from the 1930s onwards, kitchens and bathrooms were rooms characterized by science *and* comfort.⁷⁸⁶ Evidence from these magazines supports such claims. As previously mentioned, the discourse of hygiene was prominent in representations of the kitchen, but an emphasis on comfort featured too. Throughout the 1950s, the Interoven Stove Company encouraged *H&C* readers to 'Transform your kitchen into a sitting room with this "ministry approved" open fire back boiler'⁷⁸⁷, while by 1966, 'Home Affairs' was praising a Gas Council display kitchen because it marked 'a very welcome change in trends...Kitchens are going to be comfortable places again'.⁷⁸⁸

This is not to deny that contributors aligned specific rooms with certain values more so than others, with comfort noticeable in relation to bedrooms. A 1956 bed advertisement in *Woman* claimed that 'Myer's divans aren't just made – they're designed for comfort' and the names given to CWS bed-linen – 'Snug-down' and 'Haven' – insinuated comfort.⁷⁸⁹ *Outlook* drew on links between comfort, cosiness and warmth – with cover-lines asserting 'Cosy CWS blankets' and 'For a warm night's sleep CWS "Snugdown" and "Haven" blankets are best' – as did *H&C*'s 'Home Affairs' column, giving advice on care for electric blankets in 1963 and 65.⁷⁹⁰

The basic instructions given in 1956 *Outlook* advice for quilt buying suggests that they were newcomers to British homes; readers were forcefully told 'Never sit on a quilt'.⁷⁹¹ The connotations of quilts are noteworthy: although their continental associations were not explicitly stated, quilts (also known as 'continental duvets') implied connections with Europe and hence modernity. Furthermore, described as 'luxury in the bedroom' in an era when many goods were being reclassified as necessities not luxuries, quilts embodied a level of warmth in the home that was previously unavailable to many.⁷⁹² This promotion indicates the extent to which a comfortable home was only a recent possibility; as Victoria Kelley notes, many working-class women 'continued to live in conditions of considerable material deprivation at least until the aftermath of the Second World War'.⁷⁹³ As a result, the comfortable home symbolized belonging to the modern world and the end to exclusion

⁷⁸⁵ Langhamer, 'Meanings', p.346. The association of comfort and cosiness is also noted in Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Traditional Values.

⁷⁸⁶ Swenarton, 'Having', p.97; Sparke, *Pink*, p.193.

⁷⁸⁷ For examples, see: Interoven advertisement, *H&C* 05/1954, p.178; 10/1957, p.300.

⁷⁸⁸ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1966, p.163.

⁷⁸⁹ Myer's advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.22; 'Our Cover Story', *Outlook* 12/01/1957, p.30.

⁷⁹⁰ Covers, *Outlook* 12/01/1957; 14/01/1956; 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1963, p.151; 10/1965, pp.388-389.

⁷⁹¹ 'Housewife's Choice', *Outlook* 14/01/1956, p.18.

⁷⁹² Cover, *Outlook* 06/10/1956.

⁷⁹³ Kelley, 'Virtues', p.731.

on the grounds of being poor. Design advice was not always alert to this – the promotion of floorboards, for example, failed to recognize the widespread association of bare boards with poverty.⁷⁹⁴

These publications reveal a conceptual framework that integrated comfort (including cosiness and warmth) within constructions of the modern. A 1969 *H&C* advertisement for vinyl flooring reinforces this, stating that this ‘*modern floor covering*’ created ‘*soft permanent comfort*’.⁷⁹⁵ This is crucial to historiographical understandings of the modern home and modern interiors. Many accounts position comfort in opposition to modern styles of decoration, and while it may contrast with high modernist design principles, it was not antithetical to the interpretations of the modern that appeared in these publications. As the following section explores, these publications offered alternative ideas of what the modern was – with comfort forming a crucial part of such constructions.

The modern interior

In ‘The Crinoline Lady’, a 1955 *Outlook* short story, the central character was a child who desired a crinoline lady doll. Although she eventually received one, the story portrayed the doll as a childish desire, incompatible with sophisticated taste; the child’s mother, an interior designer, disliked them and resisted having one in her house.⁷⁹⁶ The crinoline lady, popular in the nineteenth century and the inter-war period, was closely associated with a feminine domestic aesthetic⁷⁹⁷, therefore the critique inherent in this story intimates a condemnation of such feminine styles. However, these magazines contained nuanced representations of interiors. A range of decorative styles featured, although constructions of the modern informed them all. The key to understanding this diversity is acceptance of the broad and complex ideas of the modern within these publications. As established, there were a number of facets to the modern and, rather than being seen as necessarily conflicting, these different sides often co-existed.

The distinctive visions of the modern and variety of aesthetic styles found in these magazines reinforce attitudes towards the housewife reader seen in earlier chapters. Although there were differences between them, both organizational periodicals addressed the reader as a sensible and intelligent woman, echoing the

⁷⁹⁴ Morley, ‘Homemakers’, p.92.

⁷⁹⁵ Emphasis mine. Tapiflex advertisement, *H&C* 10/1969, p.400.

⁷⁹⁶ ‘The Crinoline Lady’, *Outlook* 09/04/1955, pp.2-3,29,30.

⁷⁹⁷ Sparke, *Pink*, p.152.

housewife-as-expert discourse in spite of the wider marginalization of this concept. This address and attitude extended to allowing readers to make their own decisions about the interior décor presented on their pages, as Hackney found in inter-war women's magazines:

Their surfeit of inventive ideas for making, adapting and transforming objects for the home...aimed to foster a sense of agency and self-determination in their readers. The diverse range of styles meant that women could not avoid developing their own judgement and taste.⁷⁹⁸

DIY further encouraged the development of one's own judgement and taste, enabling women 'to create their own style of interior', 'their own domestic version of Utopian modernism'.⁷⁹⁹ This laissez-faire attitude contrasts with the views of the design establishment, with CoID derogatory about 'the tastes of those whom they considered to be both their social and their cultural inferiors'.⁸⁰⁰

CoID's views received some expression within these publications. Like consumer groups, 'an awareness of the role of the female consumer also crept into their rhetoric'.⁸⁰¹ For example, an article by CoID's director, Sir Gordon Russell – seemingly written specifically for *H&C*, as it referred to countrywomen and country-dwelling – stated that, 'It is the firm belief of the Council of Industrial Design that the public – and especially the housewife, who does the shopping – is genuinely interested in such problems [of design]'.⁸⁰² Ultimately, however, CoID's middle-class masculine agenda remained evident: targeting the housewife with consumer education was part of efforts to 'improve' women's taste by encouraging the adoption of CoID's principles and vision.

Russell's article was part of *H&C*'s efforts to provide guidance to readers. This advice was needed in order for the housewife – a professional, albeit unpaid, expert in her own right – to remain abreast of developments, to assist her expertise in domestic roles. Russell positioned the country-housewife outside of notions of expertise in design (and hence good taste), saying 'We cannot all become experts in every aspect of design'⁸⁰³, but this exclusion was not universal. Ten years later, 'Home Affairs' reported that a 'nursery post bag' designed by an Institute member had won a commendation from a souvenir exhibition at CoID's Design Centre.⁸⁰⁴ In addition,

⁷⁹⁸ Hackney, 'Use', p.32.

⁷⁹⁹ Browne, 'Decisions', pp.131,142.

⁸⁰⁰ Sparke, *Pink*, p.192.

⁸⁰¹ Sparke, *Pink* p.192.

⁸⁰² 'Thoughtful Buying', *H&C* 04/1956, pp.125-126.

⁸⁰³ 'Thoughtful Buying', *H&C* 04/1956, pp.125-126.

⁸⁰⁴ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1955, p.155.

CoID's limited influence is widely noted.⁸⁰⁵ Despite its earlier links with *Woman*, for example, only one article in the sample used for this study mentioned the organization and other *H&C* references were largely limited to recommendations of CoID's publications.⁸⁰⁶ Furthermore, CoID was one contributor among many in the magazines. Russell's *H&C* comments were relatively isolated, with various contributors (producers, advertisers and readers) expressing a range of views and creating a textual space containing competing meanings.

In *Outlook*, attitudes towards CoID were consistent with consumer education, emphasizing the validity of WCG and Co-operative contributions. *Outlook* subjected CoID itself to assessment. A 1959 feature, for instance, recommended visiting their Design Centre but the headline used – 'Worth Seeing' – indicates that the (anonymous) writer had made a critical evaluation, judging the centre to be of value. Moreover, the same article highlighted CoID/Co-operative connections: CoID's involvement in the movement's consumer education programme, endorsement of Co-operative goods and a CWS director's membership of the design organization.⁸⁰⁷

References to CoID demonstrate the peripheral position of the design establishment in these magazines. Despite efforts to acquire social capital and create a sense of belonging, *H&C* and *Outlook* did not simply reiterate understandings of the modern espoused by this element of the dominant symbolic economy. This is not to deny the overlap between representations on their pages and broader ideas of the modern. Representations of interiors included a number of themes central to many accounts of the post-war modern. For example, we have already seen the importance of new materials as scientific innovations that helped to position Britain as part of the modern world. In terms of décor, although older floor-coverings continued to appear, new materials such as vinyl featured in recommendations from 1961.⁸⁰⁸ Advertisers asserted the 'easy-to-clean' properties of synthetic flooring, as did an *Outlook* reader; Mrs Donaldson included 'modern easy-clean Vynolay' as one of the conveniences of her new house in her 1966 letter.⁸⁰⁹ Again, this constructs scientific developments as easing the burden of housework.

⁸⁰⁵ Browne, 'Decisions', p.132; Floré and De Kooning, 'Introduction', pp.412; Oram, 'Constructing', pp.174-175; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Preface.

⁸⁰⁶ 'Plan for Better Living', *Woman* 11/11/1961, pp.20-21; 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1968, pp.155-156; 10/1968, p.399; Keeble, 'Domesticating', p.95; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, CoID and the Media.

⁸⁰⁷ 'Worth Seeing', *Outlook* 10/1959, p.1.

⁸⁰⁸ 'Plan for Better Living', *Woman* 11/11/1961, pp.20-21; 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 04/1961, pp.146-147; 10/1965, pp.388-389; 04/1966, p.163.

⁸⁰⁹ Vynoleum advertisement, *H&C* 04/1960, p.132; Congoleum advertisement, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.50; Mrs Donaldson, *Outlook* 10/1966, pp.29-30.

Manufacturers of other synthetic materials articulated similar views. For instance, a maker of soft-furnishing textiles described one fabric as ‘non-iron, drip-dry, mothproof, crushproof’.⁸¹⁰ The hygiene aspect of science is also evident. Contemporary DIY advice claimed that covering panelled doors, stairs and fireplaces with plain boards improved hygiene because such alterations supposedly made the items less dust-collecting and easier to clean – hence modern.⁸¹¹ Such claims are mirrored in the comment that ‘A modernized door is an essential step in the modernization of a room’, made by *H&C*’s Home Editor in a recommendation for a new kind of door fascia.⁸¹²

The use of international references to denote certain attributes was visible in interiors content. One curtain firm explicitly stated the characteristics associated with continental Europe, their 1962 *H&C* advertisement claiming ‘From the Home of Fashion comes Fashion for the Home...France takes pride in introducing the Continental elegance of Tergal Voile Curtains’.⁸¹³ Other soft-furnishing manufacturers gave their patterns names such as ‘Riviera’ and ‘Capri’.⁸¹⁴ The symbolic position of Scandinavia in popular understandings of modern design emerged too. In 1958, *H&C* publicized a V&A exhibition of Finnish rugs, while a 1964 rug-making advertisement announced ‘New from Scandinavia...See the vivid colours and variety of the award-winning modern designs by Scandinavian artists’⁸¹⁵ – the latter example indicating that items produced for the home-handicrafts market were included within notions of modern design.

Representations of modern design in interiors and décor introduced additional signifiers of the modern. Use of thin legs on furniture, for example, was a common characteristic in contemporary styling and a trend mentioned in *H&C* and *Woman* in the mid-1950s and mid-1960s.⁸¹⁶ ‘Fitness for purpose’, a guiding principle for the design establishment⁸¹⁷, was invoked via references to simple lines (fitted wardrobes ‘give the bedroom a restful, uncluttered look’⁸¹⁸) and function (‘always on time, always reliable and so beautifully cased’⁸¹⁹). Many CWS advertisements made similar assertions about

⁸¹⁰ Tergal advertisement, *H&C* 04/1962, p.118.

⁸¹¹ Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.142; Holliday, ‘Truths?’, p.66; Oram, ‘Constructing’, p.184.

⁸¹² ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1957, p.325.

⁸¹³ Tergal advertisement, *H&C* 04/1962, p.118.

⁸¹⁴ Rosebank advertisement, *H&C* 10/1957, p.298; Zedette advertisement, *H&C* 04/1968, p.138.

⁸¹⁵ V&A publicity, *H&C* 04/1958, p.113; RYA advertisement, *H&C* 10/1964, p.368.

⁸¹⁶ ‘Firm Footed Furniture’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.16; ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 04/1966, p.163.

⁸¹⁷ Negrin, ‘Ornament’, p.224; Browne, ‘Decisions’, p.144 footnote 1; Atfield ‘Empty’, p.86; Catterall, ‘Perceptions’, p.69; Macdonald and Porter *Putting*, Furniture.

⁸¹⁸ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1968, p.399.

⁸¹⁹ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1959, p.26;

being ‘modern designs’, ‘today’s style trends’ and ‘Contemporary tableware for 1964’, while an editorial recommendation declared that ‘contemporary design at its most pleasing is seen in this highly polished stainless steel teaset’.⁸²⁰ These examples illustrate that within *Outlook*, Co-operative advertisers presented their goods as offering access to the modern, in this case specifically through supposedly modern design. Other advertisers also utilized the concept of design as a means of promoting their products. For instance, a firm advertising in *Woman* claimed that the designers of their soft-furnishing fabrics were ‘the most gifted young artists of today’ and ‘some of the most brilliant young artists of today’.⁸²¹ A common marketing technique, such statements reflect the symbolic capital of design in these decades and its importance to saleability.⁸²²

Colour and pattern were key signifiers of the modern prevalent in décor advice, ‘advocated as a means of creating a contemporary look without considerable outlay on furniture’.⁸²³ Colour and pattern were imbued with symbolic capital because, Sparke asserts, “‘official’ culture now embraced colour and pattern in a much more open manner – primarily because they could now be approached scientifically’. As a result, ‘it was in their choices of colours and patterns, perhaps, that the 1950s housewife had the greatest aesthetic responsibility’.⁸²⁴ These decorative trends were most noticeable in *Woman*, due to widespread use of colour and photography in this magazine. *Woman* contained interior design articles dedicated to colour, such as ‘Two in Blue’, part of their 1962 ‘New series by Blair on colour in your home’⁸²⁵, and colour was widespread in advertisements. Figure 4.2 is a typical home-related advertisement from 1956, with one manufacturer’s interpretation of contemporary style.⁸²⁶

The limited use of colour imagery in *H&C* and *Outlook* forced a reliance on textual references to colour and pattern. Some endorsement of ‘safe’ colours continued⁸²⁷; Susan Ingram, *Outlook*’s Home Editor, recommended choosing neutral colours for carpet because of its ‘long-term’ nature, although ‘curtains and covers can be a riot of colour and design...these are cheaper to change’.⁸²⁸ Overall, however, these

⁸²⁰ CWS advertisements, *Outlook* 13/07/1957, p.30; 04/1958, p.39; 04/1960, p.12; 10/1960, p.9; 04/1964, p.18; ‘Come Shopping’, *Outlook* 10/1962, p.17.

⁸²¹ David Whitehead advertisement, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.56; 17/09/1955, p.60.

⁸²² Sparke, *An Introduction*, p.xxi.

⁸²³ Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Soft Furnishings and Decorating.

⁸²⁴ Sparke, *Pink*, p.181.

⁸²⁵ ‘Two in Blue’, *Woman* 24/02/1962, pp.26-27.

⁸²⁶ Lebus advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.5.

⁸²⁷ Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Economy, Harmonisation.

⁸²⁸ ‘About the House’, *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.36-37.

Closely linked to colour and pattern were the qualities of lightness and brightness, also fundamental markers of the modern home.⁸³³ There were various ways to achieve these somewhat nebulous attributes. Lightwood furniture, for instance, was a regular constituent in contemporary interiors.⁸³⁴ Both *H&C* and *Outlook* Home Editors recommended whitewood furniture on the basis on its low cost, with the former also endorsing its lightness: the availability of whitewood furniture signaled ‘a thankful farewell to those hideous, bulky wardrobes’.⁸³⁵ This comment indicates the extent to which light and bright interiors represented disposal of the past and belonging to the modern. The conceptual framework surrounding the modern is crucial to this: the past (or at least certain elements of it, such as housing conditions) symbolized misery, poverty and darkness; the modern symbolized gaiety (happiness), affluence (inclusion) and lightness (linked to health and hygiene). These constructions were evident in *Outlook*’s 1963 short story, ‘Ancient and Modern’. The story used terms related to lightness and brightness to position the narrator’s décor (modern) against that of her sister’s (ancient): ‘I made all curtains myself out of *gay contemporary* material. Keeps us all *bright and alert to the present progressive world*’; ‘You’d have thought she’d have gone in for some nice, *light modern* stuff’.⁸³⁶

‘Ancient and Modern’ presented open-plan layout as a means of achieving such desirable modern values: ‘built on an open plan so that I can see right through the house...No dark corners, it’s all light and airy’.⁸³⁷ However, as discussed, the publications rarely mentioned open-plan layouts. Furthermore, ‘light and airy’ was potentially incompatible with the warm, comfortable and cosy interiors that were also desirable, part of the modern emphasis on family. As a result, contributors to *H&C* and *Outlook* negotiated alternative ways of achieving lightness and brightness within the home. In 1959, for example, Ingram responded to a reader’s letter about how to create more light, recommending the use of mirrors and keeping furniture to a minimum.⁸³⁸ More illuminating is Gundrey’s 1957 advice on how to clean enamel. The desire was to ‘to keep it sparkling bright’, with the brightness implying cleanliness and hygiene. The result was ‘an old black kitchen range brought up to date’: the cleaning efforts of the

⁸³³ Oram, ‘Constructing’, p.187.

⁸³⁴ Keeble, ‘Domesticating’, p.104.

⁸³⁵ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1968, p.399; ‘About the House’, *Outlook* 04/1959, pp.40-41.

⁸³⁶ Emphasis mine. ‘Ancient and Modern’, *Outlook* 04/1963, pp.2-3,14-15,21.

⁸³⁷ ‘Ancient and Modern’, *Outlook* 04/1963, pp.2-3,14-15,21.

⁸³⁸ ‘About the House’, *Outlook* 04/1959, pp.40-41.

housewife converted the darkness of the past (black) to the light (the modern and all its associations).⁸³⁹

Electrical lighting was another way of creating a light and bright interior; as established, electricity was a central tenet of the modern home. Functionality *and* aesthetics again feature: a *H&C* article commented that ‘you’ll be equally amazed at the pleasant, attractive appearance of your room after dark, and the ease of working’. This piece contained discourses of science and expertise, with a strongly educative tone. It gave advice from ‘experts’, explained the scientific unit for lighting and provided instructions on assessing lighting levels in one’s home, with the clear assumption that the housewife reader was sufficiently intelligent to carry out a technical task involving equipment such as a light meter.⁸⁴⁰

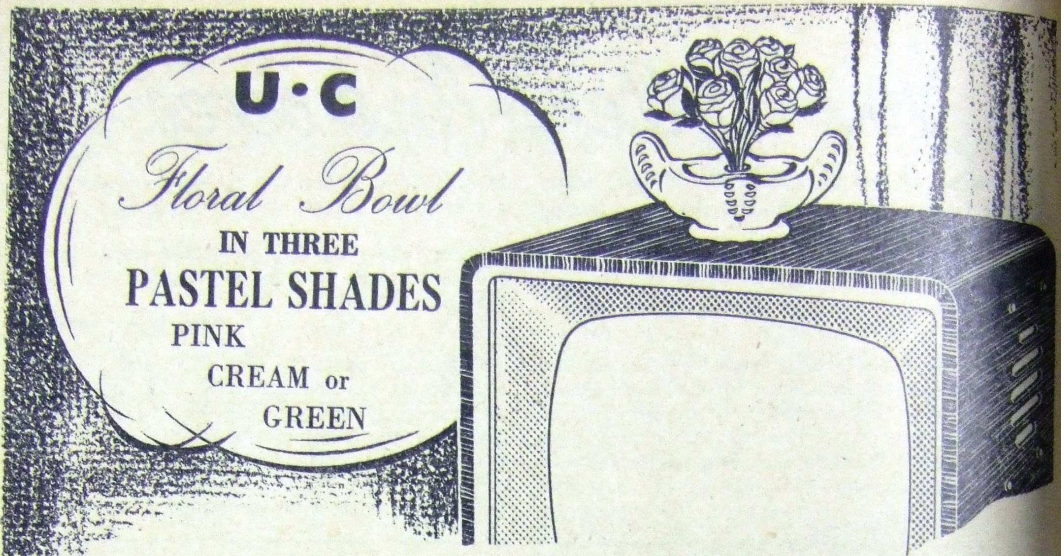
Due to the artificiality of electrical lighting, this alternative means of creating a light and bright interior is difficult to reconcile with ‘official’ design establishment views. Discrepancies were apparent in various aspects of décor and design, underlining that the modern was a contested concept as well as a multifaceted one. *Outlook* references to light-shades illustrate this. In 1957, two articles discussed these items. Both included versions of the modern with high symbolic capital: that of the design establishment (a lampshade commended by CoID) and mid-century Scandinavian modern (the headline ‘New Designs from Denmark’). Both incorporated key discourses of the modern – design, colour, simplicity, functionality and hygiene – in their descriptions: ‘the design is modern in the best sense, the colours gay, the shade durable and easily cleaned’; ‘No fussy bits and pieces about this wall bracket, but it is both decorative and dignified’.⁸⁴¹ In contrast, the year after these articles, a Co-operative advertisement promoted a floral bowl (Figure 4.3). Its ornate style and inherent artificiality contrast with official or more overtly modernist aesthetics. It highlights the variety of styles concurrent within these magazines and indicates the efforts of manufacturers to appeal to a broad market, catering for what they perceived to be contemporary feminine taste – the ‘feminised model of modernity’ or ‘housewife aesthetic’ that Sparke identifies.⁸⁴² The advertisement also reinforces the multiple ways in which contributors constructed ideas of the modern: as an electrical item introducing more lightness and brightness into the home, the floral bowl retained certain traits of the modern as understood in *Outlook*.

⁸³⁹ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1957, p.325.

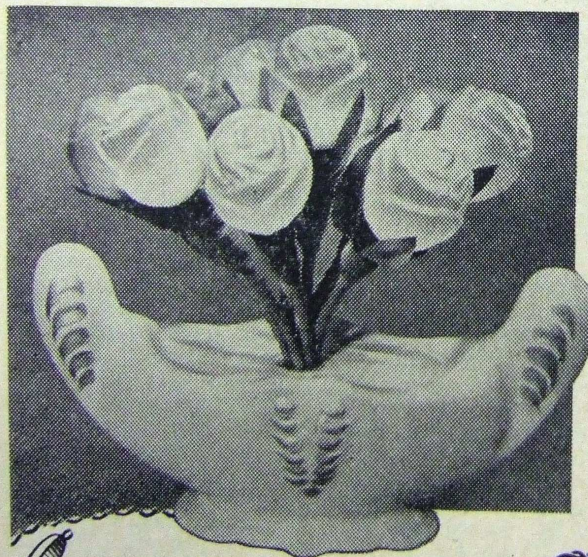
⁸⁴⁰ ‘How Are Your Foot-lamberts?’, *H&C* 04/1965, p.133.

⁸⁴¹ ‘Mary Holmes’ Notebook’, *Outlook* 10/1957, p.46; ‘New Designs from Denmark’, *Outlook* 13/07/1957, pp.16-17.

⁸⁴² Sparke, *Pink*, pp.182-189.



**A LOVELY TABLE
 DECORATION—IDEAL
 AS A TELEVISION LAMP**



FLORAL BOWL containing eight flower-shaped lamps complete with Torpedo switch, two spare lamps, flex and plug. Price including Purchase Tax, **52/11d.** Spare lamps are available priced **1/10½d**

The lamps of this set are of the permanent contact type which means that if one lamp fails the remainder stay lit.

OBTAINABLE
 AT YOUR
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

or write to— **BRITISH LUMA CO-OPERATIVE ELECTRIC LAMP SOCIETY LTD.**
 HARDGATE ROAD
 GLASGOW, S.W.1

Forty-six

Figure 4.3 A 'floral bowl': an example of manufacturers' desire to appeal to a range of tastes⁸⁴³

⁸⁴³ British Luma Co-operative advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1958, p.46.

Other aspects of interiors reveal this diversity of styles and different ways of creating a modern home too. The 1956 wallpaper article included similarly varied looks: bold, geometric patterns and designs aimed at children, alongside the ‘fashionable idea’ of ‘novelty papers which resemble brick walls and wattle fencing’ – both of which contravened design establishment interpretations of a contemporary interior.⁸⁴⁴ Moreover, manufacturers presented even seemingly old-fashioned styles as modern by publicizing other ‘modern’ characteristics and features such as synthetic materials. In a 1968 *H&C* advertisement, for instance, the maker of ‘Capri’ claimed that this fabric was a ‘beautiful traditional floral print’, but one made from bri-nylon, a recent innovation that – like other man-made materials – was considered a marker of the modern.⁸⁴⁵ Similarly, Potters claimed that most of their ‘Colourama’ fabrics had ‘a Calrepta Guaranteed permanent finish’⁸⁴⁶, and the Natural Rubber Development Board offered demonstrations to WI branches on re-upholstery using latex foam.⁸⁴⁷

These examples are significant because wallpaper and soft-furnishings were crucial elements within an interior, often forming the key components in a particular decorative style, whatever that style was. This reflects the higher cost of furniture.⁸⁴⁸ This greater expense may explain the minimal references to furniture in *H&C* and *Outlook*. As already noted, the magazines acknowledged the difficulties in buying new furniture and the reliance on previously owned items. This was an obstacle to creating a modern interior; fiction portrayed ‘second-hand’ as contrary to the modern: ‘Second-hand furniture!...What wasn’t damaged or scratched was just plain old-fashioned’; ‘people are glad to sell [the chairs in question] for a low price because they are old-fashioned’.⁸⁴⁹

These quotations clearly construe old-fashioned as a pejorative term, although this did not mean an outright rejection of everything old. While the magazines constructed certain aspects of the past – such as WW2 and the austerity years – as undesirable, to be rejected and moved away from, other elements were acceptable; as Langhamer argues, the ‘old and new were not static concepts within the context of home life: the old could be as valued as the new within the postwar world’.⁸⁵⁰ Certain

⁸⁴⁴ ‘What’s New in Wallpaper for 1956’, *Outlook* 14/01/1956, pp.12-13.

⁸⁴⁵ Zedette advertisement, *H&C* 04/1968, p.138.

⁸⁴⁶ Potter’s advertisement, *Woman* 24/02/1962, p.4.

⁸⁴⁷ Natural Rubber Development Board advertisement, *H&C* 10/1959, p.286.

⁸⁴⁸ Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, Soft Furnishings and Decorating; Ward, ‘Chintz’, p.106.

⁸⁴⁹ ‘Mary Crawford’s Dock Green Diary’, *Woman* 11/11/1961, pp.31,33,71; ‘Ancient and Modern’, *Outlook* 04/1963, pp.2-3,14-15,21.

⁸⁵⁰ Langhamer, ‘Meanings’, p.347; Winship, *Inside*, p.18; Friedman, *Women and the Making*, p.17.

bits of the past – ‘historical vignettes’ – retained a place in modern interiors.⁸⁵¹ There was, for instance, a discernible trend for including a token older piece within a contemporary interior. Advertisers showed items such as an antique dressing-table or an old lamp in a room demarcated as modern through other stylistic features.⁸⁵²

Similarly, *H&C*'s Home Editor mentioned ‘the occasional beautiful antique chest thrown in for effect’ in a modern bedroom and the protagonist of ‘Ancient and Modern’ admitted ‘I bought one of those padded Victorian chairs but then it’s the thing to have one of those somewhere about, even in the most modern house’.⁸⁵³

These vignettes were specific; they were much older, antique goods rather than the usual second-hand items, which remained ‘old-fashioned’ and therefore deemed unsuitable for a modern interior. To be successful, these vignettes required a high level of cultural capital; one needed sufficient taste to be able to judge what was acceptable or not. It is questionable whether the writers and advertisers credited readers with such taste, or whether these vignettes were included to demonstrate their own cultural capital. Either way, these examples reveal that visions of the past in these magazines varied depending on the attributes associated with the particular period, although the negative constructions seen earlier were more dominant.

The influence of the past is also evident in the continuation of older discourses. Previously important concepts did not simply disappear: like ‘traditional floral prints’, they were re-worked and integrated into understandings of the modern. For example, literature on interiors often analyses the importance of display.⁸⁵⁴ Much work on the post-war period contends that even without the parlour as a ‘best’ room, display continued via substitutes such as the cocktail cabinet.⁸⁵⁵ Sparke specifically links this to interpretations of the modern, saying that women

nevertheless found ways of negotiating the modernity that confronted them in ways which eased their transition, and that of their families. The absence of the parlour may have meant a diminution of display space in the 1950s home, but this was compensated for by the emergence of a range of new, essentially modern items of furniture which enable the housewife to show off her knick-knacks to her full satisfaction.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵¹ Taylor, ‘Beautiful Before’, p.125. See also: Darling, ‘The House’, p.123; Keeble, ‘Domesticating’, p.105; Sparke, *Pink*, p.181.

⁸⁵² Walpamur advertisement, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.57; Duralay advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1962, p.10.

⁸⁵³ ‘Home Affairs’, *H&C* 10/1968, p.399; ‘Ancient and Modern’, *Outlook* 04/1963, pp.2-3,14-15,21.

⁸⁵⁴ For example, see: Friedman, *Women*, p.16; Hamlett ‘Nicely’, pp.149-157.

⁸⁵⁵ Attfield ‘Empty’, pp.86-87; Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, throughout; Miller, ‘Appropriating’, p.50; Putnam, ‘Introduction’, pp.12-13; Sparke, *Pink*, p.180.

⁸⁵⁶ Sparke, *Pink*, p.179.

The issues of taste at the heart of such negotiations raise questions about social class. Winship claims that ‘the codes of taste’ found in *Woman* ‘have the ring of middle-class styles’, which both the magazine and readers saw as desirable.⁸⁵⁷ There is some support for this in *H&C* and *Outlook*. China ornaments, for instance, remained popular in the post-war period.⁸⁵⁸ *H&C* contained advertisements for figurines, while *Outlook* included articles on collecting figures and old English china.⁸⁵⁹ The names and labels used in such references – Staffordshire, Wedgwood – had prestige and value, therefore signaled a way of demonstrating ‘good’ (hence middle-class) taste; one *Outlook* article noted that old English china was ‘not only a good investment but is an out of the ordinary way of adding beauty to the modern home’.⁸⁶⁰

At the same time, however, contributors did not simply articulate notions of taste found in the dominant symbolic economy. As noted, the variety of styles and guidance on creating one’s own modern interior via DIY and home-handicrafts encouraged the housewife reader to make her own decisions about décor and produce an individual home for herself and her family. Personalization is a key theme in literature on housing and interiors from the nineteenth century to the late twentieth century.⁸⁶¹ Hackney, for example, examines how women were ‘encouraged actively to transform their homes through home craft or interior decoration’, with an alliance between personalization, art and creativity.⁸⁶² Rather than seeing this as in tension with discourses of science, the emphasis on personalization reinforces the specific meanings associated with different areas of the home. Whereas science was central to kitchens and bathrooms, others spaces allowed the expression of oneself and one’s taste.

