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Depiction of Women in Early 20th-century Posters and Postcards

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Zásady pro vypracování

Autorka se zaměří na korpus plakátů a pohlednic publikovaných na počátku 20. století v Británii. Cílem práce bude zmapovat, jak tento materiál zobrazuje ženy. Text uvede kapitola, která vymezí metodologický a koncepční rámec z oblasti feministické kritiky (např. genderové stereotypy). Na tomto základě autorka v následných rozborech vypracuje detailní rozbory zvolených plakátů a pohlednic s důrazem na jejich posilování, ale i popírání genderových stereotypů. Kontextem pro tuto analýzu bude odklon od tradičních viktoriánských představ o roli mužů a žen, který poznamenal společenské klima v Británii na počátku 20. století. Autorka bude sledovat zobrazování ženského vzhledu, (ne)svobody a (ne)rovnoprávnosti. Zaměří se i na ztvárnění žen, které odmítaly tradiční genderové role a inklinovaly k tzv. New Woman a sufražetskému hnutí. Práci uzavře kapitola, která z předchozích dílčích zjištění vyvodí obecnější závěry o povaze medializace žen v rané fázi 20. století.

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Prohlašuji:

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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis examines the portrayal of women in British posters and postcards at the beginning of the 20th century. The first chapter provides a theoretical background on contemporary and Victorian gender stereotypes, the concept of the New Woman and the suffragette movement. The second chapter analyses the appearance of women in posters and postcards from the period, and the third chapter explores the activities women were depicted as engaging in.

KEYWORDS

Britain, gender stereotypes, New Woman, postcards, posters, suffragette movement, women's representation

NÁZEV

Vyobrazení žen na plakátech a pohlednicích z počátku 20. století

ANOTACE

Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na vyobrazení žen na britských plakátech a pohlednicích z počátku 20. století. První kapitola poskytuje teoretický rámec soudobých a viktoriánských genderových stereotypů, konceptu tzv. Nové ženy a hnutí sufražetek. Druhá kapitola analyzuje zobrazení vzhledu žen na dobových plakátech a pohlednicích, zatímco třetí kapitola zkoumá, jaké aktivity na těchto materiálech ženy vykonávaly.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Británie, genderové stereotypy, hnutí sufražetek, Nová žena, plakáty, pohlednice, vyobrazení žen

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Introduction

The death of Queen Victoria at the turn of the 20th century may have marked the formal conclusion of the Victorian period; however, the mentality established during the period continued to persist throughout the 20th century. The Victorian Age, associated with the reign of Queen Victoria from the first half of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century, marked the expansion of the empire, technological, industrial, and scientific advancement and great social change. Victorian morality encompassed a rigid set of societal values that were expected to be upheld and which governed virtually all aspects of Victorian life. Family values, in particular, were an important component of the established order. The idealization of the home and the family life, also known as the cult of domesticity, reinforced societal norms that confined women to the domestic sphere, where they were expected and perceived as destined to care devotedly for their husbands and children. Strenuous physical and mental activity, such as pursuing a thorough education, sporting activities or professional interests in the arts were strongly discouraged by physicians and society of the time, as it was suggested they could negatively impact a woman's reproductive health and in severe cases, a woman could become unsexed. Men were associated with the public sphere, where they could participate in politics, business ventures or sporting activities and experience greater freedom and opportunities. Children were an integral part of the family, daughters in particular, due to the fact that they could share with their mothers the domestic burdens of the household and extend their feminine tenderness, care and love to their siblings, fathers and subsequently, to their husbands and children. Passive, innocent, pure, selfless, subservient, comforting, isolated from external events and a bringer of hope, the angel in the house conformed to her role as caretaker. The monster-woman, on the other hand, did not follow the expectations of society and was depicted as monstrous, unnatural, dangerous, autonomous, manipulative and impure. As a consequence of Victorian values, the firmly established societal role of women only gradually began to lose prominence at the onset of the 20th century.

The phenomenon of the New Woman and the movement for women's suffrage, gaining prominence in the latter part of the Victorian period, represented the antithesis of Victorian values. The New Woman was a woman who did not adhere to the restricting Victorian beliefs and who desired to be the creator of her own destiny. She could be characterized by her career-oriented mindset, independence, physical activity, and pursuit of educational goals. In some instances, not universally, however, she chose to refrain from marriage and motherhood.

Suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union, members of various social classes across the United Kingdom, employed militant methods to achieve the right to vote, in addition to greater equality and a more active role in the political sphere. Thus, Victorian gender stereotypes were challenged by the New Woman and the suffragettes.

Gender stereotypes, such as those held by the Victorians, have permeated society for thousands of years. Deeply rooted in historical, cultural, religious, and social structures, they are the artificially constructed notions of the qualities men and women ought to possess and the roles they are expected to conform to. The maintenance and continuity of gender stereotypes is dependent on society itself, which believes that, for various reasons, the stereotypes must be adhered to. Confronted with gender stereotypes from the earliest stages of life, individuals oftentimes accept such beliefs as universal and do not question their origins. Restricting and potentially harmful in nature, gender stereotypes may be utilized for ideological purposes and to restrict human rights. Despite their long history, gender stereotypes remain prevalent in contemporary societies.

Through its various forms, visual media has a tradition of reflecting and engaging with current cultural topics. One of the ways in which social issues permeating society at the beginning of the 20th century – such as the continuation or deviation from Victorian values – was reflected through posters and postcards, a highly popular medium during that period. This bachelor thesis utilizes a compiled corpus of posters and postcards primarily from the digital collections of the Glasgow Women's Library and the London Museum and focuses on the portrayal of women in the early 20th century. The first chapter establishes the theoretical framework for contemporary and Victorian gender stereotypes, exploring their adherence, rejection, and possible harmfulness. The concept of the angel in the house, the monster-woman, the New Woman phenomenon and the militant suffragette organization, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), preceded by the suffragist National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), are defined. The second chapter analyses the manner in which the appearance of women at the turn of the 20th century was depicted, and the third chapter examines the activities women were portrayed as undertaking. This thesis hypothesizes that early 20th-century visual representation of British women both reinforced and challenged traditional notions of femininity.

A Note on Text: This thesis makes references to authentic period materials as cited in full-text anthologies such as *Suffragettes: The Fight for Votes for Women* by Joyce Marlow.

1. Gender Expectations and the Struggle for Women's Rights

Gender stereotypes are deeply rooted within society, affecting people's perceptions of the genders. By definition, a gender stereotype is "a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by, women and men".[1] Based on the traditional and stereotypical views of masculinity, society perceives the quintessential man as courageous, strong, combative, rough, driven by sex, emotionless, logical, straightforward, rivalrous and practical. The quintessential feminine woman, on the other hand, embodies the opposite characteristics. She feels intensely, is driven by relationships, lacks strength and confidence, is collaborative, not direct or rational, and is yielding, caring and tender.[2] Thus, men and women are often perceived as possessing distinct characteristics which differentiate them.

Gender stereotyping begins before a child is born and continues throughout an individual's life. When a pregnant woman is informed that she is expecting a baby boy, she is likely to stereotype her unborn son's movements as active, energetic, determined and powerful.[3] Upon birth, girls are commonly assigned a feminine name and boys a masculine name. Furthermore, newborn girls are traditionally dressed in pink and boys in blue at the hospital. Adults are more likely to perceive an infant boy's cries as enraged and cries of girls as downhearted or afraid. Stereotypically, little girls are dressed in dresses with ruffles and play with dolls, while boys wear car-printed overalls, and their favourite toy is a car. Around girls, diminutives such as "piglet" instead of "pig" and internal state words such as "hungry" are used, and with boys, parents frequently communicate using prohibitive language. In addition, girls are typically expected to do more housework than their brothers. Such an approach is applied because parents presume that that is what is required for the genders.[4] In one's school years, the stereotypes that girls have difficulty with mathematics and that sports, such as football, are reserved for boys arise. Boys become perceived as confrontational and physical, whereas girls as more conversational and attuned to their emotions.[5] Adolescents are incessantly confronted

[1] "Gender stereotyping," United Nations, accessed February 17, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/women/gender-stereotyping#:~:text=A%20gender%20stereotype%20is%20a,personal%20abilities%2C%20pursue%20their%20professional>.
[2] Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 23.
[3] Melissa Hogenboom, "The Gender Biases That Shape Our Brains," *BBC*, May 25, 2021, accessed February 18, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210524-the-gender-biases-that-shape-our-brains>.
[4] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 7-12.
[5] Hogenboom, "Gender Biases."

with the image of the ideal heterosexual couple where the man "is taller, bigger, darker than [the woman]. They appear in poses in which he looks straight ahead, confident and direct; she looks down or off into the distance, often dreamily. Standing or sitting, she is lower than him, maybe leaning on him, maybe tucked under his arm, maybe looking up at him"[6] An adolescent girl begins to desire boys who are stronger and taller than her, who will protect her when she is frightened and comfort her when she cries, boys, who themselves do not cry and are not afraid.[7] Conforming to traditional gender roles, men and women are expected to pursue different careers. The quintessential woman's career is often perceived as that of a caretaker within the service sector. She may be expected to work as a teacher, clothing sales assistant, nurse, cook, flight attendant, cleaner, secretary or nurse. Occupations traditionally associated with men, such as that of a judge, tend to entail greater authority and influence. Thus, once women begin to hold such occupations, the occupations experience a decline in status. In the home, a woman is traditionally expected to prepare meals, maintain the cleanliness of the home and tend to the children. In contrast, a man maintains the lawn, services vehicles or repairs broken objects.[8] The conclusion can be drawn that gender stereotyping shapes a person's behaviours and social interactions and affects individuals at every stage of life.