Flower arranging, for instance, featured in both organizational magazines. Literature on the organizations reviews the place of this activity in the collective culture of the NFWI, but not the WCG. The amount of content in the publications mirrors the differing levels of association: *Outlook* contained articles⁸⁶³; *H&C* included articles, book advertisements and listings for Denman courses on the subject.⁸⁶⁴ Andrews argues

⁸⁵⁷ Winship, *Inside*, pp.60,76.

⁸⁵⁸ Macdonald and Porter, *Putting*, ‘Snuggery’.

⁸⁵⁹ Hummel advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, p.120; Ridgway advertisement, *H&C* 10/1964, back cover; Wedgwood advertisement, *H&C* 10/1960, p.359; ‘Collecting Staffordshire Figures’, *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.45-46; ‘Collecting Old English China’, *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.32-33.

⁸⁶⁰ ‘Collecting Old English China’, *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.32-33.

⁸⁶¹ For example, see: Putnam ‘Introduction’, p.8; Sparke, *An Introduction*, p.155; Miller ‘Appropriating’, pp.43-55; Hamlett ‘Nicely’, pp.144,158.

⁸⁶² Hackney, ‘Use’, pp.31-33. See also: Giles, *Parlour*, pp.111,116.

⁸⁶³ Editor’s page, *Outlook* 02/07/1955, p.1; ‘The Harvest of Autumn’, *Outlook* 10/1958, p.45; Elsa Warner’s column, *Outlook*, 04/1960, p.42; 04/1963, p.23; 04/1964, p.26; 10/1964, p.28.

⁸⁶⁴ IDA advertisement, *H&C* 04/1960, p.130; Pitman advertisement, *H&C* 04/1965, p.146; Denman column, *H&C* 04/1956, p.133; 04/1960, p.143.

that rather than being trivial, flower arranging had important meanings.⁸⁶⁵ As a celebration of the home and an outlet for creativity, it represented a means through which women could display their own taste. Magazine advice assisted with developing their skills and competencies in this respect. Furthermore, as an activity with little utility, it – unlike other home-handicrafts – symbolized a move away from necessity as the primary motivation and hence we can view flower arranging as emblematic of affluence. These articles and advertisements therefore reveal one of the ways in which contributors to these magazines believed rural and working-class women were engaging with growing prosperity.

Similar themes are evident in relation to table setting, another of women's roles.⁸⁶⁶ A 1962 *H&C* advertisement for a lace tablecloth signified affluence, as during the inter-war years, lace tablecloths had remained too expensive for many.⁸⁶⁷ Now owning a lace tablecloth meant no longer being marked as poor. Advertisements portrayed this and other tableware as markers of one's taste: 'adds a finesse that sets your table – and you – apart'; 'set new beauty on your table'; 'designed with you in mind...the touch of individuality'.⁸⁶⁸ While such comments were undoubtedly marketing flattery, they also encouraged the reader to have confidence in her judgement. This is in stark contrast to the condescension of CoID and others who regarded the housewife as lacking in taste.

These early 1960s advertisements did not, however, talk of the reader as a housewife, but invoked a more specific role: 'a skilled hostess', 'for good hostesses everywhere'.⁸⁶⁹ Although not as common as references to the roles of wife and mother – these were only a few advertisements among the hundreds included in the magazines – the invocation of the hostess is important. Not totally divorced from the housewife, the hostess embodied a more affluent and more leisured figure – or, more accurately, a figure servicing the leisure of others. She is indicative of the kinds of changes that *H&C* and *Outlook* contributors were involved in negotiating and the complex representations of women's roles in magazines of the period.

As well as complexities surrounding women's roles, this chapter has shown the complex representations of modern design and décor in these magazines. *H&C* and

⁸⁶⁵ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.160.

⁸⁶⁶ Negrin, 'Ornament', p.225.

⁸⁶⁷ Filigree advertisement, *H&C* 04/1962, p.130; Hackney, 'Use', p.29.

⁸⁶⁸ Filigree advertisement, *H&C* 04/1962, p.130; CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1964, p.30; Denby advertisement, *H&C* 04/1960, p.120.

⁸⁶⁹ Filigree advertisement, *H&C* 04/1962, p.130; Denby advertisement, *H&C* 04/1960, p.120.

Outlook featured a range of styles demarcated as modern in various ways, either aesthetically or through other traits. This range and variety reflects the multifaceted understandings of the modern within these publications. The clear association of specific rooms with certain modern attributes gave some cohesion to these multifarious ideas, but contestations over the modern remained. For example, the chapter explored how the concepts of DIY, improvement and renovation involved a rejection of the past, particularly WW2 and the austerity years. The image of the family was crucial to such configurations, incorporating notions of happiness, family leisure and comfort, characterized by cosiness and warmth. Concurrently, though, historical vignettes – denoting different elements of the past – were a clear trend in interiors.

Much of this contestation over understandings of the modern resulted from the different versions of modernization advocated by each magazine's journalists, advertisers and other parties. There were clear tensions within and between these factions. For example, both writers and advertisers offered alternative means of achieving the desired light and bright interior, emphasizing electrical lighting as opposed to the open-plan interiors favoured by the design establishment. Similarly, manufacturers presented their fabrics as modern by highlighting characteristics such as synthetic materials, even if the pattern was not an overtly modern style. We have also seen that within the organizational periodicals, writers and advertisers applied discourses and ideas of the modern to areas associated with traditional femininity and hence often deemed antithetical to the modern, such as home-handicrafts and flower arranging.

The different approach to interiors in *H&C* and *Outlook*, as established at the outset, facilitated these negotiations over what constituted the modern. Their writers were not constrained by advertising pressures to the same extent as journalists on *Woman*. In addition, CoID was one voice among many in these magazines, therefore its views did not dominate. Contributors to the organizational publications constructed a relatively accessible vision of the modern interior, focusing on specific aspects of décor or individual items and guiding readers on creating their own interiors. The latter often took the form of DIY or home-handicrafts, both of which were an integral part of post-war consumer culture. *H&C* and *Outlook* depicted women undertaking these tasks, rather than promoting the concept of martial togetherness seen in *Woman* and some contemporary advertising.

The magazines accentuated other aspects to women's roles too: as a hostess and as a wife and mother, the housewife created a modern home and serviced the leisure of

others. The housewife also had a vital role in making a modern interior through personalization, reiterating the importance of the individual in the 1950s and 60s. The chapter has shown that attitudes towards the housewife were far from straightforward. Whereas CoID positioned her as outside notions of good taste, many *H&C* and *Outlook* writers – and indeed many advertisers – credited her with taste and the ability to judge. At the same time, the magazines provided advice to assist and develop this ability; their interiors content helped readers to acquire cultural capital. However, despite efforts in this respect, the organizational periodicals remained ‘local’ sites in terms of social capital. While symbolic capital was apparent in some representations of design and décor, other aspects of their interiors content – such as the centrality of home-handicrafts in *H&C* and the offer of access to the modern via CWS goods in *Outlook* – reflected their own interpretations of value and legitimacy. These particular perspectives and distinctive constructions of the modern were as evident in representations of personal appearance as they were in relation to the modern home, as the following chapters reveal.

Chapter Five
Dressing the Modern Woman:
The Importance of Fashion to Constructions of the Modern

From the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, *H&C*'s Denman column listed 'Looking Your Best', a course that included 'help with the choosing and wearing of clothes and accessories, with make-up and hair styles'.⁸⁷⁰ This course indicates the place of personal appearance within the collective culture of the NFWI. The *Outlook* sample contained comparable examples. In 1956, for instance, Mrs Webster – describing herself as a 'demonstrator in beauty culture' – wrote about being able to grant another Guildswoman's wish to be fully made-up.⁸⁷¹ Due to the focus on issues and campaigns, scholars have not explored personal appearance in the organizations or their publications. In contrast, White notes that the relationship between women's periodicals and personal appearance has a long history, with a 'marked increase' in the space devoted to fashion and beauty in the post-war period: alongside the changes affecting the home and domestic consumption, 'a similar revolution was taking place in the sphere of fashion'.⁸⁷²

This chapter investigates the relationship between this changing sphere of fashion and understandings of the modern in these magazines. The concept of fashion intertwines with other aspects of personal appearance. This chapter and the next take a broad view of personal appearance, covering beauty and beautification, home-dressmaking and the body, as well as fashion, clothing and accessories. This approach recognizes the intrinsic connections between fashion, clothing and the body: 'dress...is about the experience of living in and acting on the body'.⁸⁷³ Furthermore, like fashion, the body is a cultural construct subject to change.⁸⁷⁴ These chapters continue to develop the argument that ideas of the modern in these magazines challenged, or at least offered alternatives, to dominant notions. The chapters show that a range of styles

⁸⁷⁰ 'Denman College Courses', *H&C* 10/1955, pp.377-378. See also: Denman column, *H&C* 05/1954, p.177; 10/1966, p.369.

⁸⁷¹ Mrs Webster, *Outlook* 14/07/1956, p.11.

⁸⁷² White, *Magazines*, pp.147,162.

⁸⁷³ Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body – Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.1,4,5. See also: Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton, 'Fashion, Representation, Femininity', *Feminist Review* 38 (1991), p.65; Gaines, 'Introduction', p.2; Wilson and de la Haye, 'Introduction', p.2; Wilson, 'Postmodern', pp.6,9.

⁸⁷⁴ Carter, 'Alice', p.205; Evans and Thornton, 'Fashion', pp.48-49,65; Niessen and Brydon, 'Introduction', p.xvi; Parkins, 'Introduction', p.5; Negrin, 'Self', pp.100,104; Wilson and de la Haye, 'Introduction', p.3; Wilson, 'Postmodern', pp.6,11-12; Wilson, *Adorned*, p.2; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Body and Consumer Culture', in Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*, pp.183,185.

featured, multiplicity that mirrored the array of complex – even contradictory – attitudes expressed about appearance in the publications. Due to the importance of personal appearance as a site for constructions and representations of femininity, this diversity further complicates accounts of post-war womanhood.

As before, the analysis emphasizes the various elements – producers, advertisers, readers – that create the unique world produced by each magazine. The chapter begins by locating this study within feminist analyses of appearance. Two sections then focus on the relationship between clothing and ideas of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook*. The chapter also assesses the concept of fashion and its implications for understandings of the modern, highlighting efforts to create a sense of belonging to the modern – considered in the fourth section too. The final two sections explore the ways in which other discourses within fashion content undermined inclusion and belonging. Chapter Six then follows with an examination of the body, beauty and beautification.

The limitations that restrict any study mean that these chapters cannot discuss every area. There are certain items, such as dresses and stockings, and other aspects of appearance, such as hair-styling, that would benefit from further attention in any future study. The focus here is on those elements that most illuminate the themes raised. The chapter demonstrates the two-way interaction between clothing and the modern: understandings of the modern influenced representations of clothing, but ideas about fashion affected signifiers of the modern as well. The findings of earlier chapters are crucial and these sections build upon a number of established themes. For example, depictions in the organizational periodicals continued to overlap with *and* differ from conceptualizations of the modern in mainstream publications. The chapters introduce additional factors behind the distinctive perspectives of *H&C* and *Outlook*, most notably age and generation. This reinforces the significance of these magazines and their readers to scholarship on post-war Britain: while the emergence of the teenager in the 1950s and growing obsession with youth in the 1960s are widely noted in historiography on the period, the older generation – and their efforts to be modern – has received scant consideration. This chapter reiterates the extent to which looking at those antithetical to the usual terms on which the modern is understood (rural; Co-operative; older) provide a valuable alternative account of Britain in these decades.

The foundation underpinning these chapters is the theory, outlined in the Introduction, that appearance is an important facet in identity construction. This view is now widely accepted, but such attitudes are relatively recent. For years, scholars

regarded fashion as superficial and meaningless⁸⁷⁵, with only art historians and anthropologists producing academic work on the subject.⁸⁷⁶ Furthermore, many feminists condemned fashion and beauty as patriarchal, with women exposed to the male gaze and sexual objectification.⁸⁷⁷ Items mainly associated with female wearers, such as the stiletto, were particularly subject to attack because of their symbolic associations with women's subordination.⁸⁷⁸

Feminist condemnation continues to have a legacy, with famous proponents such as Naomi Wolf.⁸⁷⁹ However, as Claire Colebrook notes in her introduction to *Feminist Theory's* 2006 special issue on beauty, 'there has also been a strong feminist tradition of defending beauty.'⁸⁸⁰ In addition, academic attitudes have shifted enormously, a development linked to changing views of popular culture and consumption.⁸⁸¹ This turn – especially work focusing on women's relationship to personal appearance – informs the perspective of this study. A noticeable attribute of this approach is a willingness to develop more nuanced analyses. In her influential introduction to *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, Jane Gaines poses the question 'What if self-decoration gives women a sense of potency to act in the world?'⁸⁸² Similarly, Colebrook asks 'how is beauty defined, deployed, defended, subordinated, marketed or manipulated, and how do these tactics intersect with gender and value?'⁸⁸³ Such revisionist assessments underline the possibilities for agency

⁸⁷⁵ Evans and Thornton, 'Fashion', p.48; Niessen and Brydon, 'Introduction', p.ix; Tickner, 'Trousers', p.56.

⁸⁷⁶ Boydell, 'Review', pp.137,144; Eicher and Roach-Higgins, 'Definitions', pp.8-10. There were various factors behind this academic hostility, including the long-term influence of Christian ideas, class-based critiques and Enlightenment and Cartesian attitudes. Carolyn Beckingham, *Is Fashion a Woman's Right?* (Brighton, 2005), p.10; Anne Brydon, 'Sensible Shoes', in Brydon and Niessen (ed.), *Consuming Fashion*, pp.1,4-6; Garner, 'Review', pp.576-577; Negrin, 'Self', pp.99-100,103,108-109; Niessen and Brydon, 'Introduction', p.ix; A Holly Shissler, 'Beauty Is Nothing to Be Ashamed Of: Beauty Contests As Tools of Women's Liberation in Early Republican Turkey', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24:1 (2004), p.108; Wilson and de la Haye, 'Introduction', p.2; Wilson, 'Postmodern', p.5; Wilson, *Adorned*, pp.229-231,234-235.

⁸⁷⁷ Sarah Dreher, 'Freudian Slips and Blue Jeans', in Kirsty Dunseath (ed.), *A Second Skin – Women Write About Clothes* (London, 1998), p.68; Scott, *Lipstick*, pp.1-2,8-9,224,264; Beckingham, *Right?*, pp.1,3,6-7,8; Chapkis, *Secrets*, pp.1-3,7; Negrin, 'Self', p.103.

⁸⁷⁸ Beckingham, *Right?*, pp.14,16; Gaines, 'Introduction', pp.3-5; Wilson and de la Haye, 'Introduction', p.2; Wilson, 'Postmodern', p.5; Wright, 'Objectifying', pp.7-8.

⁸⁷⁹ Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (London, 1990); Christine Boydell 'Review of *Fashioning the Body Politic: Dress, Gender, Citizenship*', *Journal of Contemporary History* 39:1 (2004), p.708; Boydell, 'Review Article', p.137.

⁸⁸⁰ Colebrook, 'Introduction', p.131. See also: Felski, 'Because', p.276.

⁸⁸¹ Andrews and Talbot, 'Introduction', pp.1,5; Attfield, *Wild Things*, p.3; Gaines, 'Introduction', p.7; Mica Nava 'Consumerism Reconsidered: Buying and Power', in Morag Shiach (ed.), *Feminism and Cultural Studies* (Oxford, 1999), pp.48-51,53; Ryan, 'All the World', pp.11,19; Winship, 'New Disciplines', pp.24-25.

⁸⁸² Jane Gaines, 'Introduction', in Gaines and Herzog (eds.), *Fabrications*, pp.5-6.

⁸⁸³ Colebrook, 'Introduction', p.132.

created by appearance *and* the way this agency is restricted and limited.⁸⁸⁴ *Feminist Theory* essayists question ‘any simple association of beauty with either the passive subjection of women to the patriarchal gaze or the active delight taken in affirming one’s own self-fashioning’ – therefore ‘feminist scholarship on beauty has to proceed on a case-by-case basis’.⁸⁸⁵ This investigation adds to such case studies, first by examining how contributors to these magazines negotiated clothing and ideas of the modern.

Clothing in *H&C* and *Outlook*

In October 1963, *Outlook* contained a fashion report entitled ‘Warm Winter Separates’, which included ski-pant trousers and advised on choosing flattering sweaters to wear with them.⁸⁸⁶ Casual clothing such as this became more popular from the late 1950s onwards, a trend linked to the influence of film stars such as Audrey Hepburn and Leslie Caron and the growth of leisure in the post-war period.⁸⁸⁷ Casual clothing became widely accepted as appropriate for leisure activities – hence its prevalence in DIY advertisements (see Chapter Four).⁸⁸⁸ However, newer styles of dress did not simply supplant older ones. Furthermore, representations of modern appearance in *H&C* and *Outlook* did not necessarily correspond with key stylistic trends of the period and multiple styles were concurrent.

On the pages immediately following ‘Warm Winter Separates’, there was a piece on autumn dresses, with the fashion editor commenting that ‘this season, everything is discreet and restrained – giving a “ladylike” look’.⁸⁸⁹ This ‘ladylike’ look contrasted with the casual styles of the preceding item, revealing that diverse styles that appeared concomitantly in the magazine. Advertisements for Gor-ray skirts in *H&C* and *Woman* accentuated a range of styles too, both visually and textually (Figure 5.1), again illustrating the variety of looks within single issues of each magazine. There was no acknowledgement of differences between the styles shown; each catered for a

⁸⁸⁴ Barnes and Eicher, ‘Introduction’, p.7; Felski, ‘Because’, pp.280-28; Negrin, ‘Self’, pp.109-112,115; Wilson, *Adorned*, pp.10-13,237,243-246; Wilson, ‘Postmodern’, pp.5,8-9,14.

⁸⁸⁵ Colebrook, ‘Introduction’, p.141.

⁸⁸⁶ ‘Warm Winter Separates’, *Outlook* 10/1963, p.5.

⁸⁸⁷ Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion – A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester, 1995), p.194; Moseley, *Growing*, pp.43,106; Moseley, ‘Respectability’, pp.483-484; Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, pp.161-162.

⁸⁸⁸ Tickner, ‘Trousers’, pp.63,65; Wilson, *Adorned*, pp.162,164.

⁸⁸⁹ ‘Sleek, Simple and Oh So Colourful’, *Outlook* 10/1963, pp.6-7.



Figure 5.1 Gor-ray advertisement highlighting a variety of skirt styles⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁹⁰ Gor-ray advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, p.110. For a similar example, see: *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.51.

different aspect of the roles that comprised ‘the housewife’ identity: mother, wife, consumer, leisured woman.

As with interiors, by offering a range of styles, the magazines credited readers with the discernment and judgement needed to make choices. As one style rarely dominated, readers were encouraged to ‘take your pick’ of options⁸⁹¹, thus empowering them with freedom – albeit circumscribed – to choose. ‘What’s Your Style?’ asked a 1961 *Woman* article, while *Outlook*’s fashion editor wrote in 1959 that choice of skirt depended on the style of one’s winter coat and how one felt.⁸⁹² This discourse was more apparent in the organizational periodicals than *Woman*, which generally located expertise with the magazine and its writers, not the readers. *H&C* and *Outlook*, on the other hand, continued the NFWI and WCG’s housewife-as-expert tradition by addressing the reader as a sensible, intelligent woman. Readers’ choice was encouraged by posing questions that created a dialogue between the audience and the text, urging the reader to consider trends; as well as general reflections such as ‘How many of these “freak” fashions have you seen on anyone... whose opinions you respect?’, readers of both magazines were asked ‘What do you think?’⁸⁹³ Some advertisers similarly positioned the reader as having good taste and distinction, although this was probably a marketing strategy to boost sales. CWS, for example, claimed that their handbags confirmed ‘your perfect taste’ and were ‘a flattering compliment to *you* and the clothes you wear’.⁸⁹⁴

This emphasis on reader choice and decision-making constructed the reader as an individual, paralleling the importance of the individual seen in relation to the home. There were other connections between the home and appearance. As noted, home-handicrafts and home-dressmaking overlapped. Both were integral components of consumer culture and highly ambiguous, resisting standard divisions such as production and consumption.⁸⁹⁵ Although ‘home-dressmaking’ is mostly associated with sewing, this study uses the term to encompass the various proficiencies required to make the

⁸⁹¹ Pattern service, *H&C* 04/1968, p.149.

⁸⁹² ‘What’s Your Style?’, *Woman* 11/11/1961, pp.14-15; ‘A Dress to Delight’, *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.24-25.

⁸⁹³ ‘Eccentric Or Elegant?’, *H&C* 10/1966, p.379; ‘Fashion Pointers’, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.15; ‘Your Most Important Buy’, *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.24-25.

⁸⁹⁴ Emphasis in original. CWS advertisements, *Outlook* 06/10/1956, p.24; 14/07/1957, p.24.

⁸⁹⁵ Barbara Burman, ‘Introduction’, in Barbara Burman (ed.), *The Culture of Sewing – Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking* (Oxford, 1999), p.3; Niessen and Brydon, ‘Introduction’, pp.xix,xv.

clothing featured, with distinctions made when necessary. Knitting was important, as were other skills such as crochet.⁸⁹⁶

Attention to the ambiguities and meanings attached to home-dressmaking is relatively recent.⁸⁹⁷ Despite Rozsika Parker arguing as early as the 1980s that embroidery was a site for resistance to femininity⁸⁹⁸, Barbara Burman's 1999-edited collection *The Culture of Sewing* is a key text in promoting such views.⁸⁹⁹ Amongst others in this volume, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin examines the range of motivations behind home-dressmaking and Hackney claims that such activities 'allowed plenty of scope for reworking and reinterpretation', hence women could 'read against the grain'.⁹⁰⁰ The change in attitudes since the publication of *The Culture of Sewing* has crucial implications, particularly for feminist analyses, with historians now investigating the breadth of meanings and potentially positive impact that such skills could have.⁹⁰¹

Home-dressmaking was a significant element in post-war women's magazines.⁹⁰² Editorial responses to readers' letters about their home-dressmaking concerns reveal that *Woman* even had a knitting department with its own editor.⁹⁰³ To discuss clothing and fashion without mentioning home-dressmaking would therefore be a misrepresentation of their contents. Of course, the presence of patterns and pattern promotions on the pages of a magazine does not illuminate how popular or widespread home-dressmaking was; even though it was a common activity for women in the early decades of the twentieth century, scholars contend that home-dressmaking was in decline during the post-WW2 era.⁹⁰⁴

These magazines suggest that home-dressmaking – especially knitting – remained popular. Editors regarded home-dressmaking as a means of attracting readers; a 1957 advertisement for *Woman* in *H&C* used the headline '16-page pull-out knitting booklet'.⁹⁰⁵ When discussing comparative circulation figures in 1958, the *H&C* sub-committee noted that one of the reasons given by Institute members for declining

⁸⁹⁶ For examples, see: "'Carefree" Crochet', *H&C* 04/1969, p.173.

⁸⁹⁷ Burman, 'Introduction', pp.1-2.

⁸⁹⁸ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch* (London, 1983), p.11.

⁸⁹⁹ Michael Zakim, 'Review of *The Culture of Sewing: Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking*', *Business History Review* 74 (2000), p.510.

⁹⁰⁰ Hackney, 'Making', p.79 (See also: Moseley, 'Respectability', pp.487-488); Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, 'Home Sewing: Motivational Changes in the Twentieth Century', in Barbara Burman (ed.), *The Culture of Sewing – Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking* (Oxford, 1999), pp.97,108.

⁹⁰¹ Hasmik Khalapyan, 'Women's Education, Labour or Charity? Significance of Needlework among Ottoman Armenians, from Mid-Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century', *Women's History Magazine* 53 (2006), pp.21-31.

⁹⁰² Langhamer, *Leisure*, pp.177-178.

⁹⁰³ Mrs SW, *Woman* 24/02/1962, pp.3-4; Mrs B, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.3.

⁹⁰⁴ Burman, 'Introduction', pp.6-7; Hackney, 'Making', pp.73-74,88.

⁹⁰⁵ *Woman* advertisement, *H&C* 10/1957, p.316; Langhamer, *Leisure*, pp.177-178.

readership was the desire for knitting patterns.⁹⁰⁶ The publishers responded to this desire: in the four years before April 1958, the *H&C* sample contained only two knitting patterns; in the following four years, there were six.⁹⁰⁷ *Outlook*'s knitting patterns were popular too; a 1966 reader questionnaire returned 'many compliments about these'.⁹⁰⁸

This popularity reflects the relatively low outlay on shop-bought clothing. Statistics are lacking as 'no rigorous analysis of clothing expenditure has been done either by an economist or historian in the UK', but Shinobu Majima's study demonstrates that in 1961, just 1.67% of a household's disposable income was spent on womenswear.⁹⁰⁹ This chapter considers representations of manufactured garments alongside home-dressmaking as they shared many themes and discourses. For example, despite widespread critiques to the contrary⁹¹⁰, contributors to these magazines applied the concept of fashion to home-dressmaking as well as shop-bought clothing. There were allusions to fashion in patterns, such as claims that a dress had 'at least two 1963 features'.⁹¹¹ Likewise, manufacturers of home-dressmaking-related items professed 'Fashion runs smoothly with NyZip' and promised that their products would 'accentuate fashion features'.⁹¹²

These examples support Rachel Moseley's argument that home-dressmaking provided women with an economical way of keeping up with fashion.⁹¹³ Patterns, supplied directly in the magazines or made available relatively cheaply via their pattern services, were a crucial part of the democratization of home-dressmaking.⁹¹⁴ Ease and simplicity further increased this accessibility. Many descriptions underscored such elements: 'quick knitteds' and a jumper that 'needs only 6ozs of Quickerknit'; dresses that were quick or 'easy to make'.⁹¹⁵ This democratization somewhat contradicts the accent on skill seen in relation to the housewife's role in the home. However, it forms

⁹⁰⁶ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 02/04/1958.

⁹⁰⁷ Knitting patterns, *H&C* 09/1954, p.337; 04/1958, p.129; 10/1958, p.319; 10/1959, p.305; 04/1960, pp.153-154; 10/1960, p.374; 04/1961, pp.149-159; 10/1961, pp.361-362.

⁹⁰⁸ 'Talking Points', *Outlook* 10/1966, p.1.

⁹⁰⁹ Shinobu Majima, 'Demographic Profile of Clothing Consumers: Fashion and the Mass Consumer Society in Britain, c1950-2001', paper at Economic History Society Annual Conference (University of Durham), April 2003, pp.1,3.

⁹¹⁰ Cheryl Buckley, 'On the Margins: Theorizing the History and Significance of Making and Designing Clothes at Home', *Journal of Design History* 11 (1998), p.166; Burman, 'Introduction', p.12.

⁹¹¹ 'Elegant Outlines', *H&C* 04/1963, p.137.

⁹¹² Lightning Nylon advertisement, *H&C* 10/1961; Vilene advertisement, *H&C* 04/1961, p.118.

⁹¹³ Moseley, 'Respectability', p.477. See also: Burman, 'Introduction', p.3; Hackney, 'Making', p.80; White, *Magazines*, p.162.

⁹¹⁴ Margaret Walsh, 'The Democratization of Fashion: The Emergence of the Women's Dress Pattern Industry', *Journal of American History* 66 (1979), pp.299-303,305-306,309,313; Moseley, 'Respectability', p.477.

⁹¹⁵ 'Cast on For Spring', *Woman* 24/02/1962, pp.37-45; 'Just the Thing For Spring', *Outlook* 06/04/1957, pp.24-25; 'Bow Belles', *H&C* 04/1966, p.153; 'Next Week', *Woman* 24/02/1962, p.21; 'A New Dress in a Night', *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.36-37.

part of the theme of exclusion and belonging. Such patterns gave rural and working-class readers – largely excluded from notions of fashion due to their location, finances and lack of cultural capital – the opportunity to create a fashionable and modern appearance for themselves, as later sections further explore. Making fashion more widely available was democratic because it facilitated inclusion in the modern world of post-war Britain.

All three magazines contained home-dressmaking-related advertisements but these were most prominent in *H&C*. A comparison of advertising for the wool company Patons and Baldwins illustrates this: there were nine of their advertisements in the *H&C* sample and only two in the *Outlook* sample. Similarly, the Coats sewing firm placed sixteen advertisements in *H&C* compared to eight in *Outlook*. It seems that the NFWI's association with home-handicrafts gave *H&C* an advantage in attracting home-dressmaking advertisers. During a period of intense competition for advertising in the late 1950s, the magazine lost some large clients but was able to secure new contracts, 'the most prominent amongst these being Emu Knitting Wools'.⁹¹⁶

Pattern services made magazines themselves part of this commercial culture of home-dressmaking.⁹¹⁷ Knitting patterns appeared in full; those in *H&C* from 1958 came 'courtesy of' various major wool manufacturers, which may explain why Emu became an important advertiser in the same year.⁹¹⁸ Sewing patterns were more expensive and hence required an additional payment, so although the magazines promoted them, readers had to contact the pattern service to obtain them. In April 1956, for example, readers wanting the 'All-Season Pinafore Dress' pattern needed to write to Department P at *H&C* and enclose a postal order for 2s 9d.⁹¹⁹

Whilst pattern services continued in *H&C* and *Woman* during the 1960s, *Outlook*'s pattern service disappeared during the latter part of 1958. Records do not reveal why. Nevertheless, it seems that CWS influence was responsible: home-dressmaking was not compatible with the editorial and organizational commitment to promoting CWS goods. Personal appearance is the area in which non-Co-operative products are most visible; Pierre Balmain perfumes and Kangol hats were amongst the goods endorsed and advertised.⁹²⁰ However, with only one exception (the fashion

⁹¹⁶ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 02/04/1958.

⁹¹⁷ Hackney, 'Reading'; Hackney, 'Making', pp.76-77,80,83; Margaret Maynard, "'The Wishful Feeling about Curves": Fashion, Femininity and the "New Look" in Australia', *Journal of Design History* 8 (1995), p.50. Mail-order patterns also had a history which pre-dated their appearance in magazines; see: Walsh, 'Democratization', pp.299-303,305-306,309,313.

⁹¹⁸ 'Warm for Winter Festivities', *H&C* 10/1958, p.319.

⁹¹⁹ 'All-Season Pinafore Dress', *H&C* 04/1956, p.149.

⁹²⁰ Kangol advertisement, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, p.8; 'Beauty Notes', *Outlook* 10/1960, p.33.

editor praising dresses from Grafton, a mail-order company⁹²¹), all non-Co-operative products had Co-operative availability – a number of advertisers explicitly stated this.⁹²² Furthermore, Co-operative publicity was prominent, notably in the 1960s reader offers; as one 1963 promotion announced, ‘These skirts...are offered to you at this extra-special privilege price as part of the Co-operative Women’s Guild campaign to publicize CWS fashion goods’.⁹²³ In contrast, the earlier pattern service linked only to the publication. This was not the sole instance of Co-operative allegiances having a fundamental impact on *Outlook*. As the rest of the chapter explores, the distinctive features found in other aspects of the magazines characterized representations of fashion too.