Gender stereotypes are not inherent; rather, they emerge from social, cultural, and historical factors. The fact that gender is "the social elaboration of biological sex"[9] can be demonstrated by the fact that colour association is socially constructed and can be interchangeable between genders. Today, pink is established as a colour typically associated with girls and blue with boys. However, historically, these associations were reversed.[10] As a further illustration, studies have shown that if children are provided solely with a certain type of toy, they will acquire the skills associated with such a toy. For example, if boys are given blocks, it will promote their building skills. Dolls, on the other hand, will allow girls to become nurturing. Similarly, it is with interests. If girls are presented exclusively with makeup, it encourages them to identify with such an interest. In contrast, boys may be encouraged to favour more physical activities by being presented with toys such as tool sets.[11] It is important to recognise that society is inclined to disregard non-stereotypical behaviour among children. Thus, in Professor Christia Brown's words, "overlook all the times the boys are sitting there

[6] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 17.
[7] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender*, 17-18.
[8] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender*, 26-27.
[9] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 2.
[10] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 8.
[11] Hogenboom, "Gender Biases."

quietly reading a book or all the times that girls are running around the house loudly".[12] It has been demonstrated that infant boys and girls cry in equal measure. As they grow older, however, boys begin to cry less due to their parents' reaction to their cries. Similarly, adults tend to respond to little girls when girls try to communicate calmly, whereas to boys when they loudly express their frustration. Such a reaction reinforces the child's behaviour.[13] Around the age of three, children develop a more concrete understanding of their gender identity. They begin to separate into same-sex playgroups, seeking security and similar play styles, which leads them to acquire different behaviours and worldviews from each other. Subsequent competitiveness between the groups contributes to the foundation of gender stereotypes.[14] By adulthood, people mould themselves to their gender's expectations and the opposite gender's desires. For instance, a woman learns to cry and be afraid in certain situations. Although it may not reflect precisely what she feels, she learns to desire to feel such emotions due to the fact that she "should". Conversely, men learn to manage their emotions and not express sadness or fear because it may be considered unsuitable.[15] In summary, with different treatment and expectations for the genders, men and women are conditioned to be dissimilar and adopt distinct roles.

Gender and gender stereotypes permeate every facet of society, remaining at the core of social order. Society has an interest in upholding both the gender dichotomy and gender order. Gender dichotomy, which is the rigid classification of gender into solely two categories, i.e. male and female, persists due to its continuous reinforcement by members of society. It "serves not to guarantee biological reproduction, but to guarantee social reproduction – to reaffirm the social arrangements that depend on the categories *male* and *female*".[16] The gender order is a system of roles and expectations associated with the genders. Part of the population views gender order as divinely created and thus necessary to uphold. Some reinforce it due to the fact that it is rooted in tradition, while others consider it a matter of practicality.[17] Gender continues to be maintained for the reason that being part of a society built on gender norms shapes the brain to be gendered.[18] In early childhood, gender is reinforced by parents, teachers and other members of society. With age, gender begins to be enforced by children themselves.[19] It is men

[12] Hogenboom, "Gender Biases."
[13] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 9.
[14] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 13-15.
[15] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 17-18.
[16] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 22.
[17] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 22-23.
[18] Hogenboom, "Gender Biases."
[19] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 7.

who predominantly enforce gender and boys onto whom gender is more strongly imposed.[20] Furthermore, "while activities and behaviours labelled as *male* are treated as appropriate for females as well as for males, those labelled as *female* are treated as appropriate only for females".[21] The thoughts and beliefs of individuals become universally recognised when society fails to recall their origins, which occurs when the thoughts and beliefs are repeatedly reiterated across various contexts in daily interactions. Such thoughts and beliefs, including gender stereotypes, become regarded as fact and go unquestioned, particularly if they are propagated by people of influence and authority. In this manner, history may be erased, and ideology may arise.[22] A way in which to reduce the impact of gender stereotypes is for individuals to recognise their preconceived notions of gender and avoid disregarding non-stereotypical behaviour among children. Parents may assist their children in reevaluating their newly acquired gender biases and, for instance, present them with a larger variety of toys.[23] Although society tends to be gender-focused, gender stereotypes may begin to be dismantled through mindfulness and intentional action.

Gender stereotypes are not only harmful, but they may also be dangerous. By imposing rigid gender roles, children are deterred from acquiring skills and qualities of the opposite gender, which they may lack later in life.[24] Furthermore, gender-based expectations restrict men and women from exploring interests, improving skills, pursuing professional aspirations, reaching their potential and determining the course of their lives. Harmful gender stereotypes create an unequal environment and culminate in discrimination across various areas of life, such as politics or education.[25] For illustration, a woman who is not considered traditionally feminine may, at times, be perceived as an "inferior woman".[26] Gender stereotypes are dangerous when they give rise to disregard of fundamental human rights and freedoms, such as "[n]ot criminalizing marital rape, perceiving that women are the sexual property of men; and [f]ailing to investigate, prosecute and sentence sexual violence against women, believing that victims of sexual violence agreed to sexual acts, as they were not dressing and behaving 'modestly'".[27] It is perpetrators of sexual violence who are frequently marked by their heightened aggressive,

[20] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 11.
[21] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 12.
[22] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender*, 29.
[23] Hogenboom, "Gender Biases."
[24] Hogenboom, "Gender Biases."
[25] United Nations, "Gender stereotyping."
[26] Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender,* 24.
[27] United Nations, "Gender stereotyping."

dominant, and often antagonistic attitudes toward women.[28] As illustrated, gender stereotypes are damaging, as they restrict an individual's potential, reduce their opportunities and contribute to discrimination and inequality.