The ‘practical woman’ in *H&C* and *Outlook*

All three magazines recognized cost as a key consideration when it came to buying clothing, but the solution offered to problems of expense differed in accordance with the title’s particular perspective. A 1962 *Outlook* article, for instance, promoted CWS dresses as providing a ‘high-fashion look for extremely little cost’.⁹²⁴ Within *H&C*, low cost was similarly attributed to clothing manufacturers, albeit not Co-operative firms; in 1959, for example, ‘News From Our Advertisers’ claimed that Gorray skirts ‘suit all purses’.⁹²⁵ In contrast, *Woman*’s writers presented the magazine itself as providing ways of reducing expense, with fashion and beauty advice to help ‘save precious pence in a hard-worked budget’.⁹²⁶

Such comments reiterate the publications’ relative sensitivity to readers’ circumstances, as seen in relation to the home. An important aspect of this was the dilemma of how to resolve practical needs with a desire to be fashionable; as one *Outlook* writer asked, ‘What do *you*, as a practical woman, look for in an autumn coat?...And can you, as a woman liking to be in the fashion, reconcile these demands with the latest fashions?’⁹²⁷ Literally practical fashions helped to partly reconcile such conflicting demands. Overalls and housecoats were the subject of many magazines’

⁹²¹ ‘A Dress to Delight’, *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.24-25.

⁹²² Kangol and Jexcel advertisements, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, pp.8,18.

⁹²³ ‘Wonderful *Outlook* Offer’, *Outlook* 10/1963, pp.16-17.

⁹²⁴ ‘Budget-priced Holiday Styles’, *Outlook* 04/1962, pp.6-7.

⁹²⁵ ‘News From Our Advertisers’, *H&C* 04/1959, p.133.

⁹²⁶ ‘Look Your Loveliest Issue’, *Woman* 23/03/1957, pp.33,35.

⁹²⁷ ‘Your Most Important Buy’, *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.24-25.

dressmaking patterns and advertisements during this period.⁹²⁸ In 1955, *H&C* labelled a housecoat ‘a real “working” overall’, while in 1964, *Outlook* described an apron as ‘Housewives’ Choice!’⁹²⁹ Such descriptions construct these items as the housewife’s equivalent of workmen’s overalls – practical garments to protect other clothing – thus perpetuating the image of housework as ‘real’ work and the housewife as a worker.

Practicality and aesthetics were not mutually exclusive. The *H&C* housecoat incorporated ‘neatly cuffed sleeves, tailored revers...a bow at the back’.⁹³⁰ Coverage of raincoats – another utilitarian item – accentuated this combination of practicality and aesthetics as well, with one *Outlook* article entitled ‘Fashion For a Rainy Day’.⁹³¹ A *Woman* advertiser used a similar phrase; Quelrayn claimed to be ‘Fashion’s favourite rainwear’.⁹³² The emphasis on practicality was further visible in references to artificial fabrics, which parallel the synthetic materials – part of the scientific discourse – used in domestic goods and interior decor. Although organizations such as the International Wool Secretariat (IWS) promoted natural materials in all three publications⁹³³, endorsements of man-made materials and fibres become increasingly noticeable from the late 1950s⁹³⁴, reflecting both the powerful influence of chemical companies such as ICI and Courtaulds and the importance of low cost and practicality.⁹³⁵ In 1957, for example, one *Outlook* fashion article remarked that ‘for many busy women the choice of fabric is nylon’ because of its easy-care properties.⁹³⁶ During the same year, *Woman* contained similar statements publicizing ease of care and low prices.⁹³⁷ Likewise, *H&C*’s advertorial page promoted the easy-care properties of Triona, a new blend of Tricel and nylon, claiming that ‘it drip dries and needs but a touch up with a cool iron, and, good news too, it is said to stay always white’.⁹³⁸

⁹²⁸ Modesta advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, p.120; Doretex advertisement, *H&C* 10/1962, p.368; Leo Specialities advertisement, *H&C* 10/1969, p.406; ‘Instant Patterns’, *Woman* 15/05/1965, p.19.

⁹²⁹ ‘Pages From Our Pattern Book’, *H&C* 10/1955, p.389; ‘Housewives’ Choice!’, *Outlook* 10/1964, pp.4-5.

⁹³⁰ ‘Pages From Our Pattern Book’, *H&C* 10/1955, p.389.

⁹³¹ ‘Fashion For a Rainy Day’, *Outlook* 10/1962, pp.6-7.

⁹³² Quelrayn advertisement, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.34.

⁹³³ IWS advertisements, *H&C* 04/1956, p.120; 04/1959, p.130; 10/1968, p.396; ‘Felicity Field Looks at European Fashions’, ‘The Little Jacket’, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, pp.8-9; ‘Highlights from Fashions in Wool’, *Woman* 29/09/1956, pp.35-37.

⁹³⁴ White, *Magazines*, p.204.

⁹³⁵ ICI advertisements, *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.55; 19/03/1960, p.46; Courtaulds advertisement, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.141; ‘Audrey Castle Presents’, *H&C* 04/1966, pp.148-149; Partington, ‘Popular Fashion’, p.151; Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, pp.186-187; Kylie Winkworth, ‘Follower of Fashion: Dress in the 1950s’, in Judith O’Callaghan (ed.), *The Australian Dream: Design of the 1950s* (Haymarket, 1993), p.72.

⁹³⁶ ‘Blouses Are High Fashion’, *Outlook* 10/1957, p.29.

⁹³⁷ Next issue’s contents, Cepea and ICI advertisements, *Woman* 23/03/1957, pp.39,42,55.

⁹³⁸ ‘Let Us Help You’, *H&C* 04/1961, p.150.

An additional aspect of practicality was versatility, with comments such as ‘separates are the key to versatile dressing on a budget’.⁹³⁹ In *Outlook*, CWS publicity heavily promoted versatility⁹⁴⁰, whereas in *H&C* and *Woman*, it was most apparent in descriptions accompanying home-dressmaking patterns. Examples taken from the latter magazines declared that the dress ‘can be made in several styles, suitable for evening or cocktail wear, as well as for more casual occasions’ and ‘Two simple patterns add up to a versatile wardrobe for between-season days’.⁹⁴¹ These quotations illustrate two vital elements of versatility: appropriateness for different occasions and seasonal transition. Clothing was versatile if it was wearable in a variety of contexts and throughout the year; permutations of the phrase ‘all season’ occurred regularly.⁹⁴² By maximizing how often an item could be worn, versatility linked to issues of cost: as a 1955 *Woman* article noted, ‘An outfit that makes and breaks to lead more than a double life saves money’.⁹⁴³

These examples reiterate differences between the three publications. In *Outlook*, the magazine’s Co-operative links remained dominant. *H&C* and *Woman* contained differing levels of advertising but both included advertisements from a wide range of companies; advertising exerted an overall influence but there was not one specific dominant pressure, as seen in the case of coats. The 1951 Rowntree Poverty Survey found that a coat was the most expensive purchase made by married women in families living on less than £6 a week (£72 today), costing six guineas every three years.⁹⁴⁴ Magazine journalists hinted at the financial investment involved in this costly purchase. In 1955, *Woman*’s fashion editor referred to ‘that all important item, the autumn-through-winter coat that usually cuts such a big slice from our clothes allowance’.⁹⁴⁵ Such views were echoed in the headline for a 1958 *Outlook* article: ‘Your Most Important Buy – A Winter Top Coat’.⁹⁴⁶ As well as advertisements for ready-made coats⁹⁴⁷, *H&C* and *Woman* offered alternatives to this costly purchase by including patterns for making coats.⁹⁴⁸ In contrast, there were no coat patterns in the *Outlook*

⁹³⁹ ‘Another Wonderful Special Offer’, *Outlook* 04/1964, pp.16-17.

⁹⁴⁰ For example, see: ‘Another Wonderful Special Offer’, *Outlook* 04/1964, pp.16-17; ‘Our Cover Story’, *Outlook* 09/04/1955, p.15.

⁹⁴¹ Next issue’s contents, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.35; Pattern service, *H&C* 10/1968, p.391.

⁹⁴² For examples, see: ‘All-Season Pinafore Dress’, *H&C* 04/1956, p.149; ‘For All Seasons’, *H&C* 10/1966, p.389.

⁹⁴³ ‘The Newest Idea in Separates’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, pp.12-13.

⁹⁴⁴ Wilson and Taylor, ‘Through’, p.185; Breward, *Culture*, p.187; Winkworth, ‘Follower’, pp.68-69.

⁹⁴⁵ ‘Cover Girl Coat’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.20.

⁹⁴⁶ ‘Your Most Important Buy’, *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.24-25.

⁹⁴⁷ Antartex advertisement, *H&C* 04/1961, p.130; Dannimac advertisement, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.40.

⁹⁴⁸ ‘Country Coat’, *H&C* 10/1961, pp.361-362; Pattern service, *H&C* 10/1968, p.391; ‘Cover Girl Coat’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.20; ‘*Woman* Success Course’, *Woman* 26/01/1963, pp.18-20.

sample. As coats were expensive, they were a key CWS item, regularly promoted on covers and in direct publicity.⁹⁴⁹ A home-dressmaking coat pattern would potentially undermine this emphasis on buying a Co-operative brand coat and it seems that CWS had sufficient influence to inhibit such challenges.

Outlook's October 1958 piece, 'Your Most Important Buy', reinforced the significance of coats because of their impact on other outfits: 'it's just a matter of how you feel and your type of winter coat'.⁹⁵⁰ The details provided in such pieces formed a type of education in cultural capital, helping the reader to look at items with discrimination and judgement: 'Points in styling include raincoats with raglan sleeves [sic] octagonal pockets' and 'The straight line and low belt mark it as very definitely "1956", but the elegance lies also in the material'.⁹⁵¹ Again, this shows that these magazines had an important role in advising on consumer choices and assisting readers in developing their cultural competencies.

Evidence from these magazines also indicates the changing symbolic capital of certain items. Fur coats, for instance, had long signaled wealth and status; in 1969, *H&C*'s fashion editor observed that 'It's the ambition of many a woman to own a fur coat – seen as a sign of her husband's success, of acquired position, as a reward, perhaps, for years of going without'.⁹⁵² However, the status and prestige of fur appears to have been declining in the 1950s and 60s. Only one *Outlook* article mentioned fur, with the fashion editor asking in 1957 'And what is more flattering to a good complexion than the soft glowing sheen of fur?'.⁹⁵³ Such overt status symbols were perhaps not in keeping with the Co-operative ethos, but *Woman* rarely mentioned fur either – just an advertisement for fur fabric and a snippet about a designer creating mink-trimmed underwear.⁹⁵⁴

H&C intimates that a concern for the modern over-rode older notions of status and prestige. During the 1960s, writers promoted synthetic furs and, as with other man-made materials, highlighted their lower price.⁹⁵⁵ Moreover, there was publicity throughout the period about acquiring furs in more fashionable styles: 'Look at the exciting way modern furriers design coats'.⁹⁵⁶ This was accentuated by L and D

⁹⁴⁹ 'Our Cover Story', *Outlook* 08/10/1955, cover, p.27; 07/04/1956, cover, p.27; 13/07/1957, cover, p.13; CWS promotion, 10/1965, p.1.

⁹⁵⁰ 'Your Most Important Buy', *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.24-25.

⁹⁵¹ 'For a Sudden Shower', *Outlook* 13/07/1957, p.27; Coat publicity, *Outlook* 13/07/1956, p.25.

⁹⁵² 'Creating the "Now" Look', *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395; Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.23.

⁹⁵³ 'That Straight Look in Coats', *Outlook* 10/1957, p.15.

⁹⁵⁴ 'Personally Yours', *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.5; Astra advertisement, *Woman* 12/12/1964, p.7.

⁹⁵⁵ 'Home Affairs', *H&C* 10/1960, pp.380-381; 'Creating the "Now" Look', *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395.

⁹⁵⁶ 'Creating the "Now" Look', *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395.

Goodkind and Derella Fur Models (the two companies amalgamated in 1957), who regularly advertised in *H&C* and featured on its advertorial page.⁹⁵⁷ They offered ‘cash for that fur coat’ (underlining the literal value that this status symbol had for women) as well as part exchange ‘for one of our modern styled furs’ and restyling: ‘This beautiful jacket made from your outmoded Fur Coat’.⁹⁵⁸ Such phrases demonstrate that contributors to these magazines negotiated ideas of the modern in order to incorporate items considered traditional or old-fashioned within understandings of fashion. Fur coats were not the only example of such negotiations, as the following section further examines.

Fashion and the modern

‘Here is a fashionable swagger coat’ and ‘Fashion says brilliant colours’ typify the generic invocations of fashion found throughout *H&C* and *Outlook*.⁹⁵⁹ Fashion was significant in these periodicals – and this study – because of its symbolic relationship with the modern. In her exploration of haute couture in inter-war France, Stewart notes that

It is widely acknowledged that fashion is modern. If one adopts David Frisby’s definition of *modernité* as “the more general experience of the aestheticization of everyday life, as exemplified in the transitory qualities of an urban culture shaped by the imperatives of fashion, consumerism, and constant innovation,” fashion is proto-typically modern.⁹⁶⁰

Such ideas are important here. Contributors to these magazines presented being ‘fashionable’ or ‘in fashion’ as a fundamental facet of the modern. Just as one could create a modern home through contemporary styling and the latest technology, one could construct a modern appearance by dressing in fashionable clothes. Rather than contemporary, a popular term used in interiors, fashionable discourse drew on phrases such as ‘the latest’ and ‘up-to-date’. ‘Now’, for example, denoted being in fashion and hence modern, as in ‘Creating the “Now” Look’ and ‘Three Ways to Look Like Now’ (the former also being a pun on the New Look).⁹⁶¹ Writers used the current or coming

⁹⁵⁷ L and D Goodkind advertisement, *H&C* 04/1957, p.120; ‘Let Us Help You’, *H&C* 10/1961, p.354.

⁹⁵⁸ L and D Goodkind and Derella advertisements, *H&C* 05/1954, inside cover.

⁹⁵⁹ ‘Our Cover Story’, *Outlook* 13/07/1957, p.13; ‘This Month’s Highlights’, *Outlook* 04/1967 p.1.

⁹⁶⁰ Stewart, *Dressing*, p.xii.

⁹⁶¹ ‘Creating the “Now” Look’, *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395; ‘Three Ways to Look Like Now’, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.9.

year to similar effect: ‘The straight line and low belt mark it as very definitely “1956” and ‘in 1970 style’.⁹⁶²

Articles about fashion rarely mentioned the past. Older styles were occasionally revived – ‘the lingerie of Victorian days has become popular once more’; hats with ‘faint reminiscence of the 1920s’; ‘the Thirties look’⁹⁶³ – but historical allusions were limited, far outnumbered by references linked to the 1950s and 60s. These included developments outside of fashion; *H&C* patterns alluded to the growth of popular music from the late 1950s with names such as ‘Round the Clock’ (clothing for different times of the day and reminiscent of the 1955 hit song ‘Rock Around the Clock’) and ‘One for the Record’, described as ‘A smash hit you can knit yourself’.⁹⁶⁴

The extensive presence of modern signifiers throughout fashion content reinforces the status of fashion as emblematic of the modern. In addition to synthetic materials (outlined in the previous section), colour was crucial. As with interiors, all three magazines assumed a role in advising readers on dressing with colour. Due to its widespread use of colour, *Woman* had a distinct advantage in this respect. A 1962 article, for instance, declared that ‘Navy’s news for spring – but navy *plus* colour is newsier!’ The piece (Figure 5.2) used a number of colour photographs, illustrating its warning that the ‘Only trick to wearing it successfully is wearing the right colour with it’. In comparison, when *Outlook*’s fashion editor advised ‘Don’t...be afraid to experiment for your *very* special outfits with more than two colours’, the use of black and white images hindered the effectiveness of her suggestions (Figure 5.3).

The widespread absence of colour forced a reliance on textual descriptions, both in advertising and editorial content. There was a generic element to this – Gor-Ray stated their skirts came ‘in a glorious collection of colours’, none of which were actually specified⁹⁶⁵ – as well as specific colour descriptions in articles, advertisements and patterns.⁹⁶⁶ This was not limited to *H&C* and *Outlook* – a 1954 Kangol advertisement in *Woman* claimed their berets were available in forty ‘fascinating’ colours⁹⁶⁷ – nonetheless it is more noticeable in the organizational periodicals because they lacked colour to illuminate the text and images.

⁹⁶² Coat publicity, *Outlook* 14/07/1956, p.25; ‘Creating the “Now” Look’, *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395.

⁹⁶³ ‘Fashion in the Bedrooms Again Says Nightgowns’, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.21; ‘Hardy Amies Chooses Your New Spring Hat’, *Woman* 10/04/1954, pp.12-13; ‘How Do I Look?’, *H&C* 04/1968, p.154.

⁹⁶⁴ ‘Round the Clock’, *H&C* 10/1960, p.373; ‘One for the Record’, *H&C* 10/1962, pp.373-374.

⁹⁶⁵ Gor-Ray advertisement, *H&C* 04/1959, p.110.

⁹⁶⁶ For examples, see: ‘Paris in Spring’, *H&C* 04/1961, p.142; ‘Audrey Castle Presents’, *H&C* 04/1966, pp.148-149; Watkins and Cole advertisement, *H&C* 10/1968, p.407.

⁹⁶⁷ Kangol advertisement, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.51.



Figure 5.2 Woman's 'Navy Plus' feature⁹⁶⁸



Figure 5.3 An Outlook article targeting younger readers and using younger models⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁸ 'Navy Plus', Woman 24/02/1962, pp.14-15.

⁹⁶⁹ 'Honeymoon or Holiday "Specials"', Outlook 04/1959, pp.24-25.

Reliance on adjectives rather than colour photographs made it more difficult to educate readers in dressing colourfully, although the desired effect of colour was often clear. For example, an *Outlook* piece on dressing for a special holiday or honeymoon informed readers that ‘you can add immensely to the gaiety of the occasion by the right colours’.⁹⁷⁰ As outlined in Chapter Four, ‘gay’ formed part of the discourse of happiness – with women having a critical role in creating a happy home and therefore a happy family – and gaiety translated into clothing. It was widely invoked in *Outlook* and *Woman* during the 1950s, with phrases such as ‘gay new plastic materials’ and ‘this gay little bolero’.⁹⁷¹ Connotations of happiness and joy were reinforced by the regular use of ‘gay’ in conjunction with clothing for summer holidays, a time of fun and relaxation – ‘Make this gay pochette for summer’; ‘For gay summer days’; ‘Gay knitteds for holiday girls’⁹⁷² – although these descriptions disappear by the 1960s, perhaps indicating the growing association of the term with homosexuality.

This emphasis on gaiety and happiness is not evident in *H&C*, possibly due to the magazine’s limited attention to fashion during the 1950s compared to the other two publications and compared to its own content in the 1960s. However, other understandings of fashion and the modern are visible in all three magazines. One such shared element was a fashion industry discourse, even though these publications were not titles associated with the industry in the way that magazines such as *Vogue* are. Proclamations such as ‘Some of the fashion houses are introducing a frame neckline’, ‘now couturiers everywhere are using it’ and ‘It has a deceptive simplicity of line that is the hallmark of couture clothes’⁹⁷³, portrayed each magazine as a forum for obtaining information about the latest fashions.

This sense of coverage coming from the heart of the fashion industry is most noticeable in *H&C*. During the mid-1960s, its fashion articles were condensed catwalk reports, as shown in Figures 5.4 and 5.5; fashion houses or an industry body may have supplied the photographs and commentary. Couture fashion dominated these articles, although there were numerous references to designers – especially Christian Dior and Hardy Amies – in all three magazines. The IWS’ 1957 contribution to *Outlook*, for

⁹⁷⁰ ‘Honeymoon or Holiday “Specials”’, *Outlook* 04/1959, pp.24-25.

⁹⁷¹ ‘For a Sudden Shower’, *Outlook* 13/07/1957, p.27; ‘Jaunty Poodle Bolero’, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.11.

⁹⁷² ‘Make This Gay Pochette For Summer’, *Outlook* 04/1958, pp.16-17; ‘Fashion’s Newest Slant’, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.15; Next issue’s contents, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.35.

⁹⁷³ ‘A Dress to Delight’, *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.24-25; ‘The Girl in the Grey Flannel Dress’, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.13; Pattern service, *H&C* 10/1961, p.351.



below: Hardy Amies' immensely gay little suit, called "One Sharp" is a bobble-buttoned jacket and twirling skirt in navy wool crepe—the sharp note, a blouse in white silk chiffon



How Victor Stiebel sees the suit for Summer 1963; a longish jacket, buttoned high up, with set-in sleeves giving a square shoulder line. The skirt—classically straight



Hat by Marie Christiane of Paris. The natural straw bands are mounted on a stiff veil, and the crown encircled with a black velvet ribbon. A different note—the duck-tailed brim

FINE FASHION



left: Width at the shoulder appears again in John Cavanagh's brief suit jackets; here, it takes important big sleeves with ease in a waist-long jacket. The skirt, again, is slim. In bright blue tweed

right: That sleeve again, used to advantage in John Cavanagh's evening dress of bright pink shantung faille. The appliqued bodice of fine white lace is heavily re-embroidered with guipure threads and diamonds



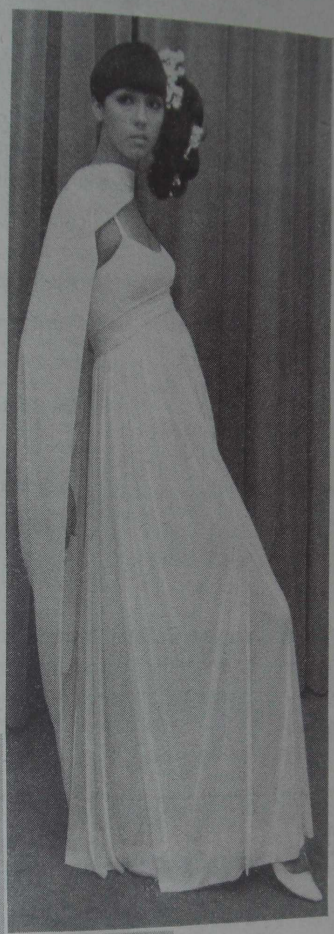
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Figure 5.4 A 1960s H&C fashion feature⁹⁷⁴

⁹⁷⁴ 'Fine Fashion', H&C 04/1963, p.137.

Eccentric or ELEGANT?

This year, the couture Autumn and Winter Collections combined elements of eccentricity and elegance. Does one necessarily cancel out the other, or is it possible for one garment to be both eccentric and elegant? Here is a selection of 1966 couture clothes—what do you think?



The "Cleopatra Cloche" in white plastic shown by Royal milliner Simone Mirman. (Another Mirman idea—a leopard hat looped with dog-lead and chain!)

below: And, at last, couture co-ordinates, by Hardy Amies. These two dashing outfits use an identical check wool. The trench coat is reversible and the three-piece is mink-trimmed to match the mink mini-stetson—both outfits to mix and match successfully



above: From couturier Mattli, this softly draped Grecian jersey evening dress, in white to enhance a brunette

left: John Cavanagh chose yellow and gold brocade for this tunic dress, designed to be worn over gold lamé trousers



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Figure 5.5 Another example of a 1960s H&C fashion feature⁹⁷⁵

⁹⁷⁵ 'Eccentric or Elegant?', H&C 10/1966, p.379.

instance, gave details about jackets by Dior, Balenciaga, Givenchy and Cardin.⁹⁷⁶ A 1961 *H&C* article also reported on Cardin, as well as Nina Ricci and Jacques Griffe.⁹⁷⁷ There were occasional hints that readers may not be familiar with such high-end fashion houses; in a 1960 recommendation for two Pierre Balmain perfumes stocked in Co-operative stores, *Outlook*'s beauty editor added that Balmain was a famous designer.⁹⁷⁸

Furthermore, such coverage did not result in a wholesale acceptance of the fashion industry. The magazines put forward alternative commentaries. In *Outlook*, the fashion editor was disparaging of autumn/winter 1957 couture collections, describing them as 'freak fashions'.⁹⁷⁹ In *H&C*, the 1966 piece 'Eccentric or Elegant?' (Figure 5.5) voiced similar criticisms; the caption accompanying the final photograph in the piece made the negative insinuation of 'eccentric' obvious: 'And, *at last*, couture coordinates by Hardy Amies'.⁹⁸⁰ Such criticisms targeted the fashion industry's more avant-garde or supposedly 'extreme' elements. *Woman* expressed similar disapproval; the editorial voice of the magazine says it will not be copying the innovations of mink-trimmed underwear and a swimsuit that converts into an evening dress.⁹⁸¹ These observations reflect the tensions seen throughout fashion coverage in these magazines: the continual negotiation between the desire to follow fashion trends and acknowledgement of readers' practical requirements.

H&C and *Outlook* writers portrayed other aspects of the fashion industry more positively. As well as designers, geography was an important part of fashionable discourses. Just as continental Europe had desirable connotations for interiors, the Continent evoked chic and sophisticated fashion.⁹⁸² Moseley positions Audrey Hepburn as the epitome of European style, contrasting her to other more glamorous images of fashion:

Unfamiliar as her look may have been to the Hollywood screen and in relation to dominant discourses of feminine glamour in the 1950s, Hepburn was the embodiment of the *Vogue couture* ideal...which produced her as representative of sophisticated Europe and, importantly, "class".⁹⁸³

⁹⁷⁶ 'The Little Jacket Up to Date', *Outlook* 12/01/1957, pp.8-9.

⁹⁷⁷ 'Paris in Spring', *H&C* 04/1961, p.142.

⁹⁷⁸ 'Beauty Notes', *Outlook* 10/1960, p.33.

⁹⁷⁹ 'Your Most Important Buy', *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.24-25.

⁹⁸⁰ Emphasis mine. 'Eccentric Or Elegant?', *H&C* 10/1966, p.379.

⁹⁸¹ 'Personally Yours', *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.5; 19/03/1960, p.5.

⁹⁸² Ash and Wilson, 'Introduction', p.xiv; Breward, *Culture*, p.193; Arthur Marwick, *It – A History of Human Beauty* (London, 2004), p.192; Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, pp.161-163,166,173; Winkworth, 'Follower', pp.64,70.

⁹⁸³ Moseley, *Growing*, p.57.

Although the organizational periodicals did not cite Hepburn specifically, contributors drew on such imagery. For example, a *H&C* short story entitled ‘The Green Beret’ describes a French ‘beauty culture and trichologist’ as ‘piquant and exquisite’, a phrase evocative of Hepburn’s ‘neatly groomed chic “Frenchness”’.⁹⁸⁴ There were numerous references to France, especially Paris due to its centrality to the fashion industry, and Italy. In an *Outlook* article, for instance, the fact that ‘The Italians use a lot of it’ was an automatic endorsement of cotton.⁹⁸⁵ Advertisers tried to secure this aura of chic for their products – and hence the end-users – by claiming continental provenance; Misslyn declared that ‘Glamour-match’ was ‘from Italy’, while another firm described ‘Juitare’ as ‘the new Paris lipstick’.⁹⁸⁶

In *Woman*, some advertisers invoked far-flung locations in order to add an element of exoticism to their items; one firm named their sandals Panama, Fiji and Kon-tiki and used illustrations of a palm tree and sailing boat in their advertisement.⁹⁸⁷ Other *Woman* advertisers evoked the USA, with declarations such as ‘It’s America’s cotton-cool glamour bra’ and ‘New York Girl Exciting Fashion!’⁹⁸⁸ The use of ‘glamour’ and ‘exciting’ discloses another side to the USA’s associations. These were different connotations to the technological innovation discussed in Chapter Two and different to the chic sophistication of continental Europe; as Moseley writes, “‘Italian’, then, is understood here to be modern, smart, unlike American fashion and, importantly, *nice*’”.⁹⁸⁹

The absence of US references in *H&C* and *Outlook* fashion content indicates the particular resonance of continental chic in these magazines. Unlike *Woman*, the organizational periodicals were not suffused with images of glamour; as Chapter Six explores, their perceptions of glamour was not universally favourable. Moreover, the role of the Continent as shorthand for ‘classiness’ is significant in terms of social capital. As has been established, social class and symbolic capital are inextricably linked, hence an alliance with class in the form of continental fashion signals an attempt to secure legitimacy and value. However, as the following sections investigate, both

⁹⁸⁴ ‘The Green Beret’, *H&C* 04/1956, pp.129,131; Moseley, *Growing*, p.45.

⁹⁸⁵ ‘Honeymoon or Holiday “Specials”’, *Outlook* 04/1959, pp.24-25,45; Scott, *Lipstick*, p.239; Winkworth, ‘Follower’, p.70; Lee Wright, ‘Objectifying Gender: the Stiletto Heel’, in Attfield and Kirkham (eds.), *A View From the Interior*, p.11.

⁹⁸⁶ Misslyn advertisements, *Outlook* 10/1960, p.39; 04/1961, p.27; BGP advertisements, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, p.12; 06/04/1957, p.5.

⁹⁸⁷ Norvic advertisement, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.40.

⁹⁸⁸ Playtex advertisement, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.48; Lennards advertisement, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.55.

⁹⁸⁹ Moseley, *Growing*, p.116.

inclusions *and* exclusions marked fashion in *H&C* and *Outlook*, affecting the capital value of these publications, their organizations and their readers.

Inclusion: who provides solutions?

Allusions to the Continent in fashion content illuminate post-war reconfigurations of national identity and Britain's place in the world: this was an outward-looking vision that reinforced links to Europe. The magazines depicted Britain as part of this pan-European fashion industry. In *Outlook*, 'Felicity Field looks at European Fashions' discussed French, Italian and German contributions to 'the beauty and charm of clothes' alongside praise for British designs.⁹⁹⁰ Likewise, *H&C*'s 'Autumn Flare' reported on 'fashion from three countries: France, Ireland, England' and 'Spring Salon' included Angele Delanghe, 'who celebrates her 25th year of London Couture'.⁹⁹¹ These examples underline complexities surrounding notions of national identity. There is ambiguity around the use of England and Britain, while London was arguably distinct. Moreover, despite including Britain in the modern world of fashion, the implicit superiority of European countries seen in these examples and in earlier chapters indicates an assumption that these places – particularly France and Italy – had recovered faster and more effectively from wartime devastation than Britain had, therefore providing a model for modernization.

The rural and Co-operative/working-class women reading *H&C* and *Outlook* occupied a similarly ambiguous position: finances, geography and social capital impeded their access to fashion and neither contemporary visions nor historical work on 1950s and 60s fashion incorporate such women in their accounts. The earlier passage from Stewart, for example, articulates the widespread perception of fashion as an urban phenomena, hence not a concept associated with the countrywomen of the NFWI. However, contributors to these publications presented solutions that – on a representational level at least – allowed readers access to fashionable clothing and therefore a modern appearance.

Articles on clothing were essential in advising the reader about dressing fashionably. Fashion industry discourses helped to enhance the legitimacy and authority of each magazine and its writers to provide such education. This is most obvious in a 1960 *Outlook* item about 'a new fashion fabric in wool'. The tone of the

⁹⁹⁰ 'Felicity Field Looks at European Fashions', *Outlook* 12/01/1957, pp.8-9; 'Fashion Pointers', *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.15; 'Blouses are High Fashion', *Outlook* 10/1957, p.29.