Gender stereotypes were particularly evident in the Victorian period, when men and women were assigned separate spheres, dictating their societal roles. "The public sphere of business, politics and professional life was defined as the male sphere" and "[t]he private sphere of love, the emotions and domesticity was defined as the sphere of women."[29] Such division came into effect during the transition into the 19th century.[30] A Victorian woman who fully complied with her assigned role in society was portrayed as the angel in the house and could be described as follows:

> She [...] leads a life of almost pure contemplation [...] in considerable isolation on a country estate [...] a life without external events – a life whose story cannot be told as there is no story. Her existence is not useless. On the contrary [...] she shines like a beacon in a dark world, like a motionless lighthouse by which others, the travellers whose lives do have a story, can set their course. When those involved in feeling and action turn to her in their need, they are never dismissed without advice and consolation. She is an ideal, a model of selflessness and of purity of heart.[31]

The angel in the house was thus passive and contained to the domestic sphere. She was devoted to her family, fulfilled her husband's wishes and navigated situations with grace. Furthermore, she was pure, self-sacrificing, yielding and unassuming.[32] On the other hand, the so-called monster-woman, asserted her own autonomy and did not accept her assigned position in society. She was perceived as the antithesis of the angel in the house and possessed characteristics traditionally associated with men, such as behaving aggressively or confidently expressing her opinions and desires. She used her flawed education to manipulate and destroy men. Monster-women were viewed as impure, corrupt, and selfish.[33] They were "accidents of nature,

[28] Hogenboom, "Gender Biases."
[29] Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982), 4.
[30] Anne Digby, "Victorian Values and Women in Public and Private," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 78 (1992): 199, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publishing/proceedings-british-academy/78/>.
[31] Hans Eichner, "The Eternal Feminine: An Aspect of Goethe's Ethics," in *Faust*, by Jonathan Wolfgang van Goethe, Norton Critical Edition, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin (New York: Norton, 1976), 620.
[32] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000), 21-23.
[33] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic,* 28-30.

deformities meant to repel, but in their very freakishness they possess[ed] unhealthy energies, powerful and dangerous arts."[34] As demonstrated, Victorian men and women were strictly divided into separate spheres; a woman who fully submitted to her prescribed role was labelled the angel in the house and the self-determining woman the monster-woman.

Many women of the Victorian period found the ideal of the angel in the house constraining. The Victorian thinker Herbert Spencer asserted that women had, over time, experienced a decline in energy because they were not required to engage in strenuous labour any longer. Furthermore, he argued that women exhausted their remaining energy at a greater speed than their male counterparts. In the Victorian period, motherhood was viewed as the most important role a woman could fulfil. Thus, women could not partake in mentally or physically strenuous activities, as it could negatively impact their reproductive health. Women were warned against participating in male-associated activities, by which they could become unsexed. The concept of the New Woman, a woman who publicly refused to respect the established role of a woman in Victorian society, emerged in the 1880s. The New Woman was criticised by middle-class men and the media due to the fact that she posed a threat to the established patriarchy.[35] She was positioned against the angel in the house and portrayed as "[a]verse to the institution of marriage and maternity, sexually licentious, decadent, mannish, asexual and masculinised by education, career ambitions and unfeminine clothing".[36] Society was concerned that, since the New Woman desired education, a career, political equality with men, and to engage in physical activities, she threatened the traditional role of women as mothers and that women would begin having fewer children, thus endangering Britain's global influence and power.[37] Furthermore, society was troubled by the fact that the New Woman may not have been capable of bearing healthy children as:

> nature, which never contemplated the production of a learned or a muscular woman, will be revenged upon her offspring, and the New Woman, if a mother at all, will be the mother of a New Man, as different indeed, from the present race as possible, but *how* different, the clamorous females of to-day cannot expect [...]

[34] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic,* 29.
[35] Beata Kiersnowska, "Female Cycling and the Discourse of Moral Panic in Late Victorian Britain," *Atlantis: Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 41, no. 2 (2019): 88-90, <https://www.atlantisjournal.org/index.php/atlantis/article/view/598>.
[36] Kiersnowska, "Female Cycling," 90.
[37] Kiersnowska, "Female Cycling," 89-90.

> [There is] the prospect of peopling the world with stunted and hydrocephalic children [...] and ultimate extinction of the race.[38]

The New Woman novels were viewed as promoting sexual deviance due to their progressive portrayal of female characters. Such novels did not romanticise marriage; on the contrary, they critiqued it as an oppressive institution. Writers openly explored themes of female sexuality and desire, sexually transmitted diseases, prostitution, adultery and free unions without marriage. Importantly, they depicted their female characters as psychologically complex.[39] Thus, it can be concluded that the New Woman challenged the angel in the house ideal, for which she was incessantly criticised and demonized.