⁹⁹¹ 'Autumn Flare' *H&C* 10/1961, p.353; 'Spring Salon', *H&C* 04/1964, p.133.

piece intimated exclusivity, as if this news was a closely-guarded secret being shared only with *Outlook* readers: 'Behind the fashion scenes it's being whispered nine ounce light weight wool flannel will soon be available'. In addition to implying that the magazine's writers have access to important parts of the fashion industry, the significance of this information for guiding readers in their clothing choices was clear: 'Have an outfit made now [with Mouline] and swing out with the confidence that you're at the very front of fashion'.⁹⁹²

Editorial content in *Woman* regularly employed this strategy, with consistent portrayal of the magazine itself as an expert and provider of solutions. For example, links between the publication and influential designers featured prominently: Norman Hartnell was a guest at the magazine's 21st birthday party and Hardy Amies wrote occasional items.⁹⁹³ Reader offers – a regular and distinguishing characteristic of the magazine⁹⁹⁴ – further enhanced this construction of *Woman* as the solution to achieving a fashionable appearance. Again, exclusivity to magazine readers was critical: the 1960 Gala lipstick offer stated 'All designed and made exclusively for *Woman*'. This offer was also typical using languages of the modern to emphasize being up-to-date: 'For the first time ever...this is really *new*'.⁹⁹⁵

In *Outlook*, CWS provided the route to a fashionable hence modern appearance. This is surprising: in the post-war period, the perception that they did not produce fashionable clothing dogged the Co-operative retail movement and hindered business success.⁹⁹⁶ Contrary to this popular view, *Outlook*'s editorial and advertising – the magazine's explicit aim of promoting Co-operative goods clouding simple distinctions – presented CWS goods and Co-operative stores as fashionable. For instance, a 1957 advertisement asserted 'choice of ten new season's colours': 'new season' evoking the 'now' element of fashion and colour being a crucial signifier of fashion and the modern.⁹⁹⁷

The issue of size also featured. A 1954 competition remarked that 'ready-made frocks are a boon and a blessing, especially now that they do cater for the less-slender figure more imaginatively' ('they' referring to Co-operative brands), while a less flattering advertisement similarly noted that 'the range includes short-fitting models for

⁹⁹² 'Introducing', *Outlook* 10/1960, p.28.

⁹⁹³ Details of *Woman*'s 21st birthday party, 07/06/1958, pp.12-13; 'Hardy Amies Chooses Your New Spring Hat', *Woman* 10/04/1954, pp.12-13.

⁹⁹⁴ Winship, *Inside*, p.40.

⁹⁹⁵ Emphasis in original. 'Fabulous *Woman* Offer', *Woman* 19/03/1960, pp.38-39.

⁹⁹⁶ Gurney, 'Battle', pp.962-963.

⁹⁹⁷ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 13/07/1957, p.24.

the five-foot-three matron'.⁹⁹⁸ Within such constructions, larger size was a hindrance to achieving a fashionable look, but CWS provided a solution to this difficulty. As *Outlook's* fashion writer commented in 1958:

There has often been a lot of grumbling among the not-so-slim at some of the styles that are shown them...But I am sure that not even the most fashion conscious outside woman could find any fault with the latest CWS Lanfield dresses that will soon be on sale in your co-operative stores.⁹⁹⁹

Outlook's articulation of a Co-operative vision of fashion was most apparent in promotions of CWS clothing designed by Guiseppe Mattli¹⁰⁰⁰, publicized throughout CP publications.¹⁰⁰¹ Despite dropping his couture line in 1955, the London-based Swiss designer remained famous throughout the 1950s and 60s¹⁰⁰²; *H&C*, for example, contained references to him in 1965 and 1966.¹⁰⁰³ Mattli's relationship with CWS is surprising considering the movement's reputation as antithetical to fashion, but it appears to represent a significant effort to depict Co-operative clothing as fashionable. Attaching a designer's name to their clothing acted as an endorsement and a way of positioning CWS as part of the fashion industry rather than outside of it, as seen in a 1958 advertisement which labelled CWS/Mattli coats as exclusive designs by the 'internationally famous fashion artist Mattli'.¹⁰⁰⁴

As well as the cover promotion shown in Figure 1.3, *Outlook's* fashion editor gave the designs the ultimate recommendation of having 'distinction and charm' and being 'practical too'.¹⁰⁰⁵ However, attempts to present CWS as a fashionable option for working-class *Outlook* readers were not entirely successful. In October 1957, Mrs Philips wrote to the publication saying 'It is good to read in *Reynolds* and *Outlook* that coats are being designed for the CWS by Mattli', adding that 'the price is a bit above the pockets of OAPs'.¹⁰⁰⁶ However, such criticism does not detract from the efforts made; it is clear that contributors tried to construct CWS and other Co-operative brands as the solution to problems – including finances and size – that their readers faced in attempting to dress fashionably.

⁹⁹⁸ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 06/04/1957, p.23; 'Our Last "Happy Summer" Competition', *Outlook* 11/09/1954, pp.16-18.

⁹⁹⁹ 'Summer Styles For the "Not So Slim"', *Outlook* 04/1958, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁰⁰ The system of fashion licensing really developed in the 1950s. See: Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, p.173.

¹⁰⁰¹ CP minutes, 18/12/1954; 'Our Cover Story', *Outlook* 13/07/1957, cover, p.13.

¹⁰⁰² Georgina O'Hara Callan, *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Fashion and Fashion Designers* 2nd edition (London, 1998), p.160.

¹⁰⁰³ 'For Gala Occasions', *H&C* 04/1965, p.141; 'Eccentric Or Elegant?', *H&C* 10/1966, p.379.

¹⁰⁰⁴ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1958, p.14.

¹⁰⁰⁵ 'Your Most Important Buy', *Outlook* 10/1958, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Mrs S Philips, *Outlook* 10/1957, pp.30-31.

Parallel efforts are visible in endeavours within *H&C* to present accessible fashion to rural readers. In particular, country-dwellers lacked regular and easy access to shops therefore required an alternative. In *H&C*, this alternative was mail-order and postal services, with two main aspects to these ‘solutions’. The first was home-dressmaking patterns (hence explaining the prevalence of home-dressmaking-related advertisements in *H&C*, as outlined at the start of the chapter). The ‘Dear Nancy Fielding’ page in 1968 explicitly articulated the importance of this provision within *H&C*. In response to Mrs Ledger’s query about why the magazine’s patterns were ‘so expensive’, Fielding perceived rural location as an impediment to accessing fashion and the pattern service as resolving this difficulty:

Since readers demand smart and up-to-date patterns, only the best makes are used, and it seems that the service is particularly appreciated by members in rural areas who would have bus or rail fares to pay if they went to choose from pattern books in town shops.¹⁰⁰⁷

Although the magazine provided the patterns, either directly on its pages or via the postal pattern service, her remark that ‘only the best makes are used’ intimated that the suppliers of the patterns were responsible for this solution. This is the opposite of *Woman*, where the reader offers positioned the publication as the solution even though other companies provided the items. As well as reflecting the relative market positions of these magazines and their level of attraction to advertisers, these differing stances are consistent with their tone throughout. As seen in earlier chapters, there was willingness – even preference – within *H&C* to credit outside bodies and individuals as experts, rather than claiming expert status for the magazine and its writers. This is indicative of broader social and cultural changes that challenged the social capital of the NFWI, an organization increasingly unable to claim authority and expertise in many areas of long-term involvement. Fashion had *never* been one of these areas, hence within this arena there was a particular need to turn to outside bodies for help.

During the 1960s, *Vogue* patterns were one of these external contributors. Due to the status of *Vogue* magazine as ‘the twentieth century’s most influential fashion magazine’, the name *Vogue* is synonymous with fashion.¹⁰⁰⁸ The first *Vogue* pattern in *H&C*, appearing in late 1961, alluded to this iconic association and links to Paris, the centre of the fashion world, placing the following statement alongside the usual pattern publicity:

¹⁰⁰⁷ ‘Dear Nancy Fielding’, *H&C* 04/1968, p.139.

¹⁰⁰⁸ O’Hara Callan, *Dictionary*, p.253.

As we visit Counties from time to time and note your requests, one above all has been voiced. “Please”, we have been asked, “may we have a really special pattern, a Paris pattern, so that some of us may have a chance to make something really exclusive for our wardrobes”. So here for your delight is a *Vogue Paris Original* pattern of a Jacques Heim model.¹⁰⁰⁹

Moseley found that paper patterns made ‘*couture*’ styles ‘available to women whose finances would not have stretched to Dior and Givenchy’¹⁰¹⁰; this *H&C* passage indicates that geography was a factor behind the popularity of such patterns too. Several other *Vogue* patterns appeared during the decade, including one by Mattli.¹⁰¹¹ As with the CWS/Mattli relationship, the presence of *Vogue* patterns suggests a desire by *H&C*’s producers to be associated with the fashion industry *and* to provide readers with a means of achieving a fashionable appearance. The *Vogue* examples also reinforce the importance of home-dressmaking (including knitting – the April 1964 pattern was ‘One of the many attractive designs in the latest *Vogue Knitting Book*’¹⁰¹²) for rural women who may not have been able to afford ready-made clothing and who certainly lacked easy access to shops.

The increased presence of ready-made clothing in *H&C* during the 1960s acknowledged the post-war consumer boom. Alongside *Vogue* patterns, there were numerous advertisements for firms offering sale of their clothes directly to readers. This was the second way in which mail-order and postal services provided a solution to rural problems of accessing fashion: allowing the purchase of goods from home rather than having to travel to shops or make one’s own clothing. Watkins and Cole, for instance, claimed ‘Immediate Delivery’ was available on their dresses and suits.¹⁰¹³ Moreover, mail-order catalogues selling clothes and other goods became widely advertised in the 1960s. The first *H&C* advertisement for Kays catalogue appeared in 1962, with regular advertisements following throughout the decade and a promotion on the magazine’s advertorial page in 1968.¹⁰¹⁴ Overall, the sample for *H&C* contained 23 catalogue advertisements, compared to eight in *Woman* – almost three times the number of advertisements in just twice as many issues. *Woman* similarly implied that mail-order was vital in rural areas: in 1968, the ‘How It’s Done’ column recommended one

¹⁰⁰⁹ Pattern service, *H&C* 10/1961, p.351.

¹⁰¹⁰ Moseley, *Growing*, p.57.

¹⁰¹¹ ‘Making Headlines’, *H&C* 04/1962, p.143; ‘*Vogue* Easy to Make Patterns’, *H&C* 10/1962, p.363; ‘Cotton On’, *H&C* 04/1964, p.143; ‘For Gala Occasions’, *H&C* 04/1965, p.141; Pattern service, *H&C* 04/1968, p.147.

¹⁰¹² ‘Cotton On’, *H&C* 04/1964, p.143.

¹⁰¹³ Watkins and Cole advertisement, *H&C* 10/1968, p.407.

¹⁰¹⁴ Kays advertisement, *H&C* 04/1962, p.119; ‘Advertising Extra’, *H&C* 10/1968, p.403.

such catalogue to a reader who had moved to a ‘remote country district’ and was having difficulty buying children’s clothes.¹⁰¹⁵

The prominence of both mail-order services and *Vogue* patterns in *H&C* demonstrate efforts in all three publications to offer solutions to their readers’ particular difficulties in accessing fashion – be it financial, size or geographical impediments. *H&C*, *Outlook* and *Woman* all reveal concerted attempts to incorporate their readers and the publications themselves into the fashion worlds of their pages. In terms of the organizational periodicals, this extension of fashion to encompass rural and working-class Co-operative women disputes widely held views of who is fashionable and what it is to be fashionable. The symbolic capital of such representations outside of these magazines may have been limited, but within their pages, such depictions created an inclusive vision of fashion and the modern. However, an increasingly significant factor became an additional challenge, as the final section explores.

Exclusion: the ‘problem’ of age

In the mid-1950s, a number of patterns supplied in the magazines catered for mothers and daughters, or at least daughters and women of the mother’s generation; *H&C*’s pattern service, for example, suggested that their ‘cover-ups’ made ideal Christmas gifts for daughters and friends.¹⁰¹⁶ Around the same time, some ready-made clothing also encompassed two generations. A 1955 *Woman* advertisement for skirts showed a woman and an older schoolgirl, while *Outlook*’s fashion editor claimed that the gap between mother and daughter fashion had narrowed so much that children could wear similar outfits to their mothers.¹⁰¹⁷ A decade later, such comments had disappeared. By the mid-1960s, a divide had emerged between daughters and women of their mothers’ generation and older, a shift with enormous repercussions for *H&C* and *Outlook*, creating exclusions that struck at the heart of these magazines.

This generation divide did not suddenly develop in the 1960s. In the early 1950s, advertisers identified a teenage demographic – not children, but not like older adults – as distinct product market; both *Outlook* and *Woman*, for instance, contained advertisements for teenagers’ shoes in the 50s.¹⁰¹⁸ Nonetheless, the distinction between younger and older women became noticeably stronger in the following decade,

¹⁰¹⁵ ‘How It’s Done’, *Woman* 05/10/1968, p.18.

¹⁰¹⁶ “‘Cover-ups’ for Christmas?”, *H&C* 10/1957; Pattern service, *Outlook* 02/07/1955, p.21.

¹⁰¹⁷ Craigmere advertisement, *Woman* 07/09/1955; ‘Felicity Field Reporting On Fashion’, *WO* 02/07/1955, p.13.

¹⁰¹⁸ CPF advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1959, p.37; Clarks advertisement, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.34.

indicative of changing attitudes towards age.¹⁰¹⁹ Although there were concerns about some youth cultures, the fashionable age moved downwards, with youth becoming desirable and positively associated with the modern.¹⁰²⁰ Within the realms of fashion, age distinctions went from being simply preferences with the same broad trend to different trends catered for by separate fashion lines. A 1962 *Outlook* article showed CWS dresses from a variety of ranges: one was from the Modern Miss collection, another was labelled a ‘teenage trend’ and a third was for shorter women (short seeming to be a supposed ‘defect’ that, like larger sizes, was equated with older women – as Chapter Six explores).¹⁰²¹

Each magazine dealt with such changes differently. Due to its readership, which covered a broad range, *Woman* needed to appeal to a variety of ages. The description accompanying a 1960 pattern highlighted this, with different life stages included: ‘Town girl, country girl, shop girl, secretary-rich girl, poor girl, housewife, bride... Whoever you are, there’s a place in your life... for this version of the little grey dress.’¹⁰²² The pattern’s title – ‘The Girl in the Grey Flannel Dress’ rather than ‘The Woman’ – reflects an emphasis on youth and the desire to accommodate the younger generation on its pages. White and others discuss how the post-war magazine industry catered for teenagers in a number of ways: in addition to specific titles aimed at younger women, established women’s magazines developed ‘teen pages’ and addressed teenage problems.¹⁰²³ Both approaches were evident in *Woman*. In 1968, for instance, a girl wrote to one of the publication’s agony aunts about her boyfriend’s ‘scruffy’ appearance, complaining that her parents did not understand that he is a student and he is clean (the importance of hygiene accentuated again).¹⁰²⁴ Marje Proops advised tolerance on the boyfriend’s part, but also remarked that older people lacked appreciation of the younger generation – once more the magazine and its experts positioning themselves as the provider of solutions, this time to cross-generational conflict.

¹⁰¹⁹ Breward, *Culture*, pp.193-194; Davis, ‘Clothing’, pp.23-26; Eicher and Roach-Higgins, ‘Definitions’, p.19; Annette Lynch, *Dress, Gender and Cultural Change – African American and African American Rites of Passage* (Oxford, 1999), pp.1,4; Marwick, *It*, p.205; Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, p.158.

¹⁰²⁰ Barberis, ‘Introduction’, p.287; Carter, ‘Alice’, p.196; Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.4; Negrin, ‘Self’, p.104; Tickner, ‘Trousers’, p.63; Varon et al, ‘Introduction’, p.2; Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, pp.157,161,169,171,177,182; Wilson, *Adorned*, pp.173-174; Winkworth, ‘Follower’, pp.72-73; Wright, ‘Objectifying’, p.12.

¹⁰²¹ ‘Budget-priced Holiday Styles’, *Outlook* 04/1962, pp.6-7.

¹⁰²² Emphasis in the original. ‘The Girl in the Grey Flannel Dress’, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.13.

¹⁰²³ White, *Magazines*, pp.141,149,171,196; Weiner, ‘Modernities’, p.404.

¹⁰²⁴ ‘Dear Marje’, *Woman* 05/10/1968, p.14.

Despite taking various names, *Woman's* teen page was a regular presence. As in the example from Proops' column, the page sometimes expressed conflict; in 1963, the writer asserted 'Next time Mum mutters it was half the price in *her* day, lead her to the lingerie counter. She'll find masses of evidence there of costs kept down, standards soaring'.¹⁰²⁵ This statement clearly constructs the journalist as a comrade, someone who understood the younger person, perhaps even a teenager themselves. This reader identification was reinforced by the use of direct address at the end of the piece, asking 'Don't you agree?'

Unlike *Woman* and its broad readership, *H&C* and *Outlook* addressed older women more than younger women. This reflects the NFWI and WCG's ageing memberships. Although the 1956 Denman course 'The Problems of Old Age' was 'cancelled due to lack of support'¹⁰²⁶, suggesting members did not want to identify as old, age was a crucial influence. In *Outlook*, readers talked about age in their letters, with the moniker OAP (Old Age Pensioner) used regularly. Mrs Charlett, for example, wrote that her granddaughter said she was not a woman but an OAP, while Mrs Philips, mentioned previously, felt CWS/Mattli coats were too expensive for OAPs.¹⁰²⁷ In the absence of other records, an analysis of *H&C* and *Outlook's* letters pages provides some broad clues as to readers' ages. Even though use of marital titles (Table 5.1) is not totally accurate and does not give specific age demographics, the numbers using Mrs compared to Miss (51% compared to 8% in *H&C*; 83% compared to 9% in *Outlook*) indicates that substantially more readers were married rather than unmarried. As the mean age for women upon first marriage was just over 23.1 years in 1961, these figures therefore at least suggest that the majority of readers were certainly not teenagers.¹⁰²⁸

Table 5.1 Use of marital titles in readers' letters

	Number of letters	Letters from women ¹⁰²⁹	Without title ¹⁰³⁰	Mrs	Miss
<i>H&C</i>	145	129	67	66	10
<i>Outlook</i>	234	213	18	176	19

¹⁰²⁵ Emphasis in original. 'Expresso', *Woman* 26/01/1963, p.9.

¹⁰²⁶ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.140.

¹⁰²⁷ Mrs Charlett, *Outlook* 04/1955; Mrs Philips, *Outlook* 10/1957, pp.30-31.

¹⁰²⁸ Jane Lewis, 'Marriage', in Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*, p.71.

¹⁰²⁹ Established via their name, use of title and, in the case of *H&C*, WI affiliation where given (membership being exclusively female).

¹⁰³⁰ In some instances of those who did not use a title, other references (such as WI affiliation) established their gender.

Both *H&C* and *Outlook* made provisions for children, with the inclusion of cartoons.¹⁰³¹ Reports about various forthcoming youth events and opportunities, both in the NFWI and beyond, implied younger *H&C* readers.¹⁰³² However, *H&C* rarely acknowledged generational difference and retained a focus on older women. *Outlook*, on the other hand, tried to accommodate a younger generation. Those younger than the average reader age were sometimes addressed; ‘Honeymoon Or Holiday “Specials”’, for example, targeted readers who were about to get married with the declaration ‘You’re young, you’re gay, you’re adventurous!’¹⁰³³ The article (Figure 5.3) used relatively young models compared to other articles, as shown by comparison to Figure 1.3.

Outlook’s ‘Up-and-Coming’, introduced in 1954 as ‘a new corner for teenagers’, also attempted to engage a younger generation.¹⁰³⁴ It is difficult to ascertain whether Jane Parker, the attributed writer, was a persona or not. Even if she was fictional, the name was not used on other items hence she seemed to be the teen journalist. Moreover, ‘Parker’ wrote as though she was the contemporary of younger readers, regularly using a personal and unifying tone: ‘I never seem to be able to think even one day ahead’; ‘Of course, we like our boy-friends to be well groomed too’.¹⁰³⁵ The overall style of ‘Up-and-Coming’ was, though, different to *Woman*’s teen pages. The friendly, informal address grated against assertions of authority: ‘In the next issue, I shall *tell you* how to choose a colour programme for your wardrobe’.¹⁰³⁶ The advice in ‘Up-and-Coming’ columns often concerned formal dress codes and styles of dress more usually associated with older women: ‘Have handbags and gloves to match your different shoes’ and ‘Always wear a hat’ were typical statements.¹⁰³⁷ This in part reflects the columns’ mid-1950s dates. It also suggests a failure of Parker – and the *Outlook* editorial team – to recognize the different desires, expectations and viewpoints of younger women. This lack of recognition may explain the short lifespan of ‘Up-and-Coming’, which ceased after just three years in 1957.

These examples from ‘Up-and-Coming’ indicate the continuation of older ways of dressing. As mentioned, newer casual styles emerged in the context of leisure, but

¹⁰³¹ ‘For the Children’ appeared in *H&C* between: *H&C* 04/1954, p.186; *H&C* 10/1957, p.326. ‘The Adventures of Sim’ appeared in *Outlook* between: *Outlook* 10/1958, p.4; *Outlook* 04/1960, p.4.

¹⁰³² ‘Youth in the Kitchen’, *H&C* 05/1954, p.154; ‘News of the Month’, *H&C* 04/1955, p.125; International Youth Conference details, *H&C* 04/1968, p.134.

¹⁰³³ ‘Honeymoon or Holiday “Specials”’, *Outlook* 04/1959, pp.24-25.

¹⁰³⁴ ‘Up-and-Coming’, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, p.1.

¹⁰³⁵ ‘Up-and-Coming’, *Outlook* 14/07/1956, p.29; 01/1957, p.27.

¹⁰³⁶ Emphasis mine. ‘Up-and-Coming’, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.23.

¹⁰³⁷ ‘Up-and-Coming’, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.23.

these did not simply supplant older styles. Although WW2 witnessed some decline in the formality surrounding clothes, dress codes remained fairly rigid in the 1950s. A full regalia of accessories, for instance, remained mandatory for a woman to be correctly dressed.¹⁰³⁸ Furthermore, stylistic changes became a marker of generation. By the 1960s, Winship argues, ‘fashion (*for the young at least*) had broken its strict and silly protocols’¹⁰³⁹, but for the older age demographic reading *H&C* and *Outlook*, established dress codes continued to be influential throughout the period. In 1960, for instance, *Outlook*’s ‘Five to Match’ article publicized a new CWS range of co-ordinating handbags, gloves, shoes, umbrellas and belts¹⁰⁴⁰, while in 1962, *H&C*’s ‘Ahead and On Hand’ focused on handbags, gloves and hats.¹⁰⁴¹

These articles contrast with mid-1960s discussions of accessories in *Woman*. Rather than hats and gloves, the items featured included sunglasses, a glitter headband and sparkling hairslide.¹⁰⁴² Even conventional items deviated from traditional forms; in 1966, there were instructions for making a geometric-patterned, PVC ‘pop art handbag’.¹⁰⁴³ The extent to which age differences ruptured into generational division is apparent in attention to hats, which only appeared in the *Woman* sample during the 1950s.¹⁰⁴⁴ In contrast, hats continued to feature in the other two magazines during the 1960s.¹⁰⁴⁵ One *H&C* article on the topic acknowledged the decline in formal dress codes among the younger generation, observing that ‘Milliners are obviously out to lure the younger set who hitherto thought it was “old hat” to wear a hat’.¹⁰⁴⁶

The stiletto heel is another illuminating example. Academic interpretations of this hugely symbolic item vary, but as Sparke notes, one view is that the stiletto played ‘a vital role within women’s need to be “up-to-date”, a visible sign that they had entered the world of modernity’.¹⁰⁴⁷ With this in mind, reactions in the organizational periodicals are interesting. The trend for stiletto heels emerges in the late 1950s¹⁰⁴⁸, though their popularity in these magazines quickly wanes. As early as 1961, *Outlook*’s fashion editor reported on ‘the decided return to fashion favour of the well-loved Louis

¹⁰³⁸ McNeil, ‘Best Face’, p.286; Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, pp.157,178; Winkworth, ‘Follower’, pp.60,66-67.

¹⁰³⁹ Emphasis mine. Winship, *Inside*, p.60.

¹⁰⁴⁰ ‘Five to Match’, *Outlook* 10/1960, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁴¹ ‘Ahead and On Hand’, *H&C* 04/1962, p.139.

¹⁰⁴² ‘Extra Special’, *Woman* 15/05/1965, p.11; ‘Fashion Find Under £1’, *Woman* 12/12/1964, p.63.

¹⁰⁴³ ‘Forty Pretty Things to Make’, *Woman* 02/07/1966, pp.33-38.

¹⁰⁴⁴ ‘Hardy Amies Chooses Your New Spring Hat’, *Woman* 10/04/1954, pp.12-13; ‘Heading Your Way’, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.15.

¹⁰⁴⁵ For examples, see: ‘Ahead and On Hand’, *H&C* 04/1962, p.139; ‘Hooded Headlines’, *H&C* 10/1964, p.357; ‘Creating the “Now” Look’, *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395.

¹⁰⁴⁶ ‘Fashion – that Fickle Fairy’, *H&C* 10/1965, p.389.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Sparke, *Pink*, pp.171-172; Wright, ‘Objectifying’, pp.7-8.

¹⁰⁴⁸ M Wilson, *Outlook* 10/1961; CPF advertisements, *Outlook* 10/959, p.42; 10/1960, p.30.

heel'¹⁰⁴⁹, a much lower, thick heel.¹⁰⁵⁰ Other styles featured too; a 1964 *H&C* article informed readers that 'Shoes for spring betray a trend towards rounder toes, lower, fatter heels and occasional open-toed sandals'.¹⁰⁵¹

H&C and *Outlook* fashion articles welcomed this change, partly because of domestic pride: 'Houseproud women with good carpets simply couldn't stand seeing the pile...dug into by those cruel little spikes'.¹⁰⁵² More common was an emphasis on comfort, with statements such as 'from the new Miss Rayne Collection, evoking memories of the more comfortable era in shoes' and 'a relief to our stiletto weary feet'.¹⁰⁵³ This was not unique to the organizational publications – *Woman* advertisers made similar claims, such as 'An eye for fashion with a view to comfort'¹⁰⁵⁴ – but hostility towards the stiletto is indicative of the emerging generation divide that was evident in the *NFWI* and *WCG* magazines. The *Outlook* piece declaring the return of the Louis heel, for instance, commented upon teenagers sticking to stilettos and gave details of a stiletto explicitly for readers' daughters.¹⁰⁵⁵ This reflects contemporary associations of stilettos with a youthful, fun-loving femininity and suggests the growing sense of a gulf between the publication's readers, older women, and a younger generation.¹⁰⁵⁶

This division is discernible in critiques of fashion too, with traces of this in the 1950s. Readers' correspondence about Teddy Boys – a youth culture that prompted a moral panic in the mid-1950s¹⁰⁵⁷ – blamed part of the problem on the fashions involved; Mrs Cale claimed that Teddy Boys' clothes meant that they 'get big-headed and think they are better than their neighbours, and that they can do as they like'.¹⁰⁵⁸ Other trends associated with 'youths' were condemned in the 60s; in 1965, Mrs Newfield responded to earlier correspondence (intimating debate within the magazine) that defended long hair on young men with the assertion that it is an 'untidy, unhygienic and dangerous fashion'.¹⁰⁵⁹ A 1967 letter from Mrs Syred questioned the popularity of

¹⁰⁴⁹ 'Step Out In Fashion', *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁵⁰ O'Hara Callan, *Dictionary*, p.155.

¹⁰⁵¹ 'Sombrero' description, *H&C* 04/1964, p.143.

¹⁰⁵² 'Step Out In Fashion', *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁵³ 'Spring Salon', *H&C* 04/1964, p.133; 'Fashion that Fickle Fairy', *H&C* 10/1965, p.389.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Diana advertisement, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.38.

¹⁰⁵⁵ 'Step Out In Fashion', *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Brydon, 'Sensible', pp.7-9; Wright, 'Objectifying', p.14.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Francis, 'Labour', p.242; Anne Logan, 'The Volunteer as Expert: Lay Magistrates and the Development of Criminal Justice Policy in England and Wales c.1920-65' paper at *From 'Voluntary Organisation' to 'NGO'? Voluntary Action in Britain since 1900* 20th Annual Centre for Contemporary British History Summer Conference (Institute of Historical Research, London), 28/06/2006; Tickner, 'Trousers', p.63; Wilson and Taylor, *Through*, p.165.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Mrs Cale, *Outlook* 06/11/1954, pp.8-9.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Mrs Newfield's letter, *Outlook* 04/1965, pp.18-19.

mini-skirts on the grounds of aesthetics – calling women’s knees ‘the least attractive part of her anatomy’ – and practicality, with British winters requiring ‘the wearing of more clothes rather than abbreviating one’s gear’. Although mini-skirts were not worn exclusively by teenagers, Mrs Syred clearly linked the trend with young women: ‘the present fashion of wearing one’s skirt, that is, *if one is in the appropriate age group*, about five inches above one’s knee’.¹⁰⁶⁰

Both Mrs Newfield and Mrs Syred lived in London. The close association of the capital with fashion, especially during the ‘Swinging London’ scene of the mid-1960s, perhaps meant that they had witnessed more of what Mrs Syred called ‘the most extraordinary of fashion’s vagaries’ than *Outlook* or *H&C* readers living in provincial and particularly rural areas. Similarly, the heart of ‘Swinging London’ – Carnaby Street – was at the centre of the most acerbic criticism of youth fashion in *Outlook*. In his October 1966 column, regular contributor James Norbury stressed that he was not attacking teenagers, but the way that Carnaby Street’s commercial ventures exploited them through the fashions offered: ‘The mini-skirt is in the main an excuse for showing unshapely and dirty knees. The slicker than slick sweater is an over-rated way of suggesting sexual allure that only exists in the mind of the pornographic beholder’.¹⁰⁶¹

Norbury’s remarks mirror those of Mrs Syred. In addition, like Mrs Newfield, he was disparaging about long hair: ‘The unkempt locks of both sexes are simply a witness to the fact that most of them need a decent haircut’. The sights of Carnaby Street had an extreme effect on him: ‘Suddenly I felt that I want to vomit....Bitterness that was filling me with horror and disgust. Fashion is my business’.¹⁰⁶² This column was unusual in the amount of vitriol levelled at fashions allied with the younger generation and should not be interpreted as typical of the views held by the magazine’s producers or readers. However, Norbury’s remarks do support the notion that a generation divide had emerged.

In many ways, these criticisms in *Outlook* were the reverse of contemporary opinion in which youth was becoming increasingly desirable and positively associated with the modern. The corresponding undesirability of advancing age had numerous effects, resulting in the lowering of age profiles in women’s periodicals to such an extent that by 1970, White claimed magazines were ignoring older women and ageing.¹⁰⁶³ In terms of fashion, *H&C* advertisements attest to this omission. In 1968,

¹⁰⁶⁰ Emphasis mine. Mrs Syred, *Outlook* 04/1967, p.16.

¹⁰⁶¹ ‘Norbury’s Page’, *Outlook* 10/1966, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁶² ‘Norbury’s Page’, *Outlook* 10/1966, pp.24-25.

¹⁰⁶³ White, *Magazines*, pp.279,300.

Kay's informed readers that their catalogue contained 'a range of "in" gear – including Mary Quant's – to suit any teenager, and delightful classic styles in clothes for the whole family': a construction of fashion that integrated teenagers but positioned their mothers and other older women as outside of fashion, assumed to be only interested in 'classic styles'.¹⁰⁶⁴ *H&C* readers seem to have been aware of their exclusion; in the same year, the magazine's beauty editor wrote that 'some of you...are always saying "there's no fashion for us older women – everything is designed for the young"'. She went on to quote Clive, a young, London-based designer: "'In fashion today", he says, "there are no older women."'. The beauty editor welcomes this news; the column ends with 'Three cheers for Clive!'¹⁰⁶⁵ An alternative reading of Clive's comments is rather more pessimistic: there were no older women *in* fashion by 1968 because the clothing industry – and society more generally – relegated them to *outside* of fashion.

It was not Clive, nor the fashion industry, nor even the women's magazine industry, which provided a vision of fashion for older women. Instead, small publications such as *H&C* and *Outlook* constructed understandings of fashion that incorporated the older (and rural, and working-class) women that comprised their readerships. Contributors to *H&C* and *Outlook* tried to include older women within presentations of what they considered fashionable, modern clothing. There also were concerted efforts to assist readers in finding desirable clothing: one 1954 issue of *Outlook* claimed to have 'A "find" for the older woman!', reporting on 'A welcome change. Strapless evening frocks and plunge necklines are beginning to pall – especially as they hold no joy for the older woman'.¹⁰⁶⁶ Home-dressmaking content contained similar sentiments, as in a knitting pattern for 'a most becoming summer jumper for the older woman'.¹⁰⁶⁷

These representations of fashion in *H&C* and *Outlook* formed a crucial tenet of ideas and understandings of the modern in these magazines. These representations offered value and validation to the reader, even if these visions lacked legitimacy and capital outside of the local arena of the publications. Age was an exclusion – from symbolic capital and broader constructions of the modern – that contributors to the magazines could not surmount. As early as 1955, *Outlook*'s Editor raised objections to the supposed desirability of youth: ruminating on the beauty of dying tulips, she asks 'perhaps if we weren't so obsessed with youthful glamour nowadays we should see a

¹⁰⁶⁴ 'Advertising Extra', *H&C* 10/1968, p.403.

¹⁰⁶⁵ 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1968, p.154.

¹⁰⁶⁶ 'Fashion Pointers', *Outlook* 11/09/1954, cover, p.15.

¹⁰⁶⁷ 'Larger But Lacy', *Outlook* 02/07/1955, pp.19-20.

similar beauty in the declining days of human beings?’¹⁰⁶⁸ Within the context of WCG decline and the closure of *Outlook* twelve years later, these words take on an added poignancy. However, as the final chapter demonstrates, despite these exclusions and limitations, the organizational periodicals continued to present readers with their own ‘particular way of understanding the world’.¹⁰⁶⁹ While attempting to help readers acquire and accrue social capital, *H&C* and *Outlook* did not adhere to visions of the modern found in the dominant symbolic economy; instead, their distinctive perspectives – their rural and Co-operative versions of modernity – remained central to representations within the magazines.

¹⁰⁶⁸ ‘Editor’s Page’, *Outlook* 02/07/1955, p.1.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.29.

Chapter Six

Health and Beauty in Making the Modern Body

A 1959 *H&C* report stated that ‘An interesting answer to the perennial question “is the country woman really interested in cosmetics?” is seen in the staggering result of a request from the [Consumer’s] Association for women to test hormone creams. Four thousand replies were received – the majority with country addresses’.¹⁰⁷⁰ This passage indicates the perceived interest of readers in beauty, a fundamental facet of personal appearance. Whereas the previous chapter explored clothing and the concept of fashion in *H&C* and *Outlook*, this chapter focuses on beauty along with health and the body. The chapter begins by establishing how beauty featured in the magazines, outlining differences between the organizational periodicals and *Woman* as well as comparing beauty to fashion content. The second section discusses how these differences enabled contributors to express diverse attitudes towards beauty, hence creating alternative views about what constituted a modern appearance. *H&C* and *Outlook*’s distinctive visions of the modern are further investigated in the third section, looking at the centrality of women’s bodies to constructions of belonging, and the final section draws many of the chapter’s themes together by considering the body, beauty and understandings of the modern.

By the post-war period, use of cosmetics was widespread; surveys in the late 1940s and early 1970s showed two-thirds of women regularly wore make-up.¹⁰⁷¹ Increased cosmetic use had its origins in the inter-war years when, as Tinkler observes, ‘lipstick became increasingly equated with modern femininity’.¹⁰⁷² This equation intimates why personal appearance was so crucial: a key purpose of magazines was to assist readers in developing the competencies required to acquire the symbolic capital associated with a modern appearance. This is not to suggest that readers lacked all such competencies: amongst the breadth of subjects covered in *Outlook*’s correspondence (*H&C*’s readers’ letters concentrated largely on WI-related issues), a number of letters shared beauty tips such as using cigarette papers to blot lipstick.¹⁰⁷³ Although these letters were limited in number – approximately ten out of 250 – they continued to

¹⁰⁷⁰ ‘A Good Buy’, *H&C* 04/1959, p.129.

¹⁰⁷¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘The Body’, p.188.

¹⁰⁷² Tinkler, ‘Material’, p.105. See also: Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.15.

¹⁰⁷³ Miss W Jowett, *Outlook* 03/07/1954, p.11.

appear until the magazine's closure in 1967¹⁰⁷⁴, reiterating the earlier argument that readers saw themselves as having expertise worthy of sharing.

In all three publications, beauty editors encouraged readers to write to them with their queries, with the use of headlines such as 'Dear Anne Marsh...Your beauty problems answered' reinforcing – as in consumer education – constructions of the housewife reader as the recipient of guidance rather than the provider.¹⁰⁷⁵ There are always doubts as to the authenticity of magazine correspondence (see Chapter One), yet whether fabricated or not, all three publications introduced readers' enquiries as genuine – in March 1954, for example, Marsh claimed to be responding to 'an urgent letter from a reader'.¹⁰⁷⁶ Despite the similarity of their appeals, the tone of responses to readers' queries varied enormously between the publications. As in advice about the home and domestic consumption, there were competing 'experts' attempting to educate readers in the competencies needed to construct a modern appearance and again there were tensions as to who was best placed to provide such education.

Woman contained a regular column under auspices of its beauty editor, Helen Temple; in 1954, for example, she advised on 'the right way to choose and use' face powder, while thirteen years later, she talked about beauty-themed Christmas gifts.¹⁰⁷⁷ In March 1957, publicity for a forthcoming issue of *Woman* asked:

Are you the girl imprisoned in the enchanted castle – the girl who could be a beauty but isn't quite? Veronica Scott and Helen Temple show how to enhance good points, camouflage any bad ones, use make-up and choose fashions to reveal a new, breathtakingly lovely you.¹⁰⁷⁸

This passage presents both the beauty editor (Temple) and fashion editor (Scott) as professional experts with the task of educating the less knowledgeable reader.

In *Outlook*, on the other hand, headlines tended to emphasize a mutual relationship of assistance: 'Anne Marsh helps you to choose a new hair style for Easter'.¹⁰⁷⁹ As seen in previous chapters, *Outlook*'s writers treated readers – with the exception of their teenage audience – as possessing skills and expertise, whether it was about housing, consumer issues or choosing a new hairstyle.

Anne Marsh was *Outlook*'s beauty editor in the 1950s and wrote a regular column. In 1960, Hannah Standring became the attributed writer, then 'a Beautician' in

¹⁰⁷⁴ Mrs S Booth, *Outlook* 04/1967, p.16.

¹⁰⁷⁵ 'Dear Anne Marsh', *Outlook* 04/1958, p.19; 'Helen Temple's Beauty Bureau', *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.45; 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1968, p.154.

¹⁰⁷⁶ 'Camouflage for a Cold', *Outlook* 13/03/1954, p.7.

¹⁰⁷⁷ 'Keep Your Powder Dry', *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.10; 'Beauty is a Gift', *Woman* 02/12/1967, pp.10-11.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Next week's contents, *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.39.

¹⁰⁷⁹ 'Anne Marsh Helps You to Choose a New Hair Style for Easter', *Outlook* 09/04/1955, p.9.

1961.¹⁰⁸⁰ Following the October 1961 re-launch, there was no longer any beauty-related content in *Outlook* (there are no clues as to why). Beauty content in *H&C* varied too, with only occasional beauty articles, such as the ‘Faces and Figures’ and ‘How Do I Look?’ series of the mid-1950s and late-1960s respectively.¹⁰⁸¹ Records of *H&C*’s publication committee suggest other mid-1960s beauty items, but these did not appear in this study’s sample.¹⁰⁸² The committee specifically commissioned such pieces as periodic items; January 1966 minutes record four beauty articles amongst that year’s new items.¹⁰⁸³ *H&C* also differed from *Woman*’s presentation of the magazine’s writers and the publication itself as the ultimate expert. A somewhat authoritarian tone is often evident; in 1954, the beauty editor forcefully instructed readers about make-up use with comments such as ‘The essentials are a foundation for your nose, powder, lipstick and an eyebrow pencil...The correct placing of rouge can make a thin face appear rounder.’¹⁰⁸⁴ This assertive style did not amount, though, to a construction of the magazine as the ultimate and only expert. With just occasional articles rather than a regular column, *H&C* beauty writers lacked the commanding presence needed to achieve the authority of their *Woman* counterparts.

Notwithstanding these differences, all three magazines offered some form of beauty advice – highly gendered skills – to help readers develop the expertise needed to make informed choices. As Tinkler notes in relation to magazines for girls, such publications ‘fostered a specifically feminine type of cultural competence – an eye for detail and for style’.¹⁰⁸⁵ For instance, when publicizing their ‘Interchange’ lipstick and lip-liner (Figure 6.2), Gala told women to ‘Whenever you change your dress colour – change your lip colour’.¹⁰⁸⁶ This example demonstrates that beauty editors were not the sole contributors to representations of beauty in these magazines. However, the organizational publications contained limited beauty advertising. Across the entire sample for *Outlook*, there were only twenty advertisements for beauty-related items such as cosmetics and bathing products and all are from the 1950s. Only one of these

¹⁰⁸⁰ ‘Beauty Notes’, *Outlook* 10/1960, p.33; ‘Strictly For Slimmers’, *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.22-23.

¹⁰⁸¹ ‘Faces and Figures’, *H&C* 05/1954, p.185; 09/1954, pp.335-336; ‘How Do I Look?’ *H&C* 04/1968, p.154; 10/1968, p.390; 04/1969, p.170.

¹⁰⁸² *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 05/04/1967.

¹⁰⁸³ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 05/01/1966.

¹⁰⁸⁴ ‘Faces and Figures 3’, *H&C* 09/1954, p.185.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Tinkler, ‘Material’, p.10. For further discussion of the association of women with ‘the detail’, see: Jane Gaines, ‘Introduction’, in Gaines and Herzog (eds.), *Fabrications*, pp.11,19,23; Kirkham, ‘Fashioning’, p.158; Moseley, ‘Respectability’, pp.474,486-487; Negrin, ‘Ornament’, p.233; Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (London, 1987), p.17.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Gala advertisement, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, p.6; 11/09/1954, p.6; 06/11/1954, p.12.

advertisements was for a Co-operative product: CWS talcum powder.¹⁰⁸⁷ Non-Co-operative firms placed the rest, but these other brands could not compensate for a lack of Co-operative options; the ‘CWS veto’ (see Chapter One) meant that the amount of advertising space available to others – even Co-operative stockists – was restricted. Co-operative allegiances were not, though, the only factor. The *H&C* sample contained even fewer beauty-related advertisements: only six, all during the 1960s. In contrast, there were numerous such advertisements in every issue of *Woman* during both decades. A May 1965 issue, for instance, included six advertisements for major cosmetics firms alone¹⁰⁸⁸, underlining the extent of *Woman*’s allure for large companies.

It is no coincidence that the levels of advertising mirrored the amount of editorial emphasis on beauty. There was a relative lack of beauty coverage in the organizational magazines, both in comparison to their own fashion coverage and in comparison to *Woman*, which had the most advertising *and* the most regular and consistent beauty-related editorial content. Due to the symbiotic relationship between advertising and editorial content, firms were more likely to place advertisements in publications where an editorial reference was also possible. It is notable that *H&C* received bookings by ‘a large cosmetics firm’ in 1968, coinciding with the magazine’s new ‘How Do I Look?’ beauty series. Such advertising had not occurred previously; the advertising manager described it as ‘a new departure’.¹⁰⁸⁹

Woman’s 1955 Max Factor reader offer (Figure 6.1) illustrates the links between advertising and editorial. The firm regularly advertised in *Woman* and the beauty editor recommended Max Factor products. Although stating that it is a promotion, the piece is largely indistinguishable from standard *Woman* beauty articles, in terms of both visuals and copy – the headline and opening statement were typical of the regular beauty column. The offer utilized colour photography in order to make the piece visually attractive and appealing to the reader. Colour photography is essential in publicizing cosmetics effectively; in contrast, the black and white 1954 Gala cosmetics advertisement from *Outlook* (Figure 6.2) lacks impact.

This *Woman*/Max Factor promotion therefore indicates another factor explaining the relative absence of beauty advertising in *H&C* and *Outlook*: lack of imagery, particularly colour photography, in these publications. As noted, compared to magazines such as *Woman*, these titles contained far more text and the use of colour was

¹⁰⁸⁷ CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1962, p.17.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Advertisements for Gala, Outdoor Girl, Coty, Max Factor, Rimmel, Helena Rubinstein, *Woman* 15/05/1965, pp.12,30,42,47,56,60,61,67.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 15/07/1968.

Help yourself to
Loveliness



Secret of beauty

Erace
 MAX FACTOR

**EXCLUSIVE
 Woman
 OFFER**

There's a wonderful new aid to
 a flawless complexion
 it's yours in a choice of four skin-toning
 shades for only **1s.3d.** post free

TURN TO PAGE 45 for the Privilege Order Form. Closing date for this offer is October 10, 1955

If one single thing were specially designed to stimulate self-confidence, it's a spot—and we all suffer, if only occasionally, from that blight to the beauty of our skins.

Recent blemishes of this type need specialized attention—your doctor will help there—but the isolated spot or red bump indicates only some minor internal upset. A change of diet with lots of fruit, greens and salad and plenty of water to drink generally does the trick quite quickly.

But that's for the future. What of today, when your fingers wander to the tender area, and you're painfully conscious of an ugly flaw to your otherwise pretty complexion?

The solution is in the wonderful beauty offer, made by the world-famous firm of Max Factor. It's one of the biggest contributions ever to the world of beauty—and we're proud to introduce it to you.

Here's the preparation—it's called Erace—that keeps a secret for many stars of film, stage and television.

Erace, which is a rich creamy preparation, is in solid stick form and looks like a skin-toned lipstick. By a special arrangement with Max Factor, Ltd., we are able to offer you Erace in an exclusive size made only for *Woman's* readers.

It comes to you in a handsome gilt case with a push-up action, for only 1s. 3d., post free. You will find it lasts for a considerable time.

A touch from the preparation and—whether it's dark rings under the eyes, broken veins, patches of discoloration or deep shadows from nose to mouth—you can conceal your beauty blemish from the rest of the world.

Choosing the correct shade of Erace is of the greatest importance—it must be matched as closely as possible to your own coloring.

The four shades from which you can choose have been carefully blended to match a great variety of skin tones. They are as follows:

FAIR—the palest of the shades, is for light, pink and white skins.

NATURAL—is for the creamy and light peach complexions.

MEDIUM—has been specially blended for those medium, peachy colorings which are in between the gold and pinky tones, neither dark nor fair.

DEEP NATURAL—will match the olive-toned skins, and also those still lightly tanned.

Applying Erace is the simplest thing in the world. It is used always before foundation and make-up. For the small temporary flaw, just cover with a dab of the preparation, direct from the stick. Blend away the edges with a light fingertip, and your blemish no longer exists.

Full step-by-step instructions for concealing more difficult faults are included in the attractive pink pack.

You will see how very easy it is to carry Erace in your handbag, so that it's always ready for an emergency; always at hand when you want to renew your make-up. It's the preparation that every girl needs to keep her looking serene in the daily whirl of this hectic age.

Figure 6.1 *Woman*/Max Factor reader offer¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁹⁰ 'Help Yourself to Loveliness', *Woman* 17/09/1955, pp.10-11

Whenever you change your dress colour—
change your lip colour with . . .



Dressed by
Susan Small
Hats by
Florence Lee

GALA *Interchange*

LIPSTICK or LIP LINE

Whatever the fashion shade, there's a brilliant
Gala lip colour to harmonise with it. And it's so
easy to change your lip colour whenever you change
your dress colour with Gala Lip Line or Interchange
Lipstick: for every refill is encased in its
own gold-metal shell. Simply slip one out
and another in—instantly!

Remember, too, that there's a glistening Gala
Nail Colour to match every lip colour

GALA OF LONDON

Fashion Cosmetics and Perfumes

BURLINGTON ARCADE PICCADILLY LONDON W1

INTERCHANGE LIPSTICK
OR LIP LINE 6/6
REFILLS 2/6

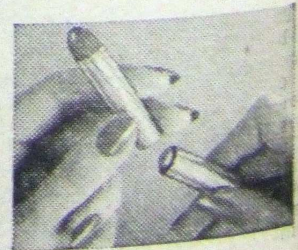


Figure 6.2 Black and white cosmetics advertisement¹⁰⁹¹

¹⁰⁹¹ Gala advertisement, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.6.

limited. The effects of this are most apparent in their beauty articles, as shown by a 1954 piece in *H&C* (Figure 6.3). The dense text of the column, giving instructions about the use of make-up, has no corresponding photograph or illustration. Even later in the period, only small sketches were used (Figure 6.4). Unlike in the realm of fashion, it seems that beauty companies – especially cosmetics manufacturers – were unwilling to advertise in not only small publications with a limited audience, but magazines that were unable to offer widespread use of colour photography.

Due to these various factors, *H&C* and *Outlook* lacked any significant amount of cosmetics or other beauty-related advertising – with noticeable consequences. Research on women’s magazines attributes considerable significance to such advertising: Mary Talbot asserts that ‘cosmetics advertising and the glamour that surrounds it present potential consumers with dominant standards of feminine appearance’ and White claims that ‘the propaganda put out by the cosmetics manufacturers’ was a driving force behind the ‘cult of personal glamour’.¹⁰⁹² The *Woman/Max Factor* reader offer (Figure 6.1) supports such arguments: the promotion used imagery closely resembling that used in cosmetics advertisements. In such images, the concept of glamour was prevalent. Glamour aligned with cosmetics: the glamorous woman was the fully made-up woman. Advertisers largely implied this link, although occasionally it was explicit; Misslyn cosmetics, for instance, labelled one of their ranges ‘Glamour-match’.¹⁰⁹³ Yet glamour was not a prevalent image or ideal in either *H&C* or *Outlook*. Without beauty-related advertising as a dominant presence, these magazines featured a range of attitudes, as the following section explores.

¹⁰⁹² Mary M Talbot, ‘Strange Bedfellows: Feminism in Advertising’, in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, p.181; White, *Magazines*, p.147.

¹⁰⁹³ Misslyn advertisements, *Outlook* 10/1960, p.39; 04/1961, p.27.

Faces and Figures—5

This month the focus is on faces—with some do's and don'ts from MARY EMBREY about the use of make-up

TWO women of my acquaintance are much of an age, type and background. They each have—like the rest of us—their good points and their weak points as far as looks are concerned. They start from scratch, neither being in her own right in the least pretty. Yet one contrives to be so strikingly attractive as to be sometimes described as beautiful while the other remains so ordinary as to be sometimes thought almost plain.

There are many reasons for this difference. One is well groomed while the other is untidy. One has cultivated a dress sense and wears her clothes to advantage while the other couldn't care less. One exercises the discipline necessary to keep a trim figure while the other has let herself go. But perhaps "make-up", the skilful use of frankly artificial aids to good looks, is the greatest single factor to make so great a difference between these two.

The object of make-up is primarily to correct faults and to highlight good features. Its success, or its most lamentable failure, lies first in the choice of the right preparations and then the skill with which they are applied. If you are going in for make-up in a big way you will need a foundation of some description, rouge, lipstick and powder. In addition you must have an eyebrow pencil, mascara and two of the tiny brushes with which it is applied.

A perfect finish demands a perfect beginning, so the foundation must be good. These foundations are of varying kinds: creams, lotions, or newest of all, a tinted liquid, half lotion half cream, one single drop of which is sufficient for the whole face. It has a capacity for spreading that is quite extraordinary. It is the perfect foundation for some special occasion by day and for all evening occasions. But it must be removed with cleansing cream. For ordinary everyday use a light foundation cream would be a better choice, for this can be removed easily with soap and water.

Next the powder. Use a feather puff for preference and dab it on lightly. Take off any surplus with a clean puff, a complexion brush or—though less efficient—a pad of cotton wool. Do this with a smooth, light, downward sweep.

Then comes rouge, of which there are two kinds—a cream type or a dry, which is in the form of a small solid cake. The dry is much the most easy to apply. But you need only to touch the rouge with a little pad to get sufficient. All hard lines and patches of colour must be avoided. If you put on too much, take it off and start again. Practice is necessary as in everything else and you will soon be able to apply it successfully. The colour should be blended upward and outward and a little put on the chin as well.

Lipstick should be used on the whole of the lips. It doesn't look good to see colour concentrated in the centre of the mouth leaving pale and untouched sides. But colour should certainly be more concentrated in the centre and especially on the lower lip, unless too "full" already. Follow the natural outline and don't be tempted to try any tricks aimed at altering the shape of the mouth. These are usually painfully obvious. Nowadays you can buy a liquid designed to be painted on top of the lipstick, which makes it at least temporarily indelible.

A well sharpened eyebrow pencil will accentuate the brows. Here again stick to the natural line and don't take the pencil beyond or above that line.

Lashes are darkened by using a mascara which is usually made in a small solid bar and which has to be moistened before use; or it may be a cream type or, better still in my view, a liquid mascara in a tiny tube. A small amount is put on a small brush and it should be used at least twice. All surplus is removed with a clean brush. You can get a little comb which will prevent the lashes having a stuck-together look which is far from pleasing.

I never recommend eye-shadow because I dislike all obvious make-up but the merest suspicion of grease can be put on the upper lids as far as the eyebrow line. This too must not be obvious and the surplus should be blotted off.

The shades you use for rouge and lipstick should, as a general rule, follow your natural colouring. But in the higher flights of make-up you can choose shades that will flatter you in relation to the colours you wear.

I have outlined the art of make-up in its fullest sense but it is not
(continued on page 337)

**FANCY CALLING
STORK
MARGARINE!**



Every taste of creamy, fresh Stork is a happy reminder that your days of making do are over. Who'd ever have believed anything called margarine *could* taste so good!

The choicest of natural fats . . . and sunshine in vitamin form . . . blended smoothly with fat-free milk into fresh, golden goodness—that's Stork Margarine. Delivered to your shops without delay, it couldn't be fresher!

That's why once your family have enjoyed its delicious goodness, they'll want it all the time.

VAN DEN BERGH & JURGENS LIMITED, LONDON, E.C.4

JS 70-142-100

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Figure 6.3 A 1950s H&C beauty article¹⁰⁹⁴

¹⁰⁹⁴ 'Faces and Figures 5', H&C 09/1954, p.335.



HOW DO I LOOK?

by JULIA KENT

sketches by BERYL SANDERS

EYEBROWS sometimes cause raised eyebrows, and here are some reasons why. First, a woman with naturally untidy eyebrows (the majority have them) has left them as they are—shapeless, straggling out and down on to her eyelids, with no firm clear line to be seen. They need plucking carefully to remove all those hairs which are not in line with the natural arch, so as to show a clear space between eye and brow; the eyes are then set in their proper background and look bigger and brighter.



If you have a sensitive skin don't pluck too much all at once, choose tweezers with accurate ends meeting exactly, and pluck only from *beneath* the brow arch, keeping the natural shape; if the skin gets pink and sore after a spell, stop and have another go tomorrow; never pluck your eyebrows while you have a cold. Here's an encouraging thought, the more sensitive the skin the less rapid the hair growth, so your self-inflicted torture will not have to be frequent. A trim in a salon by a professional is almost painless and doesn't cost much, by the way.

The second sight to wonder at is that of eyebrows completely plucked away (as was done in mediaeval times to make a higher forehead) and replaced by a thin pencil line. This, to modern taste, seems a mistake, since it wipes out so much of the character from the face, but sometimes the trouble is that repeated over-plucking has stopped the hair growth altogether, leaving no alternative to the pencil except false stuck-on eyebrows which are never very successful and give rise to a lot of nervous strain. When using an eye pencil as a substitute or to strengthen pale or uneven brows, remember to draw little short hair strokes with it, rather than an unbroken line, as this produces a much more natural effect. Be careful about the colour, too, dark brown, mid-brown or grey are the best—black only for the very dark girl.

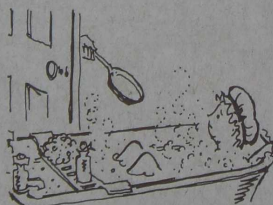
Thirdly, if you dye your hair a colour quite different from your own, or regularly

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wear a wig, your eyebrows should also be dyed; this is mainly, though not only, for brunettes turning blond—black eyebrows look odd with pale gold hair, but *lashes* can be dark whatever colour the hair.

Some people find it difficult to *see* their eyes properly and therefore difficult to make up and look after their eyebrows. They might like to try using a man's magnifying shaving glass; these usually have a normal and a magnifying side, with a stand-up frame and don't cost much; not nearly as much anyway as Revlon's special make-up spectacles which cost £5 18s. 6d.—they have a flip-down lens attachment and you can see with one eye while you apply make-up to the other; made in three strengths, they would be a great investment if you could afford them.

I HAVE recently had, on doctor's orders, to give up hot baths for a few months; they now have to be tepid, which I hate, and, of course, baths have become suddenly a favourite topic for conversation! In talking to friends I have discovered just how unadventurous and unimaginative some of them are; they have a lingering suspicion that it may be slightly immoral to *enjoy* a bath and they look on it as merely a means of getting clean quickly.



This is to waste an opportunity and can be excused only if they are about to miss a train or the family is shouting for its breakfast—in which case they would do well to change their bath time, so that it can be used for real relaxation, for restoring tired limbs and frayed nerves—all most important if you value your looks.

Lots of things are available to add a touch of luxury to your bath and they are not all in the luxury price range; you need something to soften the water, something to give a slightly oily coat to your body and something to smell delicious—in that

order. Radox now do their famous bath salts in three colours with good lasting smells and at a most reasonable price, while at the other end of the scale all the great perfumers make oils (to match their most exotic scents) which are so expensive that you can hardly bear to let the bath water go down the drain afterwards. There is, of course, much to choose from in between, and there is one lovely "fringe benefit"—no lines round the bath. If your bath is not a positive pleasure, perhaps you're missing something?

YOU will have seen that clothes this winter can have hems and waists almost anywhere. This may be a comfort to those who never felt equal to mini-skirts and who haven't bothered much about their waist-line for several seasons; but I have a hunch that some of the smartest outfits—and therefore the ones we shall all want to wear—will have belted waists at the natural level. This will cause alarm and despondency in some quarters, but prompt action can save the situation; carbohydrates and sugar must be banished from the diet and results will show in quite a short time.

Nothing looks slimmer than a smartly belted waist that *is* slim and nothing looks fatter than a belted waist that is *not* slim. If you think you are a borderline case, put a belt on over your slip and, turning sideways to a long glass, look over your shoulder at the view; this look should settle the matter, but don't ask a friend, or your husband, if you want the truth!

ARE you having your photograph taken for Christmas? Here are some tips from a professional: don't wear a patterned dress or an elaborate neckline, keep



shoulders down and neck stretched, wear light-coloured lipstick with a smear of oil or vaseline on top, and plenty of eye make-up. I hope they come out well!

October 1968

Figure 6.4 A 1960s H&C beauty article¹⁰⁹⁵

¹⁰⁹⁵ 'How Do I Look?', H&C 10/1968, p.390.

Glamour and grooming: attitudes to beauty in *H&C* and *Outlook*

In her investigation of *Girls' Best Friend* in the late nineteenth century, Alisa Webb comments that 'beauty ideals were changing, resulting in confusing and contradictory messages in the paper'.¹⁰⁹⁶ Similarly, complex findings are apparent in *H&C* and *Outlook*. As with other issues, the choices portrayed as desirable reflected the particular perspective of each title, created by a combination of the magazine's producers, advertisers and readers. The lack of widespread beauty advertising is therefore significant: in the absence of visual and financial domination by large beauty firms, we can see that various contributors to the magazines articulated a wide range of attitudes – especially about glamour.

In her recent book, *Glamour: History, Women, Feminism*, Dyhouse observes that 'notions of glamour have changed through time, and yet there are marked continuities. Glamour has almost always been linked with artifice and with performance'.¹⁰⁹⁷ Evidence from the organizational periodicals supports this. The author of *Outlook*'s short story 'The Fire and the Flame' describes Nicola Harvey as 'a glamorous girl'. Eventually Mark, the heartthrob of the piece, rejects Nicola because of her lying and deception, comparing her to the 'sham' of artificial coal fires – a portrayal linking glamour with superficiality and insincerity.¹⁰⁹⁸ This alliance of glamour with deceit is also discernible in 'Lynchford London Return', a 1955 *H&C* serial about a WI outing. The most glamorous character is Julia Mercer, established in the opening instalment as an unfriendly snob whose social pretentiousness had led to a penchant for shoplifting from expensive department stores.¹⁰⁹⁹

To an extent, such characterization indicates the changing connotations of 'glamour'. Whereas in the 1920s 'the idea of glamour evolved...into something approaching a distinctly modern, feminine style'¹¹⁰⁰, during the 1930s, 'it became widely used to describe fashions and a particular kind of feminine appeal'¹¹⁰¹ – one associated with Hollywood cinema. By the 1950s, Dyhouse argues, glamour was less fashionable; in Britain, 'the idea of glamour became somewhat tarnished by its associations with cheesecake photography, pin-up nudes or scantily dressed models in

¹⁰⁹⁶ Alisa Webb, 'Constructing the Gendered Body: Girls, Health, Beauty, Advice, and the *Girls' Best Friend*, 1898-1899', *Women's History Review* 15 (2006), p.270.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.1.

¹⁰⁹⁸ 'The Fire and the Flame', *Outlook* 10/1959, pp.8,10,12.

¹⁰⁹⁹ 'Lynchford-London Return', *H&C* 10/1955, pp.369,371.

¹¹⁰⁰ Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.21.

¹¹⁰¹ Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.28.

naughty magazines'.¹¹⁰² However, the absence of widespread beauty advertising was also a factor. This critique of glamour was not apparent in *Woman*; its level of cosmetics advertising saturated the publication with images of glamorous women and even a contentious icon of glamour – the pin-up – received some justification. In a 1957 series of articles about the actor Dawn Addams, one of her pin-up photographs was included, with the caption 'At first Dawn regarded pin-up pictures as an unnecessary indignity. Later, visiting troops in Korea, she learned their real publicity value'.¹¹⁰³

These contrasting examples from *H&C*, *Outlook* and *Woman* illuminate the spectrum of attitudes towards appearance. This plurality of views is fundamental to challenging widely held assumptions about post-war femininity in Britain, highlighting divergence and revealing that the image of modern womanhood depicted in publications visually and financially dominated by the major beauty companies (such as *Woman*) was not the only construction of femininity in the 1950s and 60s. There was diversity within the magazines themselves, with not all voices in the organizational periodicals being as critical about glamour as the fiction writers were. Mrs Sharp, for instance, shared an amusing anecdote about her stay at a Co-operative convalescent home in Hollywood, Scotland. When out with other female convalescents, a bus conductor called them the 'Hollywood glamour girls'; we all laughed she says – her light-hearted tone conveying pleasure and a humorous attitude towards the notion of glamour.¹¹⁰⁴

It is important to reiterate that these examples do not undermine the negative attitudes towards glamour seen in fiction and the promotion of glamour remained far from ubiquitous. Despite discussing a wide range of cosmetics, *H&C*'s 'Faces and Figures' (Figure 6.3) concluded that 'The greatest compliment to the skill of a well made-up woman is to be told that it is nice to see such complete naturalness'¹¹⁰⁵, while *Outlook*'s beauty editor stated 'Beauty isn't all a matter of looking glamorous.'¹¹⁰⁶ 'Bedtime Glamour' may have been the headline for *H&C*'s April 1959 pattern service, with 'the more glamorous version' of the nightdress having a 'flounced hem and frilled shoulder straps', but this was totally contradicted by the 'Covered Up and Cosy' nightdress pattern six months previously.¹¹⁰⁷

¹¹⁰² Dyhouse, *Glamour*, pp.3-4.