In addition to the New Woman, it was the suffragists and suffragettes who challenged the angel in the house ideal. The aim of the suffragists and suffragettes was not merely to attain the right to vote. Rather, suffrage would enable women to lay the foundation for achieving greater equality among men and women and initiate significant changes regarding working conditions, children's rights, education, animal rights, public services and other social issues.[40] The objective of female suffrage was met with significant critique from many, including Queen Victoria, who is well-known for condemning "'this mad, wicked folly of Women's Rights' and privately declaring that Lady Amberley [one of the vanguard known to her] deserved a good whipping."[41] Suffragists were perceived as the more sensible and moderate campaigners who peacefully lobbied Parliament for the vote. Their organization, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, was founded in 1897 and headed by Millicent Garrett Fawcett.[42] Fawcett desired women's suffrage in order "to see the womanly and domestic side of things weigh more and count for more in all public concerns," and simultaneously, she urged to "[l]et no one imagine for a moment that we want women to cease to be womanly; we want rather to raise the ideal type of womanhood".[43] Suffragettes, in contrast, were associated with the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), a militant organisation founded by Emmeline Pankhurst in Manchester in 1903.[44] The term "suffragette" was coined by a journalist from the Daily Mail,

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[38] Charles G. Harper, *Revolted Woman: Past, Present and to Come* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1894), 27.
[39] A. R. Cunningham, "The 'New Woman Fiction' of the 1890's," *Victorian Studies* 17, no. 2 (1973): 178–186, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3826183>.
[40] Joyce Marlow, *Suffragettes: The Fight for Votes for Women* (London: Virago, 2015), xi.
[41] Marlow, *Suffragettes*, x.
[42] "Early suffragist campaigning," UK Parliament, accessed February 3, 2025, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/overview/earlysuffragist/>.
[43] Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "Home and politics," in *Before the vote was won: arguments for and against women's suffrage,* ed. Jane Lewis (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 423.
[44] Marlow, *Suffragettes*, x.

Charles Hands, in 1906. Intending to create a derogatory term, he converted the word "suffrage" into the feminine "suffragette". To his dismay, suffragettes began to use the term with pride, "pronouncing it with a hard 'g' to emphasise that they would 'gette' the vote".[45] The WSPU engaged in activities such as chaining themselves to railings, destroying famous paintings, arson, or bombings, for instance. However, they were instructed that no one was to be harmed. Suffragettes were frequently imprisoned for their actions.[46] Although Millicent Garrett Fawcett had a complicated relationship with the WSPU, in 1906, in relation to the beginning of militancy, she proclaimed the following: "I take this opportunity of saying that in my opinion, far from having injured the movement, they have done more during the last twelve months to bring it within the realms of practical politics than we have been able to accomplish in the same number of years."[47] Through their actions, suffragettes were seen as dismantling the socially constructed gender roles rooted in the Victorian period, and for that reason, they were labelled as unfeminine and hysterical.[48] Ultimately, both the suffragists and suffragettes contributed significantly to the movement for equality, altering the perception of womanhood.

In summary, this chapter explores gender stereotypes, the preconceived notions about the expected appearance, behaviour, and characteristics of different genders. Such stereotypes are not biological. Rather, they are socially constructed and consist of acquired patterns of behaviour. Society has a vested interest in reaffirming gender stereotypes to uphold existing hierarchy, maintain traditional roles and for reasons of convenience. Gender stereotyping begins in the prenatal period and influences individuals throughout their lives. In general, men reinforce gender roles more strictly than women, and society enforces gender-expected behaviour more strongly on men. Gender stereotypes are harmful due to the fact that they are limiting and dangerous. Furthermore, they may at times lead to violations of human rights and the imposition of ideological control. Gender stereotyping was strictly enforced in the Victorian period, which led to the strict division of men and women into the public and private spheres. Depending on their level of conformity, women were either revered as angels or vilified as monsters. The New Woman and the suffragettes were frequently viewed as monter-women for the reason that they defied Victorian ideals and pursued their own agendas, the agenda for

[45] Diane Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!: The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 39.
[46] "Suffragette bombings," Google Arts & Culture, accessed February 3, 2025, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/suffragette-bombings-city-of-london-corporation/2wVxgPLt7aWiKg?hl=en>.
[47] *The Times*, October 27, 1906, in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 46.
[48] Digby, "Victorian Values," 212.

greater equality. In conclusion, gender stereotypes were not only prevalent during the Victorian period and at the beginning of the 20th century but persist to the present day.

2. The Portrayal of Women's Appearance in Posters and Postcards

As women in the Victorian period started entering the public sphere and participating in activities previously accessible only to men, they concluded that their clothing was unsuitable and started modifying it. A modified piece of clothing is present in the postcard "The New Woman"[49] (1900s, Appendix 1), in which a woman wearing a divided skirt is set to depart on her bicycle. The Rational Dress Society, formed in the early 1880s in London and presided over by Viscountess Harberton, encouraged women to wear fashionable yet practical garments. The key rule of the organization was "to promote the adoption, according to individual taste and convenience, of a style of dress based upon considerations of health, comfort, and beauty, and to deprecate constant changes of fashion, which cannot be recommended on any of these grounds".[50] In her 1884 pamphlet, the Viscountess suggested that beauty was harmonious with the natural world and posed the question of whether the fashion of the time aligned with such a principle. She concluded that it did not. Skirts, for example, were overly heavy, to prevent them from becoming dirty was challenging, and they were dangerous to wear because they could cause women injuries. As a result, Viscountess Harberton supported the usage of the various styles of the divided skirt.[51] Bicycleware was a domain where clothing modification was highly prominent. Since women's fashion at that time, particularly skirts, rendered cycling unsafe, there were numerous approaches to solving this problem. Wearing knickerbockers or bloomers instead of skirts was a popular approach because such garments did not become entangled in bicycles. The concept, however, was viewed as a radical change in women's fashion, a shift from the feminine to the unfeminine, and society did not react well to its introduction in Britain. Women suffered not only verbal abuse but also physical harm as objects were thrown in their direction by angry passersby in the streets. Therefore, women tried to hide their knickerbockers and bloomers by wearing them instead of petticoats beneath their skirts.[52] To prevent public scrutiny entirely, special mechanisms or alterations were added to allow women to wear their usual skirts or dresses when cycling. This involved, for example, securing the skirt at the ankles so that it would not rise when peddling and in windy conditions or altering the skirt to suit the

[49] Living Picture Post Card Co, *The New Woman*, 1900s, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/1465323/>.
[50] India Office Records, "The Rational Dress Society," *Untold lives blog*, October 12, 2021, accessed November 7, 2024, <https://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2021/10/the-rational-dress-society.html>.
[51] India Office Records, "The Rational Dress Society."
[52] Kat Jungnickel, *Bikes and bloomers: Victorian women inventors and their extraordinary cycle wear* (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2018), 64-67.

shape of the bicycle.[53] The final but equally important approach was the utilization of convertible clothing. Alice Bygrave created the Bygrave Convertible Skirt, which, by pulling two strings on the front and the back of the skirt, lifted and gathered the material, allowing for safe cycling. The garment appeared like an ordinary skirt when the gathering mechanism was not in use.[54] Another example of convertible clothing was Mary and Sarah Pease's Convertible Cycling Skirt/Cape, in which a skirt could be detached and laid over one's shoulders while cycling, serving as a cape. Later, it could be re-attached back to the waist as the skirt.[55] Through garment modification, women's clothing became more practical and safer, facilitating women's involvement in the public sphere.

Colour association can be a powerful tool that, when used correctly, makes members of a political movement instantly recognisable to the public. At the beginning of the 20th century, the colours purple, white and green became traditionally associated with the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). This colour scheme can be seen in various posters and postcards from that time that depict suffragettes. In particular, a postcard titled "A Happy New Year"[56] (ca. 1911, Appendix 2) shows a woman wearing a purple dress with a green hat, green shoes, and a tricolour rosette. In the poster "The End of the Hunger Strike"[57] (ca. 1910, Appendix 3), a woman is once again dressed in the same suffragette colours. Mrs Pankhurst, leader of the WSPU, became aware of the importance of colour association as a young girl when she dressed up in the colour scheme of the Liberal Party, thus spurring on voters.[58] This realization translated into the suffragette movement. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Mrs Pankhurst's close associate, first publicly introduced the three colours that would become synonymous with the WSPU at Women's Sunday. Shendeclared that "[p]urple [...] is the royal colour. It stands for the royal blood that flows in the veins of every suffragette, the instinct for freedom and dignity [...] white stands for purity in private and public life [...] green is the colour of hope and the emblem of spring."[59] Women's Sunday was a significant suffragette demonstration held in Hyde Park on 21st June 1908. It was a visually captivating display of unity and an incredible

[53] Jungnickel, *Bikes and bloomers*, 97-101.
[54] Jungnickel, *Bikes and bloomers*, 121-122.
[55] Jungnickel, *Bikes and bloomers*, 207-208.
[56] Donald McGill, *A Happy New Year*, ca. 1911, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/2063333/>.
[57] Anita Reed, *The End of the Hunger Strike,* ca. 1910, poster, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O560032/the-end-of-the-hunger-poster-reed-anita/>.
[58] Katarzyna Kociołek, "London's Suffragettes, *Votes for Women*, and Fashion," *ANGLICA* 27, no. 1 (2018): 88, <https://anglica-journal.com/resources/html/article/details?id=196755>.
[59] Diane Atkinson, *Purple, White and Green: The Suffragettes in London, 1906-1914* (London: Museum of London, 1992), 15.

organizational feat with hundreds of thousands of attendees. Suffragettes were encouraged to dress in the tricolour scheme, with white as the primary colour, while purple and green were to be used supplementarily.[60] The event succeeded in earning positive feedback from the media:

> I am sure a great many people never realised until yesterday how young and dainty and charming most leaders of the movement are. And how well they spoke – with what free and graceful gestures; never at a loss for a word or an apt reply to an interruption; calm and collected, forcible, yet so far as I heard, not violent, earnest, but happily humorous as well.[61]

Adopting the distinctive purple, white and green colour scheme contributed to establishing a strong visual identity of the WSPU, differentiating its members from other activist organizations.