¹¹⁰³ 'I Love Life', *Woman* 23/03/1957, pp.27-29,59,61,63.

¹¹⁰⁴ Mrs J Sharp, *Outlook* 01/1955, pp.8-9; Garner, 'Review', p.576.

¹¹⁰⁵ 'Faces and Figures 5', *H&C* 09/1954, p.337.

¹¹⁰⁶ 'Blemished Beauty', *Outlook* 06/11/1954, p.13.

¹¹⁰⁷ 'Bedtime Glamour', *H&C* 04/1959, p.134; 'Covered Up and Cosy', *H&C* 10/1958, p.325.

Other representations of glamour reflected ‘a desire for something out of the ordinary’¹¹⁰⁸ – a style reserved for special occasions rather than being an everyday expectation. This was even apparent in *Woman*. Although advertisers commonly used ‘glamour’ as an adjective to promote products from bras to wool¹¹⁰⁹ – illustrating Norman Hartnell’s lament that the notion ‘was no more than “the small change of advertising currency”’¹¹¹⁰ – *Woman*’s knitting patterns only mentioned glamour in relation to eveningwear.¹¹¹¹ In October 1955, *Outlook*’s knitting pattern was similarly a jumper ‘for a glamorous evening’.¹¹¹² In all three publications, there was a clear association of glamour with Christmas. Beauty items appearing in December issues of *Woman* emphasized glamour and *Outlook*’s fashion editor described some raincoats as ‘glamorous enough to go over party dresses (useful for Christmas dances and theatre outings)’.¹¹¹³ In October 1960, *H&C*’s pattern service even promoted ‘a glamorous nightie (with Christmas presents in mind?)’.¹¹¹⁴

Literature on fashion and beauty often distinguishes between special occasions and the everyday. Anne Cahill, for example, identifies beautification as a potentially feminist activity if it is limited to special occasions rather than being an expected everyday norm, while Webb outlines the contention that the practice of tight-lacing was largely reserved for special occasions.¹¹¹⁵ The promotion of glamour largely in relation to special occasions reiterates that journalists on these magazines acknowledged the reality of readers’ circumstances, as also seen in the attention given to practical clothing (see Chapter Five). The beauty writers rarely made explicit demands that readers were unlikely to be able to fulfill. An exception is Marsh’s 1957 advice that required an unrealistic level of the time commitment and exclusive dedication to beautification: recommendations included ‘allow one evening without any interruptions and give yourself a face pack’ and ‘finish your week with a pedicure and a manicure’.¹¹¹⁶

Rather than glamour, the beauty advice in all three publications overwhelmingly focused on seemingly more achievable ideals: phrases such as ‘Looking your best’ and

¹¹⁰⁸ Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.3.

¹¹⁰⁹ Triumph advertisement, *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.45; Wendy advertisement, *Woman* 24/02/1962, p.78.

¹¹¹⁰ Dyhouse, *Glamour*, p.10.

¹¹¹¹ ‘Twinset with Sparkle’, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.13; ‘Neckline in the News’, *Woman* 07/07/1958, p.14.

¹¹¹² ‘For a Glamorous Evening’, *Outlook* 08/10/1955, pp.19-20.

¹¹¹³ ‘Next Week’, *Woman* 12/12/1964, p.34, 02/12/1967, p.45; ‘Fashion For a Rainy Day’, *Outlook* 10/1962.

¹¹¹⁴ ‘Round the Clock’, *H&C* 10/1960, p.373.

¹¹¹⁵ Ann J Cahill, ‘Feminist Pleasure and Feminine Beautification’, *Hypatia* 18 (2003), pp.44,46; Webb, ‘Constructing’, p.262.

¹¹¹⁶ ‘Give Yourself a Spring Clean’, *Outlook* 06/04/1957, p.5.

‘making the most of what you have’ turn up repeatedly.¹¹¹⁷ The idea of suiting oneself – aiming to ‘Look Your Loveliest’¹¹¹⁸ – was an older ethos that remained prevalent in post-war magazines.¹¹¹⁹ As White notes,

The beauty consultants on the magazines were encouraging but honest in the face of this commercial barrage. They duly initiated their readers in the vital mysteries of expert make-up and showed women how to make the best of their natural endowment – even improve on it.¹¹²⁰

This is certainly apparent in these publications, with the use of cosmetics promoted as a way of optimizing one’s appearance. The article shown in Figure 6.3, for instance, provided detailed instructions about make-up but observed that ‘The use of make-up is not intended to be a deception – it is rather the creation of an optical illusion...complete naturalness’.¹¹²¹ Likewise, the 1956 *Outlook* article ‘Head-to-toe Beauty’ asserted that ‘Looking attractive doesn’t depend just on having a pretty face or curly hair, it really is a matter of head-to-toe trimness – it’s the sum total of little things’.¹¹²² In an earlier column, Marsh similarly wrote that ‘Beauty isn’t all a matter of looking glamorous. Very often it is mostly a matter of keeping yourself in radiant health...and making the best of what you have’.¹¹²³ The notion of ‘making the best of oneself’ did not favour one homogenous image as the ideal, but highlighted various elements to beauty that readers could cultivate. Alongside home-dressmaking and the magazines’ views of fashion, this discourse was part of efforts to construct a democratic vision of appearance – an ideal of beauty supposedly open to all, resonating with wider contemporary efforts to create an inclusive, classless society.¹¹²⁴

Beauty editors also presented beautification as a means of boosting confidence and self-esteem. An *Outlook* column dedicated to readers with colds admitted that maintaining a beauty regime when ill was difficult, but the sub-title claimed that it ‘helps you to cheer up yourself’.¹¹²⁵ There was an accent on enjoyment; in 1968, *H&C*’s beauty editor asked ‘If your bath is not a positive pleasure, perhaps you’re missing something?’¹¹²⁶ The presence of such attitudes in the NFWI and WCG magazines is important to recognize as the historiographical focus on issues and

¹¹¹⁷ For examples, see: Denman column, *H&C* 05/1954, p.177; 10/1955, pp.377-378.

¹¹¹⁸ Next issue contents,, *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.39.

¹¹¹⁹ Carter, ‘Alice’, pp.205-207; Hackney, ‘Making’, pp.82,85; Moseley, ‘Respectability’, p.478; Webb, ‘Constructing’, p.265; Winkworth, ‘Follower’, p.65.

¹¹²⁰ White, *Magazines*, pp.147-148.

¹¹²¹ ‘Faces and Figures 5’, *H&C* 09/1954, pp.335-336.

¹¹²² ‘Head-to-toe Beauty’, *Outlook* 06/10/1956, p.5.

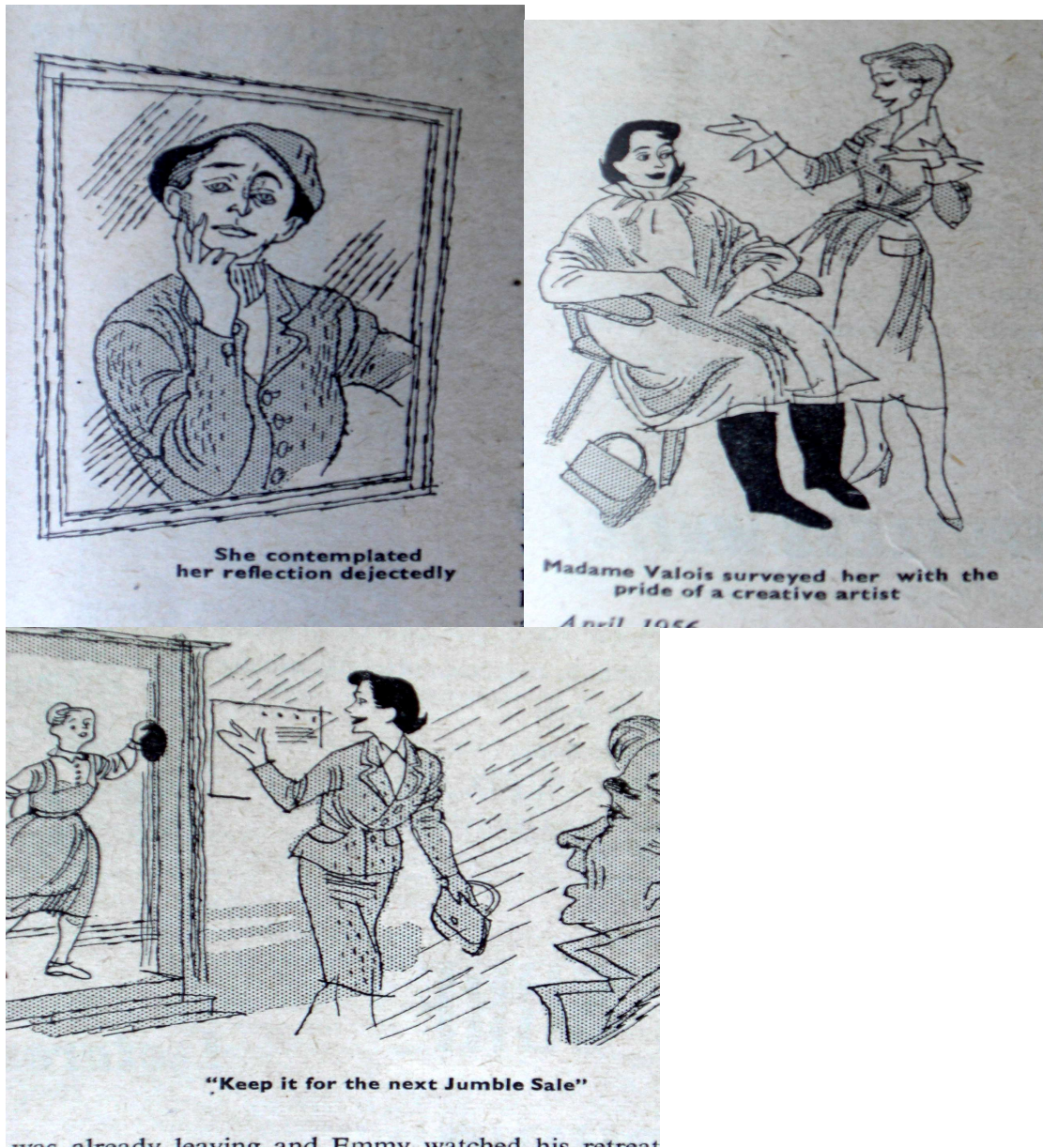
¹¹²³ ‘Blemished Beauty’, *Outlook* 06/11/1954, p.13.

¹¹²⁴ Marwick, *It*, p.194; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Body’, pp.183-185.

¹¹²⁵ ‘Cold Comfort’, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, p.15.

¹¹²⁶ ‘How Do I Look?’, *H&C* 10/1968, p.390.

campaigns has obscured such views. Andrews comments that ‘Erica Carter has argued that for women their bodies may be a source of leisure and pleasure...this is not a position that the WI Movement’s ideology seemed to have space for’.¹¹²⁷ However, references to pleasure and self-confidence appear throughout *H&C*. The description for Denman’s ‘Looking Your Best’ course, for instance, stated that ‘Looking our best gives us confidence’¹¹²⁸, while in a story entitled ‘The Green Beret’, the forlorn Emmy has her self-esteem boosted thanks to a makeover during a WI talk, as shown by the accompanying illustrations (Figures 6.5-7).



Figures 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7 Illustrations from ‘The Green Beret’, depicting Emmy before, during and after her make-over¹¹²⁹

¹¹²⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.157.

¹¹²⁸ Denman courses, *H&C* 10/1955, pp.377-378.

¹¹²⁹ ‘The Green Beret’, *H&C* 04/1956, pp.129,131.

Mrs Sharp's anecdote about the 'Hollywood glamour girls', discussed earlier, indicates that some readers shared this sense of pleasure and enjoyment, although for every such positive letter, others voiced criticism. The notion of the 'social gaze' figures again, this time regarding the social pressures exerted on women about their appearance. Mary from Suffolk wrote:

I knew my face would never be my fortune. How I despaired of my plain features!...Take heart, you young ladies who sigh for the beauty of your friends. Their looks will fade more quickly than yours, and you will have your hey-day when you've grown used to being "just plain Jane".¹¹³⁰

This letter suggests that *Outlook's* correspondence page acted as a supportive forum for readers, with parallels to the validation that women's organizations offered to members. At the same time, the magazines perpetuated the kinds of pressure that Mary criticizes. One aspect of this pressure was perceptions of beauty as an essential element of women's roles. This was not new to the post-war period¹¹³¹, but the popularity of beauty contests in the 1950s 'intensified the idea of beauty as work' and hence further distorted the unclear boundary between work and leisure in terms of personal appearance.¹¹³²

This trend is detectable in these publications. The winner of *Woman's* 1958 'Golden Girl' competition appeared on the magazine's cover and *Outlook* publicized 'Miss Co-op 1966' – a contest that by its very existence draws attention to the diverse attitudes within the Co-operative movement.¹¹³³ *Outlook's* 'The Girl with a Future' articles also presented modelling as a career option – and one that was hard work.¹¹³⁴ Moreover, the beauty editors compared domestic chores and beautification tasks. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there were analogies to spring-cleaning, reiterating associations between appearance and work.¹¹³⁵ There was no denying beauty and beautification required hard work; one *Outlook* beauty column declared 'you can have white, smooth hands and nails – *if* you take the trouble to make and keep them so'.¹¹³⁶

These examples highlight the extent to which a woman's body could be the site of 'prodigious labour'.¹¹³⁷ An additional aspect to this emphasis on hard work was 'good grooming', significant due to its symbolic capital. Grooming intertwined with social class and views of respectability; Pat Kirkham notes that while 'it was central to

¹¹³⁰ Mary, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, pp.9-10.

¹¹³¹ Webb, 'Constructing', p.263.

¹¹³² Langhamer, *Leisure*, pp.39,44.

¹¹³³ Golden Girl competition, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.19; photo and comment, *Outlook* 10/1966, p.1.

¹¹³⁴ 'The Girl with a Future', *Outlook* 08/10/1955, pp.14-15.

¹¹³⁵ 'Give Yourself a Spring Clean', *Outlook* 04/1957, p.5; 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1969, p.170.

¹¹³⁶ 'How Old Are Your Hands?', *Outlook* 02/01/1954, p.15.

¹¹³⁷ Craik, *Face*, p.69.

1930s notions of femininity...middle and upper-class women had always had more time and money for grooming'.¹¹³⁸ As with understandings of 'good taste', these social class associations gave grooming legitimacy and value. Advising on how to achieve good grooming therefore formed part of efforts to educate readers in socially approved standards of appearance and assist them in acquiring cultural capital.

Writers used comparisons to present those who practised good grooming favourably. In *Outlook's* teenage column, Jane Parker claimed that her friend Betty was well groomed and well organized; as a result, 'while the Bettys of this world remain calm and peaceful because they look ahead', she will probably end up with wrinkles and heart disease.¹¹³⁹ *H&C's* beauty editor compared 'two women of my acquaintance', neither of whom was 'in the least pretty'. One appeared beautiful, 'while the other remains so ordinary as to be sometimes thought almost plain'. The first reason given to explain this difference was that 'One is well groomed while the other is untidy'.¹¹⁴⁰ *Woman's* 'Help Yourself to Loveliness' reiterated these points, stating that 'These [beauty] assets are, firstly, perfect grooming. You'll never see Elizabeth with a chewed lipstick line, with dull, tousled hair or chipped nail varnish'.¹¹⁴¹

Although probably fictitious, Elizabeth, Betty and the women in the *H&C* article encouraged good grooming among readers. These particular examples are from the mid-1950s, but attention to grooming continued throughout the period. Occasionally advice focused on physicality, as in a 1956 *H&C* item that proclaimed 'It's all a matter of Deportment!' This piece is suggestive of the continued difficulties facing rural women in accessing consumer culture: although cosmetics were not entirely absent from *H&C*, deportment offered an alternative means of creating an impression of good grooming.¹¹⁴² More often, the beauty advice in the magazines assisted readers in developing the necessary skills to create a groomed appearance by discussing the different body parts governed by the concept of grooming, such as eyebrows, skin, hands and nails.¹¹⁴³ Half of *H&C's* October 1968 'How Do I Look?' article, for instance, was dedicated to shaping and plucking eyebrows and in 1956, *Outlook's* beauty editor dealt with issues including 'turkey throat', hard elbows, scaly heels and

¹¹³⁸ Kirkham, 'Fashioning', pp.156-158. See also: Dyhouse, *Glamour*, pp.3-4; Murray Wax, 'Themes in Cosmetics and Grooming', *American Journal of Sociology* 62 (1957), p.588.

¹¹³⁹ 'Up-and-Coming', *Outlook* 14/07/1956, p.29.

¹¹⁴⁰ 'Faces and Figures 5', *H&C* 09/1954, pp.335-336.

¹¹⁴¹ 'Help Yourself to Loveliness', *Woman* 17/09/1955, pp.10-11.

¹¹⁴² 'Straight From the Shoulder', *H&C* 04/1956, p.143.

¹¹⁴³ Brydon, 'Sensible', p.12; Tinkler, 'Red', p.264.

ugly toes.¹¹⁴⁴ *Woman's* Reader Service Bureau provided a range of 'newsheets' about similar 'problems'.¹¹⁴⁵

This focus on individual areas reinforced understandings of beauty as 'the sum total of little things'.¹¹⁴⁶ It also cultivated the idea that the body was essentially flawed and defective. Critical self-assessment was overtly encouraged – *H&C* and *Outlook* beauty editors told readers to study themselves in a mirror in order to assess their supposed faults¹¹⁴⁷ – and advertisers positioned their products as 'solutions' to help with grooming and supposed defects. In 1954, for example, one *Outlook* advertisement proclaimed that 'Adelaide Grey gets at the root of superfluous hair on the face' and another promised that the Natural Health Clinic 'corrected' 'facial defects, mis-shapen noses, ears, etc'.¹¹⁴⁸

The expectation that all readers should work hard to overcome their inevitable flaws and defects via grooming and beautification practices was highly prevalent in these magazines. This expectation – the view that one *must* be attractive – was the almost unavoidable consequence of the inclusive vision of beauty presented in these publications. As beauty was supposedly available to all, there was the assumption that all readers ought to conform to high standards of physical appearance. Similar pressures are evident in other contexts too. In work on the present-day US, Sarah Banet-Weiser and Laura Portwood-Stacer contend that 'The Miss America crown has been held up to be attainable by "ordinary" women; this crown, like commercial success, like the American dream, is there for those who try'. Furthermore,

Through a visual focus on female bodies and particular visions of individualism, pageants attempt to resolve contradictions within liberal ideology – contradictions about the exclusivity of who can access wealth, employment, housing, and so forth – by relying on classic liberal stories about individual achievement and pluralist tolerance.¹¹⁴⁹

The ideal of beauty in these magazines also attempted resolutions, trying to overcome exclusions of finance, geography and limited cultural and symbolic capital. In part, this was successful, with an inclusive vision of beauty and fashion, though there were limitations. The time commitment implicit within grooming practices and other acts of beautification remained an arguably unrealistic demand for working-class

¹¹⁴⁴ 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 10/1968, p.390; 'Head-to-toe Beauty', *Outlook* 06/10/1956, p.5.

¹¹⁴⁵ 'Woman Reader Service Bureau', *Woman* 05/10/1968, p.14.

¹¹⁴⁶ 'Head-to-toe Beauty', *Outlook* 06/10/1956, p.5.

¹¹⁴⁷ 'Woman's Beauty Page', *Outlook* 04/1959, p.38; 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1969, p.170.

¹¹⁴⁸ Adelaide Grey advertisement, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, pp.19-20; Natural Health Clinic advertisements, *Outlook* 13/03/1954, p.29; 08/05/1954, p.23; 03/07/1954, p.24.

¹¹⁴⁹ Sarah Banet-Weiser and Laura Portwood-Stacer, "'I Just Want To Be Me Again!': Beauty Pageants, Reality Television and Post-feminism', *Feminist Theory* 7 (2006), p.258.

women in urban and rural areas; as Webb notes about working-class girls reading *Girls' Best Friend*, 'The effort, time, and expense...must have appeared particularly daunting'.¹¹⁵⁰ The increased attention to beauty in *H&C* through the 'How Do I Look?' columns of the late 1960s possibly reflects the NFWI's increasingly middle-class composition at that time. However, for working-class women in both the NFWI and WCG and outside of such organizations, any reductions in time spent on housework (questionable in itself) was largely replaced by rising levels of paid employment or family leisure – denying the possibility of an evening a week tending to oneself and one's appearance. As a result, inclusion in *H&C* and *Outlook*'s seemingly democratic visions of appearance was neither simple nor straightforward. Furthermore, a number of exclusions remained inherent in the visions and ideals portrayed, as the next two sections explore.

Health and the medical: the body in *H&C* and *Outlook*

In 1956, *Outlook*'s beauty editor gave medicinal recommendations for dealing with cold sores and other minor ailments.¹¹⁵¹ Her advice intimates the inextricable connections between concepts of health and beauty in relation to women's bodies, an overlap discernible throughout magazines for women and girls.¹¹⁵² The post-war scientific discourse added an extra dimension to this. As Webster notes, views of science as women's 'aid and guide' in controlling their bodies had crucial implications: the health discourse created 'a division between the modern woman and all those who were seen as outside this, through their reliance on the advice of mothers or "old wives' tales", or refusal to listen to scientific expertise'.¹¹⁵³

By exploring understandings of the modern woman – and her body – in the organizational periodicals, this section further accentuates the enormous overlap between discourses of beauty, health and the medical. The latter two had long been areas of NFWI and WCG campaigning. Beaumont's work on the inter-war period shows that concerns for women's health, 'coupled with the belief that women as citizens had a right to state-funded social service', resulted in women's organizations

¹¹⁵⁰ Webb, 'Constructing', p.269.

¹¹⁵¹ 'Anne Marsh Helps the Beauty Seekers', *Outlook* 08/05/1954, p.7.

¹¹⁵² Vicky Long and Hilary Marland, 'From Danger and Motherhood to Health and Beauty: Health Advice for the Factory Girl in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 20 (2009), p.456; Webb, 'Constructing', p.255.

¹¹⁵³ Webster, *Imagining*, pp.92,118-119.

demanding a free and universal health service for women.¹¹⁵⁴ The WCG was the most radical group in this respect; their 1915 publication *Maternity: letters from working women* was hugely influential, exposing ‘the terrible physical and emotional effects frequent childbirth had on mothers’.¹¹⁵⁵

These concerns and campaigns form the backdrop to perceptions of women’s bodies in *H&C* and *Outlook*. A broader medical trend in women’s magazines complemented this organizational history. Giles underlines the importance of medical knowledge to women’s experience of modernity in the inter-war years.¹¹⁵⁶ By the post-war period, the provision of such medical knowledge was widespread in women’s publications.¹¹⁵⁷ *Outlook* and *Woman* had regular columns supposedly written by a doctor and a nurse.¹¹⁵⁸ *H&C* also contained frequent discussions of health and medical issues, with organizational activities a vital part of this: there were, for example, several reports about WI action on mental health during the 1950s, with a 1959 article concluding that the NFWI had already started to ‘break the barriers’ surrounding this subject.¹¹⁵⁹

Fundamental to this medical discourse was the National Health Service (NHS). Created in 1948 – when the housewife-as-expert discourse still had social capital – women’s organizations had been involved in the system’s development.¹¹⁶⁰ The NHS made medical attention accessible to many for the first time, hence ending the pervasiveness of death and disease.¹¹⁶¹ A healthy body was now available to all rather than just those who could afford medical bills and this had an impact on contemporary sensibilities. In November 1954, for instance, *Outlook*’s Marsh commented that ‘odd disorders’ and ‘minor troubles’ such as blackheads and chilblains may ‘seem too trivial to worry a busy doctor about’ but were important, reminding readers that necessary treatments were available on the NHS.¹¹⁶² The following year, *Woman*’s agony aunt told a reader that a hearing aid might be available via the health service.¹¹⁶³

¹¹⁵⁴ Beaumont, ‘Citizens’, p.423. See also: Beaumont, ‘Housewives’, p.69.

¹¹⁵⁵ Caitriona Beaumont, ‘Moral Dilemmas and Women’s Rights: the Attitude of the Mother’s Union and Catholic Women’s League to Divorce, Birth Control and Abortion in England, 1928-1939’, *Women’s History Review* 16 (2007), p.464. See also: Beaumont, ‘Movement’, p.267.

¹¹⁵⁶ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.19-20.

¹¹⁵⁷ White, *Magazines*, p.140.

¹¹⁵⁸ For examples, see: ‘Family Doctor’, ‘Nurse Joan Williams’, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.39; ‘Baby Bureau’, *Outlook* 13/07/1957, p.28; ‘The Return From Holiday’, *Outlook* 10/1959, p.7.

¹¹⁵⁹ ‘Helping the Mentally Ill’, *H&C* 04/1959, pp.114-116; ‘Misadventure to the Mind’, *H&C* 10/1955, pp.363,365; Elizabeth Dickson, *H&C* 04/1956, p.141; Mrs Checketts, *H&C* 04/1957, p.128; ‘Notes From Headquarters’, *H&C* 10/1957, pp.307,309.

¹¹⁶⁰ Beaumont, ‘Citizens’, p.425.

¹¹⁶¹ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.19-20,49-50,52,161.

¹¹⁶² ‘Blemished Beauty’, *Outlook* 06/11/1954, p.13.

¹¹⁶³ ‘You Ask’, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.59.

References to entitlement indicate a sense of inclusion produced by the introduction of a *national* health service; as its name suggests, it incorporated the post-war nation, including women. This was in contrast to previous legislation on health that had excluded women, particularly housewives.¹¹⁶⁴ Some question the actual impact of such changes.¹¹⁶⁵ However, the impression of improved female health in the post-war period is widespread.¹¹⁶⁶ The magazines contrasted the post-war situation with the poor access to health care that previously faced many married women; in 1956, *Outlook's* Editor attributes the rising number of women wearing spectacles to the NHS, because in the past 'they hadn't the money for such "luxuries"'.¹¹⁶⁷

Women's reproductive capacities and gynaecology were a central theme in representations of health and the female body in these magazines. Such depictions support Mort's argument that mid-twentieth century Britain requires 'a more complex narrative of contemporary sexual and moral change'.¹¹⁶⁸ Discussion of sexual relations was not explicit, but the health discourse challenged the secrecy and shame surrounding sex and other bodily functions. This challenge was not universally successful; as found in other research, certain taboos diminished although did not vanish altogether.¹¹⁶⁹ For example, there were only two pieces on the menopause, but these tried to expound myths: *Outlook's* nurse talked about the 'second blooming' experienced by many menopausal women, while *Woman's* doctor was more explicit, reassuring his patient that her symptoms would not 'turn to' cancer and that 'The menopause doesn't affect your pleasure in the sex relationship'.¹¹⁷⁰

Key characteristics of the magazines – namely average reader age, organizational culture and the level of advertising – affected attention to issues of sex and reproduction. As established, whereas the NFWI and WCG's ageing memberships read the organizational periodicals, a wide age group read *Woman* – which probably explains its greater level of attention to pregnancy and childbirth.¹¹⁷¹ *Woman* also

¹¹⁶⁴ Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.424.

¹¹⁶⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, pp.132,134.

¹¹⁶⁶ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.32.

¹¹⁶⁷ 'Editor's Page', *Outlook* 14/ 07/1956, p.1. For references to the situation in the 1930s, see: Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.424; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, p.133.

¹¹⁶⁸ Mort, 'Scandalous', p.132.

¹¹⁶⁹ McCrindle and Rowbotham, *Dutiful*, pp.1-2; Tinkler, *Girlhood*, p.185; Webster, *Imagining*, pp.106-113.

¹¹⁷⁰ 'Second Blooming', *Outlook* 02/01/1954, pp.9,11; 'I Am Dr Meredith', *Woman* 23/03/1957, pp.45,47. For discussion of such myths, see: Julie-Marie Strange, 'Menstrual Fictions: Languages of Medicine and Menstruation, c.1850-1930', *Women's History Review* 9 (2000), p.615; Alia Al-Khalidi, "'The Greatest Invention of the Century": Menstruation in Visual and Material Culture', in Andrews and Talbot (eds.), *All the World and Her Husband*, p.612; Webster, *Imagining*, p.101.

¹¹⁷¹ For examples from *H&C* and *Outlook*, see: 'The Fashionable Lady-In-Waiting', *Outlook* 10/1958, p.15; 'Creating the "Now" Look', *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395; 'Notes From Headquarters', *H&C*

featured a far higher number of advertisements for sanitary ware, including new internal products.¹¹⁷² The organizations themselves had an influence, as illustrated by the case of birth control. This was a divisive issue for women's groups¹¹⁷³; Andrews observes that the NFWI's non-sectarian constitution prohibited the direct promotion of birth control because it would offend Catholic members.¹¹⁷⁴ This policy accounts for the 1966 *H&C* sub-committee decision not to accept advertising for talks about oral contraception – even though an earlier book review in the magazine openly remarked on the prominent role of Lady Denman, former NFWI chair, in the Family Planning Association (FPA).¹¹⁷⁵ In contrast, there was an article about the FPA in *Outlook* in 1956 and from that year onwards, there were advertisements for information about 'planned families' too.¹¹⁷⁶

As the focus of the article and the wording of the advertisements suggest, understandings of birth control drew on notions of 'family planning' rather than concepts of sexual freedom. This mirrors the accent upon women's familial roles seen in relation to the home and supports Beaumont's assertion that mainstream women's organizations continued 'to always situate their demands in the context of the family rather than to focus solely on the rights of women as individuals'.¹¹⁷⁷ This continuity is not, however, a sign that representations of women's bodies within *H&C* and *Outlook* remained static. On the contrary, in the mid-1960s, a new issue linked to women's reproductive capacities emerged as an area for NFWI and WCG involvement: cervical cancer screening. In 1964, the NFWI passed a resolution calling for regular testing¹¹⁷⁸, while the following year, *Outlook* quoted the Minister for Health as saying 'Your guild, like other women's organisations, has performed a useful function in campaigning for routine screening'.¹¹⁷⁹

This article mentioned the Guild's 'substantial contribution' to the Institute for Cancer Research and it seems that WCG branches made donations as well.¹¹⁸⁰ The NFWI's encouragement of members to attend screenings is evident in *H&C*, most

04/1955, p.149. For examples from *Woman*, see: 'Playclothes For Future Mamas', 'Our Family Doctor', *Woman* 07/06/1958, pp.31,70; 'Talking About Health', *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.38; 'I Watched Our Baby's Birth', *Woman* 12/12/1964, pp.32-34.

¹¹⁷² Tampax advertisement, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.55.

¹¹⁷³ Beaumont, 'Dilemmas', p.472; Beaumont, 'Citizens', p.420; Thane, 'Women', pp.136-137.

¹¹⁷⁴ Andrews, *Acceptable*, p.29.