Although Women's Sunday aided in the public viewing suffragettes in a more positive light, visual media continued to portray women in an unflattering way, furthering the stereotype of the unattractive and unfeminine suffragette. The postcard "We Want the Vote"[62] (1909, Appendix 4) illustrates this fact clearly. The woman depicted in the postcard is a frightening sight. She is cross-eyed with spiky, unkempt dark hair. She has a large mouth with only three misshaped and unevenly spaced-out teeth, a large wart above her lip and on her forehead, a double chin and deep wrinkles. Her nose resembles that of a pig, and she has a vacant look in her eyes. She resembles a monster. Christabel Pankhurst, daughter of Mrs Pankhurst, received this postcard which said, "Don't you think you had better sew a button on my shirt". The line refers to the commonly held opinion that suffragettes were forsaking their rightful feminine role in the home, rendering them unappealing.[63] In another image, "Effects of 'votes for women' - upon Women's faces"[64] (1910, Appendix 5), the caricature artist W.K. Haselden demonstrates what becomes of a woman's appearance over the course of several years if she desires to have the vote. At 16 years old, Miss Fairface Lackvote is an innocent, respectable, and stylish young lady while aged 22, she appears to be prematurely aged, less attractive, less feminine, unfashionable, and dissatisfied. When she is 16 years old, she has smoothly styled long, straight

[60] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!,* 96-101.
[61] *The Daily Mail* quoted in Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!,* 99.
[62] Cynicus Publishing Company Ltd, *We Want the Vote*, 1909, postcard, London Museum, London, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/v/object-289813/we-want-the-vote/>.
[63] "We Want the Vote," London Museum, accessed October 31, 2024, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/v/object-289813/we-want-the-vote/>.
[64] W. K. Haselden, *Effects of "votes for women" - upon Women's faces*, 1910, artwork, British Cartoon Archive, University of Kent, <https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WH0522>.

hair in which she wears a bow. At the age of 18, that is replaced with a stylish, voluminous Edwardian pompadour hairstyle. As she grows progressively older, her hairstyle begins to appear overly flat, and it lacks sophistication and refinement. Her glasses, which she begins to wear at 21 years of age, perhaps indicate she has educated herself and, clenching her fist in anger, is not satisfied with the unfairness of the world around her. As she ages, her high heels disappear completely. Furthermore, her clothing undergoes a radical transformation from puffy sleeves to a corseted waist with a high-collared blouse and long skirt to, finally, a cravat with an ill-fitting skirt. Her posture loses its poise, and her style transforms from elegant to unattractive and masculine-like. As a result of such representation in visual media, the public expected suffragettes to be unattractive, and people would express confusion "at being harangued by a pretty woman who looked so different from the expected 'shrieking sisterhood'."[65] One of the issues of the WSPU newspaper, Votes for Women, described an incident where a person interrupted a suffragette gathering and claimed that the women would have a higher chance of gaining suffrage if they were more attractive. The response he received was, "If good looks are to be the basis of the franchise many of the gentlemen present would lose their vote, and most decidedly our friend."[66] The stereotype of the unattractive and masculine-like suffragette was often used to satirize and harm the movement, consequently becoming deeply embedded in the minds of the public.

Confronted with the unfavourable manner in which the public viewed them, suffragettes understood that to be successful in their cause, it was necessary to dress well. Well-dressed suffragettes appear in the postcard "From Prison to Citizenship"[67] (1908, Appendix 7). Instead of wearing worn, unflattering clothing, all three women are dressed in a tasteful and stylish fashion. They are wearing finely crafted, ornate hats and tailored ensembles in green, yellow, white, and black. Furthermore, their hair is neatly styled. For WSPU members, dressing fashionably was essential, especially when appearing at significant suffrage events. Suffragettes realised they would be doing a disservice to the movement if they didn't appear respectable and began to implement fashionability as a tool to combat the unattractive suffragette stereotype.[68] As an illustration, "a richly decorated hat was used as a metaphor of respectability, for a

[65] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!,* 50.
[66] London Museum, "We Want the Vote."
[67] B. B., *This is 'The House' that man built*, 1908, postcard, London Museum, London, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/v/object-453714/this-is-the-house-that-man-built/>.
[68] Cally Blackman, "How the Suffragettes used fashion to further the cause," *The Guardian*, October 8, 2015, accessed November 7, 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/oct/08/suffragette-style-movement-embraced-fashion-branding>.