¹¹⁷⁵ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 05/01/1966; Lady Denman biography review, *H&C* 04/1961, pp.124-125; Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.21,29; Harrison, *Seeking*, p.xviii.

¹¹⁷⁶ 'Planned Families', *Outlook* 14/07/1956, p.4; 'Committee Woman', *Outlook* 07/04/1956, pp.16-17.

¹¹⁷⁷ Beaumont, 'Housewives', p.71.

¹¹⁷⁸ Beaumont, 'Housewives', p.71.

¹¹⁷⁹ 'The Fight Against Cancer', *Outlook* 04/1965, pp.10-11.

¹¹⁸⁰ 'Guild News Round-up', *Outlook* 04/1967, pp.11-14.

notably with the 1968 article ‘Spread the Word and Save a Life – Honor Wyatt reports on her cervical cancer test’. Wyatt, regular *H&C* contributor, used an anecdotal and reassuring manner, emphasizing the importance of such screening. She detailed resources for information and publicity, including a free film available to WI branches.¹¹⁸¹

Cervical cancer screening is an example of the organizations successfully adapting one of their traditional areas of involvement – concern for women’s health and bodies – to a ‘modern’ issue. The Minister of Health’s comments indicate that the housewife and her organizations retained some capital and expertise in this arena, despite marginalization within housing and consumer issues. This retention of social capital adds further to the ways in which discourses of health and the medical – manifestations of science – offered these groups and their members a sense of belonging to and inclusion within the versions of modernity constructed in *H&C* and *Outlook*. However, exclusions also characterized representations of women’s bodies. For example, a few of *Outlook*’s health-related advertisements alluded to the difficulties experienced by some post-war housewives – the negative associations of domesticity such as neuroses and what Friedan labelled ‘the problem that has no name’.¹¹⁸² The makers of Clarke’s blood mixture asked if readers were ‘Nervy, irritable, depressed?’ and ‘Nervone’ – a ‘new biochemic [sic] tablet... not a drug, but a vital cell food’ – exhorted readers to ‘Revitalise Your Nerves and *Live!*’¹¹⁸³

These advertisements hint that not all women shared the positive assessments of domesticity widely portrayed in these publications. More widely evident were other exclusions that centred on women’s bodies. The attention to gynaecology underscored the prominence of heterosexuality seen throughout these magazines, with marriage and children presented as normative and universal experiences; as recent research highlights, the institution of marriage exemplifies the force of heterosexuality.¹¹⁸⁴ Homosexuality, on the other hand, is notable only by its absence. As Thane observes with regards to the publication *Labour Women* in the first half of the twentieth century, while there was no outright disapproval of lesbianism, ‘They had nothing to say about women who lived with women though a number of their leading members did so’.¹¹⁸⁵

¹¹⁸¹ ‘Spread the Word and Save a Life’, *H&C* 10/1968, pp.369-370. See also: ‘Dear Nancy Fielding’, *H&C* 10/1965, p.369; Beaumont, ‘Housewives’, p.71.

¹¹⁸² Friedan, *Mystique*, pp.13-29. See also: Webster, *Imagining*, p.56.

¹¹⁸³ Nervone advertisement, *Outlook* 12/01/1957, p.20; Clarke’s advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1958, p.19.

¹¹⁸⁴ Jane Ward and Beth Schneider, ‘The Reaches of Heteronormativity: An Introduction’, *Gender and Society* 23 (2009), p.435.

¹¹⁸⁵ Thane, ‘Women’, pp.131-132. See also: Webster, *Imagining*, pp.107-108.

As well as the omission of homosexual women from constructions of modern womanhood in these magazines, non-white women did not feature either. Connections between race and sexuality are widely noted by scholars: Julian Carter contends that specifically heterosexual whiteness defined ‘normality’ in the USA, while Waters asserts that ‘dark strangers’ and homosexuals were amongst the groups ‘who deviated from the norms of the national imaginary’ in post-war Britain.¹¹⁸⁶ This is not to suggest that the magazines were overtly racist. Andrews maintains that the WI rejected dominant definitions of foreigners and blacks as ‘Other’. In the *H&C* story ‘Black Beauty’, for example, there is a positive portrayal of an African nurse.¹¹⁸⁷ Similar attitudes are evident in *Outlook*. In 1958, for instance, Miss Jeffrey praised the care her sister received from ‘coloured girls’. She welcomed further immigration and condemned racist legislation, concluding her correspondence by saying ‘We are short of nurses and can do with many more girls like these. No one would ever mention that loathsome phrase “Colour bar” after they had been so well nursed and cared for.’¹¹⁸⁸

Despite such statements, white remained normative. This was not unique to these publications; Tinkler remarks on the widespread absence of race in the magazines she considered.¹¹⁸⁹ As previous chapters established, *H&C* and *Outlook* contained little acknowledgement of the decline of Empire and onset of large-scale immigration; reconfigurations of national identity and understandings of cosmopolitanism focused upon relations with Europe and, to a lesser extent, the US. This lack of acknowledgement continued in terms of health and beauty content; as Bridget Byrne argues, whiteness in Britain is often a ‘silent or unmarked norm’.¹¹⁹⁰ The inclusive tone did not extend to non-white bodies: in both these magazines and more widely, British women were perceived to come in two colours, blonde or brunette.¹¹⁹¹

The absences and silences surrounding race and homosexuality allowed the presentation of a unified vision of femininity and a tone of belonging in these magazines – a sense of ‘we women’ for all readers to identify with. Certain variations were accommodated, such as the disparate roles of married white women (countrywoman; Co-operator; citizen; consumer; producer; wife; mother; hostess), but non-white and homosexual women remained largely invisible. In contrast to other

¹¹⁸⁶ Julian B Carter, *The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880-1940* (London, 2007), p.2 and throughout; Water, ‘Strangers’, pp.228-230.

¹¹⁸⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable*, pp.163-164.

¹¹⁸⁸ Miss Jeffrey, *Outlook* 04/1958, pp.36-37. See also: Mrs Gregory, *Outlook* 11/09/1954, p.9.

¹¹⁸⁹ Tinkler, *Girlhood*, p.185.

¹¹⁹⁰ Byrne, *White Lives*, pp.1,12.

¹¹⁹¹ Conekin, *Autobiography*, pp.193,195-196,205; Mort, ‘Striptease’, pp.31,32,40; Moseley, *Growing*, p.7.

contemporary magazines, though, contributors to *H&C* and *Outlook* attempted to negotiate visions of the modern that incorporated older women, as the following section explores.

Health, beauty and understandings of the modern

In 1955, *H&C* reported on a NFWI resolution calling for more mobile physiotherapy vans to visit rural areas.¹¹⁹² Despite the gains that accompanied the creation of the NHS, there remained a shortfall in medical provisions for the countryside, hence the Institute's resolution is again evidence of efforts to overcome the difficulties facing rural-dwellers in accessing facets of the modern – in this case a healthy body. The remainder of this chapter focuses on similar efforts in *H&C* and *Outlook* to provide 'solutions' to the problems facing countrywomen and women Co-operators. Drawing on already established themes, the section further shows the extent to which contributors to the organizational publications attempted to negotiate visions of the modern that incorporated their rural, Co-operative/working-class and older readers.

As the previous section demonstrates, aspects of the modern body in *H&C* and *Outlook* – notably discourses of the NHS, sexuality and race – overlapped with understandings found elsewhere. The organizational periodicals continued, however, to contain distinctive responses to ideas of the modern, such as the emphasis on cervical cancer screening. Turning from concepts of health and the medical to notions of health and beauty, their distinctiveness becomes even more apparent. Contributors had to negotiate visions of the modern body, health and beauty, because their readerships did not easily assimilate into visions of the modern body perpetuated by the dominant symbolic economy.

References to tanning illustrate the extent to which many – not just rural and working-class women – were unable to access aspects of modern appearance with high levels of symbolic capital. Due to the sample used (largely analysing spring and autumn issues), tanning was not a prevalent theme, but those examples that did appear indicate the changing symbolism of suntans: previously associated with outdoor work, a tan became a marker of affluence, a literal embodiment of leisure time and holidays.¹¹⁹³ In particular, foreign holidays – alluded to in women's magazines from the mid-

¹¹⁹² 'Rheumatic Diseases Do Abound', *H&C* 04/1955, p.129.

¹¹⁹³ Wilson, *Adorned*, pp.130-131; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Body', p.187.

1950s¹¹⁹⁴ – featured prominently in relation to suntans. Although mentioning holidaying in England, *Outlook*'s 'Going On Holiday?' invoked foreign destinations imbued with the symbolic capital of continental sophistication: 'a Riviera tan...Swiss mountains...Italian sunshine'.¹¹⁹⁵ The only tanning advice in *H&C* targeted readers going 'abroad for your holidays', while a *Woman* advertisement for fake tan pictured an exotic beach.¹¹⁹⁶ The latter two examples are from the mid- to late-60s, a time when foreign holidays were becoming more widespread, but were still a far from common experience – 'by 1968 a tenth of British adults were taking holidays abroad'.¹¹⁹⁷ For many, soft-furnishing fabrics named 'Riviera' and 'Capri' remained the nearest that they came to other countries and getting a tan remained out-of-reach – unless, as the *Woman* advertisement encourages, they faked it.

The higher level of advertising in *Woman* compared to the organizational periodicals resulted in a stronger emphasis upon commercial 'solutions' in this magazine, as evident in relation to personal hygiene. As already outlined, hygiene was a crucial element of the scientific discourse and hence a signifier of the modern. Perceptions of hygiene interlinked with notions of social class and social capital; since at least the nineteenth century, poor personal hygiene had been associated with the working classes.¹¹⁹⁸ By the inter-war period, cleanliness and hygiene were of growing significance to working-class women; Giles argues that for them, modernity meant cleanliness, health and belonging in terms of their bodies and clothes as well as their homes.¹¹⁹⁹ Such ideas figured in these magazines: as with maintaining hygiene in the home, having a clean body represented a way of demonstrating to the social gaze that one was modern. In *Woman*, advertisers offered a route to achieving a clean and hence modern body; Colgate and Lifebuoy, for instance, respectively promoted their toothpaste and soap as overcoming bad breath and body odour.¹²⁰⁰ In *Outlook*, on the other hand, Marsh emphasized readers' own efforts alongside the use of products: 'Have a daily bath or sponge down with warm-to-hot water...and use a good deodorant and anti-perspirant'.¹²⁰¹

¹¹⁹⁴ White, *Magazines*, p.162.

¹¹⁹⁵ 'Going On Holiday?', *Outlook* 13/07/1957, p.15.

¹¹⁹⁶ 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1969, p.170; Quickies advertisement, *Woman* 02/07/1966, p.41.

¹¹⁹⁷ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.85.

¹¹⁹⁸ Swenarton, 'Bath', pp.95-96; Webb, 'Constructing', p.270.

¹¹⁹⁹ Giles, *Parlour*, pp.160-161. See also: Kelley, 'Virtues', p.720; Long and Marland, 'From Danger', pp.460-461.

¹²⁰⁰ Lifebuoy and Colgate advertisements, *Woman* 19/03/1960, pp.56,62.

¹²⁰¹ 'Woman's Beauty Page', *Outlook* 04/1959, p.38.

Again, this is not to suggest that contributors to the organizational publications were always attentive to the financial and other constraints facing readers.¹²⁰² The references to tanning show that these magazines disseminated the kinds of exclusions that they also tried to address. Similarly, when encouraging readers to take up exercise, *Outlook*'s doctor – likely to be a middle-class contributor – recommended costly and prestigious activities such as tennis, golf and hiking.¹²⁰³ However, other writers presented alternative options: in both the first and final years of the sample, *H&C*'s beauty editor outlined simple exercises that readers could do in their homes.¹²⁰⁴ The later reference also promoted Keep Fit Association classes, mentioning the advantages of 'enjoyment and companionship' and physical well-being through attendance.¹²⁰⁵ *Outlook*'s beauty editor publicized exercise classes too.¹²⁰⁶ As well as reflecting the collective ethos of the NFWI and WCG, these recommendations continued a long tradition of feminists and women's organizations promoting sport and exercise for women.¹²⁰⁷ *H&C* indicates that the NFWI itself provided a forum for such activities: Denman ran a course entitled 'Keep Fit' and there were WI sports teams and dancing groups.¹²⁰⁸

Exercise was another manifestation of health discourses within these magazines, with 'keep fit' and sport presented as an additional way – along with medical attention – to achieving a healthy (and therefore modern) body. A further facet to the concept of health was nutrition, which had been a key concern in the inter-war period.¹²⁰⁹ In 1969, for example, the *H&C* beauty editor wrote about healthy eating. She began by stressing the importance of nutritional food: 'I should like to make a plea for really sensible spending on food, because your health and looks will suffer if your diet is defective'. She then became more forceful, using dramatization to reinforce her point: 'Were you *shocked* at the size of the nation's sweet bill, published recently? You should have been'; 'If all eating between meals were to be *banned* in all families, their health as well as their bank balances would improve'.¹²¹⁰

Although this article invoked the advantages of nutrition for one's 'looks', this related to notions of a healthy appearance rather than weight loss. Similarly, the desired

¹²⁰² Webb, 'Constructing', p.258.

¹²⁰³ 'Keeping Fit In Spring By The Doctor', *Outlook* 04/1963, p.25.

¹²⁰⁴ 'Faces and Figures 3', *H&C* 05/1954, p.185; 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1969, p.170.

¹²⁰⁵ 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1969, p.170.

¹²⁰⁶ 'Woman's Beauty Page', *Outlook* 10/1958, p.44.

¹²⁰⁷ Harrison, *Seeking*, p.32; Long and Marland, 'From Danger', pp.464-467.

¹²⁰⁸ Denman programme for 1964, *H&C* 10/1963, pp.354-355; 'Keep Fit Camera News', *H&C* 10/1959, p.291; Marguerite Crill, *H&C* 04/1969, pp.159-160.

¹²⁰⁹ Long and Marland, 'From Danger', p.464.

¹²¹⁰ Emphasis mine. 'How Do I Look?', *H&C* 04/1968, p.154.

results from attending Keep Fit classes were ‘a supple body and graceful carriage’, not losing weight.¹²¹¹ This is unusual. Slimness had featured as an ideal in women’s magazines since the nineteenth century, becoming even more prevalent in the post-war period.¹²¹² By the 1950s, the slim figure represented the modern female body, resulting in greater attention to ways of achieving slimness via weight-loss. The concept ‘dieting’ (or ‘slimming’, as it was often known) is a ‘disciplinary practice of femininity’, like Victorian tight-lacing.¹²¹³ Recent research on makeover television programs contends that such disciplinary practices produce ‘a mainstreaming’ and ‘a new, improved self who conforms even more readily to dominant norms’.¹²¹⁴ Such arguments associate body discipline with compliance to norms and ideals of conventional femininity. This view is widely supported. Discussing the inter-war period, for example, Winship asserts that slimness embodied respectable femininity; the body ‘becomes the site on which class tensions are played out’ as being small and slim, having a ‘nice and neat’ body, allowed women to distance themselves from their class origins.¹²¹⁵

Winship’s claims imply that by reinforcing the importance of a slim body and providing advice on how to achieve this ideal through dieting, women’s magazines were assisting readers in efforts to acquire greater social capital: the cultural capital needed to successfully diet and the symbolic capital of the slim figure. *Woman* clearly articulates the desirability of slimness – with headlines such as ‘You’re Less – and Lovelier’¹²¹⁶ – and reveals its associated meanings, the factors that explain why the ‘nice and neat’ body retained such prestige and value in the post-war period. Contributors portrayed the slim figure as a prerequisite to dressing fashionably: ‘But you must have a slim figure to wear these wonderful [spring fashion] clothes well’, a Ryvita advertisement declared.¹²¹⁷ Without access to fashionable – hence modern – clothes, it was difficult to achieve a modern appearance and demonstrate one’s modernity to the social gaze.

An advertisement for Biskafe meal supplement announced ‘Young housewife loses well over 3 stones! Margretta Dowgun, young, attractive...but sadly overweight,

¹²¹¹ ‘How Do I Look?’, *H&C* 04/1969, p.170.

¹²¹² Webb, ‘Constructing’, p.263; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, circa 1900-1939’, *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005), pp.240-242,246-248.

¹²¹³ Susan Bordo, ‘Reading the Slender Body’, in Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller and Sally Shuttleworth (eds.), *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science* (London, 1990), p.83; David Kunzle, ‘Dress Reform as Antifeminism: A Response to Helene E Robert’s “The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman”’, *Signs* 2 (1977), pp.572,578; Roberts, ‘Exquisite Slave’, pp.556-558,565.

¹²¹⁴ Banet-Weiser and Portwood-Stacer, ‘Me Again!’, p.267.

¹²¹⁵ Winship, ‘New Disciplines’, pp.31,33,37,39-40.

¹²¹⁶ ‘You’re Less – and Lovelier’, *Woman* 29/09/1956, p.20.

¹²¹⁷ Ryvita advertisement, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.32.

couldn't wear fashionable clothes'.¹²¹⁸ Her 'young' age – mentioned twice in this statement – magnified the mixture of sympathy and pity shown towards Margretta as there was a strong association of slimness with youth.¹²¹⁹ Throughout *Woman*, we see the two conflated: another advertisement for slimming products, for instance, said 'Slimness makes her look and feel younger!' and 'She is slim once more – and feeling much younger'.¹²²⁰ This equation with youth was another factor behind the symbolic value of slimness: the social capital linked to youth therefore transferred to slimness too. Such associations are discernible in the organizational periodicals. *Outlook* knitting patterns contained comments such as 'Youthful classic...to flatter the slender figure' and its reverse, 'Larger but lacy – a most becoming summer jumper for the older woman'¹²²¹; likewise, a 1956 *H&C* article remarked that 'It is natural, normal, but by no means inevitable that as we grow older we should measure more'.¹²²²

Responses to this modern ideal of slimness in *H&C* and *Outlook* differ enormously from *Woman*. The latter gave lots of advice on achieving a slim figure, even bringing out its own weight-loss diets¹²²³ – again, the publication's producers positioning the magazine itself as the expert, in this case providing 'solutions' to the 'problem' of excess weight. *Outlook*'s beauty pages also gave weight-loss advice, featuring calorie counting, the advantages of dieting compared to slimming pills and specific regimes such as the five-day citrus diet.¹²²⁴ However, the discourse of health – rather than youth or fashion – remained paramount in these slimming guides; Marsh described the creator of the citrus diet as a 'naturopath and health expert'.¹²²⁵ Even the few diet-related advertisements did not focus on the same discourses found *Woman*: the manufacturers of Granose Rolls drew on the concept of self-esteem, claiming 'Elegant, poised and supremely confident of her appearance she knows that one way to avoid superfluous weight is to cut out starchy food'.¹²²⁶ Furthermore, dieting was far less prevalent in *Outlook* than in *Woman*. This may have been a legacy the WCG's brand of radical feminism, as once again the magazine's readers criticized the pressures facing

¹²¹⁸ Biskcafe advertisement, *Woman* 11/11/1961, p.58.

¹²¹⁹ Maynard, 'Wishful', p.46; Negrin, 'The Self', p.104; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Body', pp.183,188.

¹²²⁰ Energen Rolls advertisement, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.59.

¹²²¹ 'Youthful Classic', *Outlook* 11/09/1954, pp.19-20; 'Larger but Lacy', *Outlook* 02/07/1955, pp.19-20,23.

¹²²² 'Straight From the Shoulder', *H&C* 04/1956, p.143.

¹²²³ Miss IGF, *Woman* 10/04/1954, p.3; 'Successful Slimming Proof', *Woman* 29/09/1956, pp.18-20; '30-day Figure Plan', *Woman* 24/02/1962, pp.10-11; 'Our Great New 3-speed Diet Plan', *Woman* 15/05/1965, pp.22-23.

¹²²⁴ 'Count Your Calories', *Outlook* 14/07/1956, p.5; 'Luxury Slimming Diet', *Outlook* 04/1958, p.11; 'Woman's Beauty Page', *Outlook* 04/1959, p.38; 'Strictly for Slimmers', *Outlook* 04/1961, pp.23-23.

¹²²⁵ 'Luxury Slimming Diet', *Outlook* 04/1958, p.11.

¹²²⁶ Granose advertisement, *Outlook* 10/1959, p.36.

women with regards to their appearance. Two mid-1950s letters, for instance, disapproved of negative attitudes towards larger women: one talked about the rudeness of a shop assistant to a larger lady; the other asked why men and women like slim figures so much.¹²²⁷

In contrast to *Outlook* and, more noticeably, *Woman*, the concept of slimming was virtually absent from *H&C* due to a deliberate editorial policy: minutes of the publishing committee reveal an outright ban on the promotion of slimming products.¹²²⁸ The editor strictly upheld this policy. The only anomaly in the sample was a 1960 Mushroom Growers' Association advertisement that announced 'Mushrooms help you to slim. If your diet is controlled by Calories, then eat mushrooms.'¹²²⁹; presumably this succeeded in evading the ban because mushrooms are not obviously or exclusively associated with weight loss in the way that items such as slimming pills are. Records do not disclose the grounds for the ban, but it was consistent with efforts to create a vision of the modern that incorporated older women; if the contemporary emphasis on youth marginalized older women, then the equation of slimness with youth potentially exacerbated this.

Rather than slimming, then, *H&C* offered readers alternative means to achieve the figure that they desired. For example, contributors presented underwear as practical items to rectify supposed defects: a 1963 piece on underwear proclaimed 'Here are several styles designed to *solve* one or two of the more *common figure problems*'.¹²³⁰ Similarly, a 1956 advertisement claimed 'Your figure lines are correctly moulded by Strodex Corsetry'.¹²³¹ Strodex was one of many *H&C* advertisements for corsets, brassieres and girdles; there are 45 underwear advertisements in the thirty issues sampled – a sign of the limited scope for making such garments oneself. Underwear was less widely advertised in *Outlook*, probably because the magazine contained almost exclusively Co-operative branded items: whereas its April 1960 issue included one advertisement for CWS underwear, a March 1960 issue of *Woman* featured underwear advertisements from CWS, Triumph, Aertex and Proper Pride.¹²³²

During the 1950s, as in the *H&C* examples, promotions of CWS underwear in *Outlook* articulated the concepts of structure and control – with headlines such as 'The

¹²²⁷ Miss WM, *Outlook* 03/07/1954, p.11; Mrs L Kilver, *Outlook* 01/01/1955, pp.8-9.

¹²²⁸ *H&C* sub-committee minutes, 26/10/1962, 04/04/1963, 03/07/1963.

¹²²⁹ Mushroom Growers Association advertisement, *H&C* 10/1960, p.372.

¹²³⁰ Emphasis mine. 'In Good Shape', *H&C* 10/1963, pp.370,374.

¹²³¹ Strodex advertisement, *H&C*, 04/1956, p.151.

¹²³² CWS advertisement, *Outlook* 04/1960, p.7; advertisements for Triumph, Aertex, Proper Pride and CWS, *Woman* 19/03/1960, pp.45,52,53,69.

Foundation of Elegance’¹²³³ – but by the late 1960s, the accent shifted. A move away from ideas of control is evident in claims about freedom; ‘Marvellous sense of freedom’ and ‘Join the move to freedom...free as a Bird of Paradise’ were two phrases used by advertisers in *Woman*.¹²³⁴ Such ideas are visible in sanitary-ware advertisements from the late 1950s, but these later examples also utilized discourses associated with burgeoning second-wave feminist movement of the time.¹²³⁵ A 1969 *H&C* advertisement for underwear, for instance, declared ‘You now have a *choice* to be more *relaxed, natural* with our *wonderful Comfibelt or Comfipantie*’.¹²³⁶

The move from control to freedom did not signal an end to views of the female body as inherently flawed and defective. This attitude remained noticeable in a 1969 reference to body shape, when *H&C*’s fashion editor described some clothing as having ‘a youthful air, yet is well suited to the older woman with the not-so-good figure’.¹²³⁷ Despite the implicit criticism of such comments, contributors to *H&C* and *Outlook* tried to provide clothing for those with ‘not-so-good’ figures – unlike in *Woman*, where the emphasis upon dieting instead encouraged readers to slim down. Due to the association of older age with larger sizes, efforts within the organizational periodicals to offer ‘solutions’ to the supposed problem of being a bigger size were inextricably linked with attempts to construct a vision of fashion that incorporated older women. As noted in Chapter Five, items about ready-made clothing suggest that manufacturers had only recently begun to produce bigger sizes, hence home-dressmaking was an essential remedy in catering for larger sizes. This was apparent in all three magazines, but was especially underlined in *H&C*: in 1955, the magazine’s pattern service informed readers that ‘Because we sometimes are told that “out-sizes are outcasts”, this pattern is made in four large sizes’, while in 1969, the fashion editor claimed that the pattern ‘has the unmistakable stamp of today’s fashion and – miraculous fact! – is in all sizes from 33½ in. to 48 in. hips’.¹²³⁸

Such ‘solutions’ were an integral part of negotiations of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook*, reflecting the older age of their readerships and attempts to address the difficulties that older women faced in creating a modern appearance for themselves. In

¹²³³ ‘The Foundation of Elegance’, *Outlook* 08/05/1954, p.15.

¹²³⁴ Silhouette and Berlei advertisements, *Woman* 05/10/1968, pp.69,89.

¹²³⁵ Tampax advertisement, *Woman* 07/06/1958, p.55; Nikini advertisement, *Woman* 12/09/1959, p.63; Al-Khalidi, ‘Greatest’, p.66.

¹²³⁶ Emphasis in original. Scottish Knitwear and Fashions, *H&C* 10/1969, p.406.

¹²³⁷ ‘Creating the “Now” Look’, *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395.

¹²³⁸ ‘Pages From Our Pattern Book’, *H&C* 10/1955, p.389; ‘Creating the “Now” Look’, *H&C* 10/1969, pp.394-395. See also: ‘Fashion Scoop!’, *Woman* 23/03/1957, p.19; ‘Slimming for the Fuller Figure’, *Outlook* 10/1962, pp.23-24.

Woman, the opposite tactic is evident. Contributors exalted youth and by 1968 were offering readers ways of disguising and denying their age in a quest to look younger: fashion articles featured looks ‘that belie age’, while the beauty column promised to help readers ‘learn how *not* to look your age’.¹²³⁹ This presentation of ageing as somehow a defect was a corollary to the fashionableness of youth, exposing the elusiveness of the symbolic capital of youth – it represented a risky investment as the inevitability of ageing reduced one’s capital value.

The strategy within *Woman* reinforces the prestige and value of youth seen in Chapter Five; guidance on how to look younger attracted readers who wanted to acquire the cultural capital needed to achieve this. The level of advertising in *Woman* was undoubtedly a factor behind the emphasis on youth too, with various advertisers presenting their beauty products as a means of attaining a younger appearance; in 1964, Ulay alleged that their night cream restored ‘youth to the complexion’ of users.¹²⁴⁰ The organizational publications lacked such extensive beauty advertising, hence such ideas were less widely promoted. However, those advertisements that did feature perpetuated negative views of ageing and promised a ‘solution’: an Endocil advertisement in *H&C* declared that their cream ‘will make your skin soft and young again’.¹²⁴¹ Similarly, while there were nowhere near as many advertisements for hair dye in *Outlook* as in *Woman*, examples from both magazines portrayed youth as good and grey hair (symbolizing older age) as bad: one manufacturer named their ‘hair tinting crayon’ Youthexa and Shadeine dye allowed users to ‘Brush away ageing grey’.¹²⁴²

The Shadeine advertisements in *Outlook* during the 1950s were full of phrases implying that women should be ashamed of the ageing process and try to hide it: ‘Her crowning glory – More glorious when grey hair is banished’ and ‘Grey hair? Ssh!!! Keep it dark with Shadeine’.¹²⁴³ Such statements indicate the efforts of hair dye manufacturers to present grey hair as a problem that their products could solve. However, there are signs that some magazine writers and readers also held these opinions. When recommending a League of Health and Beauty class, *Outlook*’s beauty editor told readers ‘Don’t worry if you are fat or an odd shape or way past middle age; you’ll find lots of other people with the same *problems*’.¹²⁴⁴ The same year, she

¹²³⁹ ‘Soak Up Beauty’, ‘Next Week’, *Woman* 05/10/1968, pp.29,61.

¹²⁴⁰ Ulay advertisement, *Woman* 12/12/1964, inside back cover.

¹²⁴¹ Endocil advertisement, *H&C* 10/1963, p.341.

¹²⁴² Youthexa advertisement, *Woman* 17/09/1955, p.46; Shadeine advertisements, *Outlook* 04/1958, p.19; 04/1959, p.14.

¹²⁴³ For examples, see: Shadeine advertisements, *Outlook* 08/05/1954, p.20; 07/04/1956, p.5.

¹²⁴⁴ Emphasis mine. ‘Woman’s Beauty Page’, *Outlook* 10/1958, p.44.

received a letter asking for advice about dyeing grey hair: 'I go out to work and want to *deal with this problem* before it becomes obvious.'¹²⁴⁵ The reader's perception that obvious signs of ageing were a disadvantage in the workplace reiterates the symbolic capital of youth and the corresponding devaluation of older age – and with it, older women.

Within the local arena of the publication, many contributors to *H&C* and *Outlook* from all three elements of the magazines (producers; advertisers; readers) did try to counter such constructions; theirs was a version of modernity in which – far from being old-fashioned or ignored altogether – older women had value and legitimacy. Writers and advertisers in the organizational periodicals offered alternative ways to create a modern appearance that were – according to contemporary views on ageing – more suitable for older women, such as the use of underwear rather than dieting to achieve one's desired figure. Furthermore, within these magazines, youth did not define or dominate understandings of the modern. Other aspects of the modern, notably discourses of health, were more prominent. As well as a healthy body being arguably more easily attainable for older women – via the NHS, medical advice in the magazines, exercise and nutrition – than a youthful appearance, health signifies a reasonably successful area of negotiation: cervical cancer screening representing a modern twist on long-standing NFWI and WCG concerns and campaigns about women's health.

Many understandings of the modern discussed in this chapter, including the silences around homosexuality and race, were widely held. At the same time, constructions in *H&C* and *Outlook* were distinctive. For example, in addition to differing from the perspective on age found in *Woman*, their rural and Co-operative/working-class visions of the modern drew upon notions of grooming rather than the glamour promoted by cosmetics advertisers. Although the organizational magazines remained local arenas with limited influence on the dominant symbolic economy, the chapter has further demonstrated that the rural, Co-operative, generational and gendered perspectives revealed on their pages were far from antithetical to the modern – thus challenging both contemporary assessments and many later historical accounts. As a result, the versions of modernity in *H&C* and *Outlook* – understandings of what the modern was and how it was experienced, responded to and made sense of – give new insights into modern womanhood and alternative perspectives on modern Britain in the 1950s and 60s.

¹²⁴⁵ Emphasis mine. 'Dear Anne Marsh', *Outlook* 04/1958, p.19.

Conclusion

Following the Coronation in 1953, Queen Elizabeth II and her family came to symbolize the national emphasis on the family.¹²⁴⁶ Women's magazines were partly responsible for this, with widespread royal coverage in a style 'which has been described as "knitting your own Royal Family"'.¹²⁴⁷ The treatment of the royal family in *H&C*, *Outlook* and *Woman* illuminates the vastly different perspectives of the three magazines. For instance, a *Woman* report on royal footwear discussed the Queen Mother, Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret – women at different life-stages, consistent with the magazine's broad appeal to readers across a wide age range.¹²⁴⁸ However, the most regularly featured individual royal in the *Woman* sample was Princess Margaret, whose allure seemed to result from her young age, accentuated in statements such as 'The *girl* in everyone's heart'.¹²⁴⁹ Her apparent popularity is a sign of the increasing desirability of youth and lowering of age profiles in mainstream women's magazines.

Royal coverage in *H&C* expressed organizational identity: the magazine gave details of the shawls crocheted by Institute members for royal babies and the outfit worn by the Queen Mother during her visit to the NFWI craft exhibition¹²⁵⁰ – another attempt by *H&C* writers to present a vision of fashion that incorporated older women. In contrast, the royal family is entirely absent from the *Outlook* sample. This was not due to CP policy; in 1964, CP minutes noted that the *Sunday Citizen* had 'obtained a scoop with the participation of Prince Philip on the interviews granted to Stanley Baron', suggesting that royal content was valued in other Co-operative publications.¹²⁵¹ Instead, this absence may have been a vestige of the working-class radicalism associated with the Guild in the early part of the twentieth century.

These examples reiterate the differing class, regional and generational perspectives of *H&C*, *Outlook* and *Woman* seen throughout. These differing perspectives – their 'particular way of understanding the world'¹²⁵² – was the focus of this study, established through visual and textual analysis in conjunction with investigating the publication contexts of *H&C* and *Outlook*: industrial and technological

¹²⁴⁶ Conekin et al, 'Introduction', p.2; Sparke, *Pink*, p.170; Winship, *Inside*, p.35.

¹²⁴⁷ White, *Magazines*, p.223.

¹²⁴⁸ 'Personally Yours', *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.5.

¹²⁴⁹ Emphasis mine. 'Princess Margaret', *Woman* 19/03/1960, p.9

¹²⁵⁰ 'For the New Prince', *H&C* 04/1960, p.141; 'Blue for Royal Baby Boys' *H&C* 04/1964, p.128;

'News of the Month', *H&C* 04/1960, pp.121-122.

¹²⁵¹ CP minutes, 21/03/1964.

¹²⁵² Ballaster et al, *Worlds*, p.29.

factors; individuals, groups and business involved in producing and contributing to the magazine. As well as offering a fusion of some approaches found in other work on women's magazines, this combined context and textual analysis also established the validity of treating *H&C* and *Outlook* as women's magazines, while not obscuring their distinctiveness: their provincial position, organizational status and respective rural and Co-operative identities.

The rural perspective in *H&C* and Co-operative perspective in *Outlook* were characteristics not found in other women's magazines of the period, which assumed urban living as the norm and heavily promoted mass consumption. These rural and Co-operative perspectives therefore provide an opportunity to gain not only new but different insights into Britain in the 1950s and 60s. This study has revealed that the distinctive perspectives in the publications resulted in different expressions of modernity in which the rural and the Co-operative were fundamental. There has been little examination of the relationship of these perspectives to modernity. Both contemporary accounts and later historical studies position the rural as antithetical to modernity – due to its association with the past and the absence of many markers of modernity, such as department stores – and regard the Co-operative movement's older, collective perception of the consumer as incompatible with 'modern' forms of mass consumption.

However, *H&C* and *Outlook* contained alternative versions of modernity. The discovery of these rural and Co-operative versions does not just add to the vast body of literature on the subject. As with other research on women and modernity that has developed concepts such as conservative modernity, suburban modernity, domestic modernity and hybrid modernity (outlined in the Introduction), these findings enrich our conceptions of modernity itself. Instead of evaluating rural and Co-operative versions in terms of existing definitions and finding them lacking – hence labelling them anti-modern, backwards looking or old-fashioned – the evidence from these publications indicates that a more profitable approach would be to revise our conceptualizations of the modern and modernity.

Such revision is necessary because existing conceptualizations – especially the notion that modernity is an urban, often metropolitan, phenomenon, with mass consumption as an essential tenet – do not easily accommodate the notion of a rural or Co-operative version of modernity. Yet *H&C* and *Outlook* contain so much that relates to and informs historiographical debates about post-war modernity and ideas of the modern, such as expertise, national identity, consumer culture, generation and age.

They enhance our understandings in two main ways. Firstly, certain constructions of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook* were as distinctive as the publications' perspectives were. These particular constructions arose from the perspectives of rural experience (rather than urban experience) and the principles of Co-operation (rather than private enterprise capitalism). For example, within *H&C*, representations of modern agriculture were an important element of the magazine's version of rural modernity. WCG political allegiances meant that Labour – considered a modern party by 1964 – was part of the Co-operative version of modernity in *Outlook*. More significant was CWS. Despite the wider Co-operative movement struggling to adapt to post-war consumption and becoming increasingly marginalized, the largest Co-operative retail firm was vital to the Co-operative vision of the modern. From electrical appliances to DIY supplies and decorative items to clothing, advertisements and editorial promotions presented CWS goods as a way of accessing the modern, whether one wanted modern standards of cleanliness, modern design or a modern appearance.

As the case of CWS illustrates, those specific constructions of the modern linked to the rural and Co-operative perspectives of the publications are discernible across the various factions that comprise a magazine. Views of agriculture or CWS as modern can be found in editorial content, advertising and readers' input, demonstrating that *H&C* and *Outlook*'s producers were not alone in expressing modernity via rural experience or Co-operative identity; at least some advertisers and readers shared these visions. Freezer manufacturers, for example, chose to advertise in *H&C* as freezers were a form of modern technology initially targeted at rural-dwellers with surplus produce.

Secondly, the rural and Co-operative versions of modernity in *H&C* and *Outlook* affected how contributors to the magazines made sense of other phenomena associated with modernity. The modern is complex and multifaceted, and these visions of modernity were not completely detached from other visions. Giles argues that the city and the suburb 'express two different ways of responding to modernization'¹²⁵³; similarly, the rural and the Co-operative express two more ways of responding. Alongside specific ideas about what the modern was and how it was constructed (agriculture; CWS), there was engagement with ideas of the modern found in, for example, 'domestic modernity', which highlights the centrality of 'home' to women's experiences of modernity. The importance of the home in *H&C* and *Outlook* created overlap between that version of modernity and their rural and Co-operative versions. They all share the home as a crucial feature, but with varying responses to it. In the

¹²⁵³ Giles, *Parlour*, p.35.

case of these two publications, their rural and Co-operative perspectives often determined responses; *Outlook's* writers, for instance, presented CWS goods as a means of creating a modern home.

These overlaps and links with other versions of modernity further develop the contribution that *H&C* and *Outlook* make to debates about major themes in 1950s and 60s British history. Many historians, for example, recognize that the home and family were bastions of post-war British society and the deconstruction of what constituted 'the modern home' in these magazines adds new insights into this. To give one illustration: the preferences for houses as opposed to flats was not just because of privacy; the perception that houses were the ideal site for family life was a critical factor too. The emphasis on the modern in relation to the home also disputes any assumption that the post-war prominence of the home simply indicates a desire to return to older notions of the domestic sphere as a repository of tradition and a refuge from the modern world outside of it.

The multiple meanings of the modern home reinforce the polysemic, multifaceted nature of the modern. At times, ideas of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook* look contradictory, with dualisms within their representations. These magazines underlined the actual creation of a modern home as well as the purchasing of domestic goods and appliances, with DIY and home-handicrafts having a vital role. Despite the apparent tension between bought goods and the homemade, consumption and production were not as contradictory as they first seem; the amount of advertising for DIY and home-handicrafts demonstrates that these activities were part of consumer culture, not divorced from it. Similarly, home-dressmaking was an integral component of consumer culture.

The parallel between DIY/home-handicrafts and home-dressmaking draws attention to the comparative analysis in this study. Both areas – the home and appearance – accentuate the importance of interdisciplinarity. Scholars work on these topics in various disciplines and often connections are not forged; above all, attention to interior design and decoration is classified as 'just' design history and not considered by historians from other schools. This study has used, amongst others, feminist sociological research on appearance and design history studies on the home to assist with exploring the meanings that underpin the representations in these magazines. The connections shown between the home and appearance also assisted with exploring meanings. For example, the place of languages of modernization within conceptions of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook* is reinforced because such discourses featured in

relation to the home *and* appearance: ‘contemporary’ was a popular interior design and decoration term, while fashion reports referred to the current year or used phrases such as ‘the latest’ and ‘up-to-date’.

Content on the home and appearance incorporated the alternative ideas of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook* – overlapping with other visions of modernity but inflected with the distinctive rural and Co-operative perspectives in the magazines. Crucially for our conceptions of mid-twentieth-century modernity, these constructions of the modern did not neatly correspond with dominant stylistic trends of the period. The magazines contained a diverse range of fashion and decorative trends, often concurrently, such as back-to-back articles on casual clothing and ‘ladylike’ dresses. On the one hand, we should not underestimate the importance of *looking* modern; the contemporary style, for instance, was a key signifier of the modern home. The magazines advised on a range of ways in which readers could create a modern aesthetic, for themselves and their homes: Home Editors promoted colour and the concept of design as markers of a modern interior, while an advertiser in *H&C* promised to remodel old fur coats into more modern styles. On the other hand, looking modern was not the sole factor. Other traits signified the modern too: ‘Capri’ fabric was a traditional floral print hence did not look ‘contemporary’, but its advertisement presented it as modern because it was synthetic material. Historians need to be alert to such nuances. A willingness to recognize that contemporary understandings of the modern may have integrated items, activities or behaviours that we do not see as modern is part of the revision of conceptualizations of the modern and modernity that these publications indicate is necessary.

Amongst the traits and characteristics emblematic of the modern in *H&C* and *Outlook* were some, such as the scientific discourse, whose association with modernity is well established. Science featured through technological innovations such as appliances and synthetic materials as well as hygiene (cleanliness of one’s home and oneself) and health (in the form of medical knowledge, the NHS, exercise and nutrition). The notion of comfort also featured in relation to the home and appearance – the desire for comfortable shoes and a comfortable home that was warm, light and bright – as did happiness, signaled by colour. Attention to such concepts reinforces the multifaceted nature of the modern and adds to existing scholarship on the 1950s and 60s.

A theme in historical accounts has been the influence of the past on British modernity and post-1945 society and culture. British (or perhaps more accurately,

English) ambivalence towards modernity is widely documented, evident in JB Priestley's inter-war *English Journey*, for instance, and post-war hostility to perceived Americanization. Of course, such ambivalence was not universal, but one would perhaps expect to find echoes of such concerns in these publications: maybe fears about the decline of 'traditional' working-class culture in *Outlook*, or older notions of Englishness and ideas about maintaining rural traditions and heritage in *H&C*. Such attitudes were not entirely absent. Overall, however, *H&C* and *Outlook* reveal a different way of responding to modernity. They contained largely negative constructions of the past, alluding to death, disease, poverty and drudgery – the hard labour involved in cleaning homes with limited utility provision and even fewer appliances, or for those readers who had been in service, having to clean the homes of others. In contrast, in the seemingly egalitarian and affluent decades of the 1950s and 60s, *H&C* and *Outlook* offered their rural and working-class readers a vision of a modern world that signified an escape from the past: happy and healthy families in hygienic, comfortable and supposedly labour-saving homes.

None of the magazines idealized the past or constructed it as a place onto which dissatisfactions were projected. Geography replaced history: we can read fears and dissatisfaction in the ways that contributors imagined other countries. It has been beyond the boundaries of this study to discuss all representations of the wider world on the pages of *H&C* and *Outlook*. This is an area deserving further investigation as even in the two areas of the home and appearance, the findings illuminate and add further to tensions in post-war Britishness and national identity identified by other historians. The lack of references to the Empire and Commonwealth again show a rejection of the past; instead of older imperialist discourses, for instance, the NFWI based their international identity upon the shared rural identity of the ACWW and humanitarian assistance through charitable campaigns such as 'Freedom From Hunger'.

Rather than being a colonial power, writers in the magazines presented scientific innovations such as plastics and London's position within the fashion industry as earning Britain a place in the modern world and, most noticeably, a place alongside European neighbours. At the same time, doubts and anxieties about national identity are palpable, hinting at the declinist narrative that haunts much of the writing on twentieth century Britain. Representations of Europe implied that Britain was falling behind and failing to modernize sufficiently quickly, with countries such as France and Italy shedding their image of wartime devastation and surpassing Britain. During the inter-war period, the US had been the pinnacle of modernity, from Hollywood cinema

to mass production and technological change. While the latter association remained clear in *H&C* and *Outlook*, journalists and advertisers aligned European countries with other desirable features and traits of the post-war modern: Scandinavia and Italy were iconic of modern design, and France and Italy epitomized continental cosmopolitan chic. Furthermore, by constructing Europe as the site of cosmopolitanism, contributors managed to avoid confronting more ambiguous attitudes towards the cosmopolitanism developing in parts of Britain due to large-scale immigration.

As well as commenting on themes in British history, these findings call for more nuanced approaches to the modern and modernity – and how ideas and meanings may change over time. The differences between inter-war and post-war visions of modernity reinforce that ideas change. We have seen various continuities, such as the symbolism surrounding domestic appliances, but there were shifts too; notions of the comfortable family home, for instance, replaced the inter-war image of the housewife's workshop. In addition, the clear continuities throughout the period of this study support the increasing academic move towards analysing the 1950s and 60s together rather than artificially positioning the two decades in opposition, without denying those changes that undoubtedly took place across these years. The changes most evident in these publications are already key themes in literature on the period, but *H&C* and *Outlook* offer new perspectives on these areas. These perspectives do not just arise from their rural and Co-operative identities. Gender was crucial too, with women's experiences, notably their domestic roles, fundamental to representations in these publications. Furthermore, the provincial perspective within these two magazines differs from the markedly metropolitan nature of both contemporary and historical accounts.

One major change was the growing importance of the individual. Although collective visions remained visible in *Outlook* due to the magazine's Co-operative status, the prominence of the individual was apparent in the mid-1950s and became even stronger in the 1960s, as seen in relation to consumer education, transport, utility provision and Labour's attitudes towards housing tenure. Other work indicates that this shift left women and the working classes behind – the CA and CoID, for instance, were emblematic of a more affluent, professional, middle-class male figure. The findings uncovered in this study, however, show resistance to such ideas: the emphasis upon reader choice and decision-making in women's magazines constructed the housewife of all classes as an individual with taste and judgement, albeit with the publications providing guidance along the way.

This was an area of un-reconciled tension in *H&C* and *Outlook*, as the move away from collectivism posed a challenge to the organizations at the heart of these magazines. Another tension surrounded age, also the subject of discernible change. The sense of a generation divide began to emerge in the late 1950s, but the rupture took place in the mid-1960s, symbolized by fashion articles reporting on stiletto heels for daughters and comfortable shoes for mothers. *H&C* and *Outlook* reveal perceptions of the generation gap and the growing desirability of youth from the perspective of older women, an interesting counterpoint to the usual prominence of younger women in work on the period. This is the mothers' story, not that of the daughters.

These examples highlight the gendered perspective in these magazines – an approach to issues developing from women's specific roles and experiences. This was an integral part of the rural and Co-operative versions of modernity in *H&C* and *Outlook*; in the former, for instance, the identity of the country-housewife was central. These versions of modernity informed representations of the modern woman in the magazines, again creating distinctive constructions with implications for understandings of post-war femininity and post-war British history. For example, in the 1970s, feminists debated the status of housework as work. Ambiguity about the nature of housework was also apparent in these magazines: some advertisements perpetuated the myth that housework was not 'real' work, although NFWI and WCG conceptions of the housewife as a skilled professional disputed this stance. There were occasional suggestions of problems, such as allusions to neuroses in medical advertisements, but overall the magazines presented a positive image of domesticity, with a modern kitchen full of appliances signaling an escape from drudgery not a prison in which the housewife was trapped. This view has become increasingly evident in literature on the housewife, despite being contrary to many earlier assessments of post-war domesticity.

Constructions of the modern woman in *H&C* and *Outlook* also contribute to efforts by scholars such as those in the ESRC 'Women in the 1950s' Seminar Series to explore the complexity and diversity of post-war women's lives. The housewife on their pages was not a one-dimensional figure. Her familial identities – being a wife and a mother – were significant too. Advertisements for domestic appliances could address the reader as a professional housewife, striving for efficiency, or as a mother and a housewife, trying to create a happy, healthy environment for her family. The two were not mutually exclusive. Nor can we arbitrarily separate other roles from the housewife identity. NFWI and WCG encouragement of members to be active citizens continued in community-building efforts, seen as important because the experience of being a

housewife could result in feeling isolated within one's own home. Similarly, concerns for consumer education arose from widespread conflation of the consumer with the housewife.

As well as a consumer, *H&C* and *Outlook* addressed the housewife reader as a producer, with home-handicrafts, DIY and home-dressmaking all part of creating a modern home and a modern appearance. There was little acknowledgment of potential tension between women being consumers and producers, although the suspension of *Outlook's* pattern service indicates that CWS wanted to promote Guildswomen buying clothes and not making them. Other elements of women's roles underscored other frictions. The tension between work, leisure and pleasure – embodied in magazines themselves¹²⁵⁴ – arose in the hostess role that emerged with the increasing affluence of the late 1950s. Ostensibly a leisured figure, representations of the hostess in these magazines actually reveal a worker, servicing the leisure of her family and others who came to her home.

A whole host of other roles appeared on the pages of *H&C* and *Outlook* too. Paid employment featured, albeit not prominently. The publications contained clear expectations that fashion and beauty were essential elements of women's roles, and that personal appearance was an area of work for readers, again distorting any straightforward boundary between work and leisure. Readers expressed a variety of reactions to such expectations and a range of attitudes towards beauty in general. There was – almost literally – space in these magazines for differing attitudes because the absence of widespread colour imagery in *H&C* and *Outlook* deterred cosmetics advertisers. As seen in the analysis of glamour, this lack of visual and financial domination by large cosmetics firms allowed for the articulation of more ambiguous attitudes towards feminine stereotypes of the period.

Such challenges to dominant cultural images were not limited to readers: without widespread pressure from cosmetics manufacturers on beauty writers, an emphasis on grooming rather than glamour flourished, with a seemingly democratic promise of offering beauty to all women. Due to this, and the ban on slimming promotions in *H&C*, the organizational periodicals deviated from conventional contemporary images of feminine beauty as found in magazines such as *Woman*. As well as depicting a more complex picture of femininity in post-war Britain, this adds to feminist scholarship on personal appearance. Although not providing any definitive answers about the nature of beauty – on the contrary, these findings suggest that

¹²⁵⁴ Winship, *Inside*, p.55.

representations could simultaneously mean subjugation and pleasure to readers – the case studies of *H&C* and *Outlook* demonstrate that not all media outlets perpetuated norms and ideals of conventional femininity.

Beauty was not the only area of deviation; comparisons between the organizational periodicals and *Woman* throughout the study have exposed a number of differences. The visions of the modern and modernity in *H&C* and *Outlook* overlapped with other visions but were also distinctive; likewise, while the two publications were part of the canon of women's magazines, their identities and ways of perceiving the world varied from the mainstream representations portrayed in *Woman*. This sense of belonging and at the same time not quite belonging – being part of but not easily fitting in – relates to the theme social capital and comments on post-war society, suggesting factors influencing understandings of who was included in and excluded from visions of a modern Britain. Having social capital signifies belonging as it stands for value, legitimacy and worth. To an extent, the notion of a modern Britain did include the country-housewife and working-class housewife readers of *H&C* and *Outlook*: in a nation where class-based demarcations of inclusion and exclusion were being re-drawn along the lines of race – and, to a degree, sexuality – all white heterosexual women now belonged.

However, other features meant this sense of belonging was far from secure. Compared to widely accepted constructions of an urban and mass consumption vision of modernity, their rural and Co-operative perspectives were marginal views (despite representing the lifestyles, experiences and loyalties of many women – and men). Consequently, other articulations of the modern nation rarely incorporated these standpoints. The Festival of Britain may have included a modern farming scheme (see Chapter One), but this was literally peripheral, part of the regional exhibition in Wales. Over a decade later, the 'Swinging Sixties' version of modern Britain focused on a small area of central London dominated by private enterprise – as well as being far removed from the countryside, the geographical distance from Soho to the nearest Co-operative store at that time is a tidbit of information worthy of investigation. Furthermore, the importance of youth and its additional associations, such as slimness, to the modern of the 'Swinging Sixties' exacerbated the exclusion of *H&C* and *Outlook*'s older readers.

A further development detrimental to the social capital of older rural and working-class housewives was the pivotal position of professional expertise in post-war British modernity. Within these magazines and in certain specific areas where women's

experiences were fundamental, such as cervical cancer screening, the housewife-as-expert discourse endured, but overall the rise of the professional expert devalued this notion. As a result, the social capital of 'the housewife' concurrently deteriorated. The magazines offered a form of education to counter this decline. Firstly, from broad concepts such as modern interiors and modern dress to specific features such as antiques or good grooming, all three publications contained guidance as to what had symbolic capital (prestige and value). Moreover, by showing their audience how to integrate this symbolic capital into their own homes and appearance, the magazines assisted readers in acquiring cultural capital (the right knowledge) and developing cultural competencies to demonstrate to the social gaze that they too were modern.

Contributors to the magazines mediated between the dominant symbolic economy, to which those items or characteristics with symbolic capital belonged, and the experiences and circumstances of readers. A theme in design history work on magazines, this mediation reinforces the fruitfulness of an interdisciplinary approach to women's periodicals for illuminating post-war history and conceptions of modernity. The significance of *H&C* and *Outlook* contributors as cultural intermediaries – mediating and educating – is particularly strong: serious negotiation was required in order to assimilate their readers who had limited social capital *and* the magazines' marginalized versions of the modern and modernity.

At times, this involved considerable re-conceptualization of the modern, as seen in attempts by the organizational periodicals' fashion writers to provide a vision of fashionable – and practical – clothing geared towards older women. In this instance, magazine writers were largely responsible for negotiations. On other occasions, writers and advertisers claimed to have negotiated a 'solution' to a 'problem' facing readers, be it a geographical, financial or social capital restriction (or even all three): electric lighting rather than open-plan interiors to achieve lightness and brightness; home-dressmaking – notably *Vogue* patterns – to create modern clothing; CWS providing larger sized dresses. The CWS/Mattli collaboration – representing a dynamic, modern attempt to engage with consumer culture – symbolizes the extent to which *Outlook* contributors saw Co-operative clothing as a valid alternative vision of the modern and a 'solution' for older, working-class women who wanted to be fashionable.

Such negotiations reiterate the composite nature of magazines and the impact of this on their contents. Sometimes editorial content and advertising offered contrasting solutions: in relation to transport and utility provision, manufacturers' individual remedies appeared alongside organizational collective efforts. A large part of the

ambiguity of women's magazines is attributable to these differing solutions, seen throughout the study. The need for advertising also hindered certain attempts by journalists to negotiate a compromise; appliance advertising, for instance, limited the ability of Home Editors to present smaller, less expensive items as a means of creating a modern kitchen. Conversely, thanks to the absence of widespread cosmetics advertising, *H&C* and *Outlook* beauty writers could promote the concept of 'looking one's best' over notions of glamour.

These attempted negotiations often linked with efforts to educate readers in social capital and secure a sense of belonging to the modern world. There were endeavours in all three magazines to enhance the legitimacy of the publication and its writers in undertaking such tasks. This is most apparent in *Woman*, where the copy constantly positioned the magazine itself as the ultimate expert. There were elements of this in the organizational periodicals too; journalists referred to the fashion industry, for instance, to assert their authority in writing about fashion, to show that they had cultural capital and align with the symbolic capital of Paris and clothing designers.

However, a further ambiguity is that at the same time, there was resistance in the organizational periodicals to the dominant symbolic economy. The significance of this for wider scholarship is that evidence from *H&C* and *Outlook* indicates that national identity was not the main motivation behind this resistance. In many other cases, resistance or hostility towards dominant forms of modernity appears to derive from a desire to protect seemingly distinctive British (again effectively meaning English) heritage and characteristics from perceived attack; to return to earlier examples, Priestley and post-war detractors of Americanization were concerned about the loss of British identity in the face of US cultural imports. Fears about mass immigration also often coalesced around its supposed impact upon British customs and 'way-of-life'.

Such concerns were not entirely absent from *H&C* and *Outlook*, especially in the former due to the Institute's association with earlier notions of Englishness. More prominent, though, were desires to maintain the collective cultures of the NFWI and WCG. Rather than nationality, this – a collective gendered identity – is the basis for resistance. Both magazines functioned as local arenas in which organizational values were foremost; contributors tried to negotiate and integrate readers into the modern world, but not at the expense of sacrificing the Institute and Guild's identities. This focus on the concerns, campaigns and ethos of the organizations explains the relative lack of attention paid in the magazines to certain topics that dominate other contemporary accounts and/or later historical writing. For example, birth control did

not feature in *H&C* because of the NFWI's commitment to not alienating members of any religious denomination within its membership. Issues that received attention were those judged most pertinent to members' lives and areas in which the organization could be involved and contribute, such as public transport and community-building rather than new housing and layout.

Moreover, contributors to the organizational periodicals tried to adapt areas traditionally associated with these groups and present them as modern too. These activities or concepts may not have retained their prestige and legitimacy in the broader symbolic economy, but continued to have value within the local arena of these publications. This is most noticeable in *H&C*, with home-handicrafts an integral part of their rural modernity. It is evident throughout both publications in the presentation of the reader as an intelligent, sensible woman with taste and judgement: the housewife-as-expert discourse still resonated on their pages despite wider marginalization. The local distinctions and values may have been specific to these publications, but they provide insights into how demographics rarely considered as modern perceived themselves as modern subjects. Unlike many modern protagonists, these readers did not escape from their homes and domesticity in order to claim modern selfhood. Instead, assertions that the housewife was an expert were one way for these magazines to articulate a distinctly modern identity of her behalf.

Presentations of the rural and working-class housewife reader in *H&C* and *Outlook* shared traits with other modern subjects. For example, changes associated with modernization posed both opportunities and challenges. The consumer culture that developed as part of the 1950s economic boom gave the housewife a route to a modern identity, as seen in advertisements promising that their domestic appliances would create a happy and healthy family life. Correspondingly, the same consumer culture threatened the existence of the Co-operative movement central to the Guild and *Outlook*, while rural housewives struggled to access consumer culture, hence an emphasis in *H&C* on home-dressmaking and mail-order. Expertise was also far from straightforward: the importance of professionalism in the post-war period undermined the organizations' constructions of unpaid professional expertise as embodied in the housewife.

Assertions of a modern housewife identity, and one in which either the rural or the Co-operative featured strongly, relied upon renegotiation of the modern and its meanings. The context of a broader organizational culture with an alternative value system (as seen in NFWI and WCG evaluations of domesticity) was essential, a crucial

backdrop to all the negotiations evident in the publications. Institute and Guild connections were also vital to the social and cultural networks discernible in *H&C* and *Outlook*, such as the web of alliances surrounding consumer education. This is an area in need of further development, as the magazines disclose only a limited account of such links. Norbury, Stott and Wyatt all had prolific writing careers in these decades, hence further investigation of them would broaden awareness of the range of networks in which these publications were involved.

Such investigations may shed more light on Institute and Guild ripostes to the difficulties they faced in the post-war period. This study has not denied the problems of dwindling WCG membership and declining NFWI radicalism, instead seeking to uncover the organizations' responses to these changes. Within *Outlook*, the introduction of 'Up-and-Coming' signaled an attempt to engage with younger women, as did Guild efforts to target potential members on new housing estates. However, Co-operative influence meant that contributors to *Outlook* struggled to adapt; CWS seemed to offer a means for readers to access the modern, but older Co-operative notions of consumption severely hindered reactions to changes in consumer culture. The decision by CWS to withdraw financial support in 1967 – resulting in *Outlook*'s cessation in June that year – highlights the extent to which Co-operative connections circumscribed the publication. In contrast, *H&C* reveals a much broader willingness to react to developments with new initiatives and ideas. Reconfigurations of the housewife-as-expert discourse, underlining its two-way interactions, prolonged its viability by increasingly positioning the housewife as the recipient of guidance. The introduction of *Vogue* patterns, widespread mail-order advertising and even cosmetics advertisements in the late 1960s are further examples of attempts to change.

Responses to developments and challenges of the 1950s and 60s are a key difference between *H&C* and *Outlook* and the present state of their organizations indicates the relative success of such reactions. The WCG remains in existence, but in extremely small numbers: approximately 1577 members in 86 branches.¹²⁵⁵ The NFWI, on the other hand, is now the largest women's organization in the UK, with 205,000 members in 6,500 Institutes. *H&C* is no more, nevertheless its latest incarnation – *WI Life* – continues.¹²⁵⁶ Furthermore, representations of the WI in contemporary media have shifted enormously. While *Jam and Jerusalem*, a recent BBC sitcom, continues to

¹²⁵⁵ The Co-operative Women's Guild, <http://www.coopwomensguild.co.uk/index.html>, accessed 03/08/2010.

¹²⁵⁶ The National Federation of Women's Institutes, <http://www.thewi.org.uk/index.aspx?id=1>, accessed 03/08/2010.

propagate the more traditional view of the Institute encapsulated in its title, more widely known is the very different portrayal found in the hit film and stage show *Calendar Girls*, based upon the true story of a WI creating a fundraising calendar featuring photographic portraits of members in the nude. The characters in *Calendar Girls* are rural, older women; they are also modern women, not old-fashioned or quaint relics of a time gone by. Due to the Guild's smaller size, there are no comparable media references to its members. It is similarly difficult to find representations of older working-class women. Perhaps the best-known examples are in *Coronation Street*, a soap opera that began in 1960 in homage to the disappearing world of matriarchal working-class communities – the disappearing world of the WCG members – also captured in Richard Hoggart's 1957 *The Uses of Literacy*.¹²⁵⁷ *Coronation Street* continues as a swan-song to that world, with its older female characters symbolizing a traditional working-class femininity rather than depicting modern womanhood.

These media representations suggest that the concept of rural modernity, however contrary to existing conceptualizations of the modern and modernity, resonates in twenty-first century British society. Moreover, it appears that the NFWI has a level of symbolic capital unimaginable to *H&C*'s 1950s and 60s contributors. In contrast to 1960s 'Swinging London', some fashionable elements of London's youth scene in the 2000s embraced the Institute and its values; in 2007, for example, the daughter of a punk rock musician established Shoreditch Sisters WI, comprised largely of women in their twenties.¹²⁵⁸ Working-class visions of modern Britain, on the other hand, continue to struggle. While the retail arm of the Co-operative movement has undergone a renaissance by adapting its tradition of ethical consumerism to concepts such as Fairtrade, this is a Co-operative vision devoid of the working-class radicalism embodied by the WCG in its prime. This study has begun to investigate rural and Co-operative understandings of the modern as part of its more complex and nuanced account of 1950s and 60s Britain and the position of women. The study provides new insights into what life was like for women in these decades, but the relationship between rural and Co-operative perspectives, social capital and notions of modernity raises many more questions that both historians and contemporary society need to address.

¹²⁵⁷ Christine Geraghty, *Women and Soap Opera – A Study of Prime Time Soaps* (Cambridge, 1991), p.33.

¹²⁵⁸ Shoreditch Sisters WI, <http://www.thewi.org.uk/standard.aspx?id=14032>, accessed 20/09/2010; Agent's profile of Jazz Domino Holly, http://www.pfd.co.uk/client/jazz_domino_holly/, accessed 20/09/2010.

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10/1956

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04/1957

10/1957

04/1958

10/1958

04/1959

10/1959

04/1960

10/1960

04/1961

10/1961

5/FWI/G/2/3/55-58 box 264

Home and Country issues:

04/1962

10/1962

04/1963

10/1963

04/1964

10/1964

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