woman's unkemptness and wildness directly correlates with her political anger, making her unfeminine". Thus, if a suffragette were engaged in a fray, she would ensure that her hat was positioned correctly before assessing how much harm she sustained.[69] Sylvia Pankhurst, the second daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, on one occasion, acknowledged that "[m]any suffragists spend more money on clothes than they can comfortably afford, rather than run the risk of being considered *outré* [excessively unconventional]."[70] Mrs Pankhurst stressed the importance of appearing feminine at all times. She knew that the media would use any opportunity to draw attention to a suffragette wearing a masculine-looking piece of clothing and use it against the cause.[71] Therefore, a feature dedicated to fashion advice was, for several years, part of the Votes for Women newspaper. The feature contained advertisements from various retailers promoting coats, dresses, blouses, skirts and shoes, for example. Such advertisements could be found in close proximity to reports about specific suffragette events, thus subtly indicating the desired image of a woman attending such events. The garments were advertised as modern and stylish but simultaneously functional and practical. This demonstrated that women could, for example, wear elegant shoes while remaining standing for prolonged periods of time when campaigning. Additionally, they could gracefully undertake an assignment in the rain due to a chic waterproof coat.[72] Tasteful clothing was thus a strategic method implemented by the WSPU to improve the image of suffragettes and mitigate the public's opposition.

At a time when Victorian ideals of womanhood persisted, suffragette supporters depicted women as academics in posters. In the poster "Convicts, Lunatics and Women! Have No Vote for Parliament"[73] (ca. 1908, Appendix 8), the woman is stylishly dressed in academic dress, i.e. a cap and gown. She is confined behind locked gates, which are draped in cobwebs, together with a male prisoner and a mentally ill man. She is clutching a lock and proclaiming: "IT IS TIME I GOT OUT OF THIS PLACE. WHERE SHALL I FIND THE KEY?". Two large books lay on the gate from the outside. Throughout the Victorian period, the education of girls changed substantially. In the early and mid-Victorian periods, girls from middle-class backgrounds were usually taught at home by their mothers or elder sisters or, in wealthier families, by a governess. These women were not formally trained for such a role. Other girls

[69] Kociołek, "London's Suffragettes," 92.
[70] Blackman, "How the Suffragettes used fashion."
[71] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 320.
[72] Kociołek, "London's Suffragettes," 91-93.
[73] Emily J. Harding Andrews, *Convicts, Lunatics and Women! Have No Vote for Parliament*, ca. 1908, poster, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/suffrage>.

received their education at day or boarding schools. Middle-class girls were taught reading, arithmetic and needlework. Additionally, they acquired a surface-level knowledge of French, drawing, music, geography and history. They were not familiar with higher mathematics or classical languages. Their education was not standardised and generally considered insufficient. A young girl could occasionally receive an excellent education "in her father's study" if a family regarded education highly. Nevertheless, however well-educated middle-class girls were in the early and mid-Victorian period, it was assumed that in the future, they would assume their expected Victorian role within the domestic sphere.[74] In her novel Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen wrote that "imbecility in females is a great enhancement of their personal charms"[75] and that "[a] woman especially, if she have the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can"[76], an observation that remained relevant during the Victorian period. In the late-Victorian period, education for girls underwent a transformation. Schooling became public, standardised, structured, competitive, and achievement-focused. Girls undertook examinations, played competitive games and studied Latin, Greek, the sciences, history, and mathematics. In this way, the schooling system contradicted the Victorian ideal of femininity. At the same time, however, it recognised the ideal by insisting that girls should not be over-burdened or fatigued, that they should exhibit feminine qualities, and be taught domestic skills such as sewing. Reformers justified the changes in education by claiming that learned women were the preferable partners and mothers and that countless women must be able to support themselves and ought to be prepared for their future employment. In the late-Victorian period, school attendance became a significant component in the lives of young girls.[77] By the beginning of the 20th century, women were permitted to attend universities and undertake the men's examinations. However, they could generally not receive official qualifications. It was in 1920 at the University of Oxford and in 1947 at Cambridge University that women were granted the right to receive degrees.[78] In her essay titled Professions for Women, Virginia Woolf reflected on how she successfully disposed of the Victorian "angel in the house", which loomed over her shoulder when writing and tried to persuade her that she, as a young woman, should be complimentary when reviewing a famed man's literary work and not express her true thoughts. However, she had yet to overcome the intrusive thoughts that occasionally entered her mind – that some of the things she was imagining when plotting her novels were unsuitable for a

[74] Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, 20-24.
[75] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1903), 132.
[76] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 132
[77] Gorham, *The Victorian Girl,* 24-26.
[78] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!,* 91.

woman and that men would be appalled by such thoughts.[79] She added that "if this is so in literature, the freest of all professions for women, how is it in the new professions which [women] are now for the first time entering?"[80] As illustrated, academia was not traditionally associated with women. If a woman decided to enter a male-dominated field, there were many external and internal obstacles she had to overcome. By dressing women in posters in academic dress, suffragette supporters sought to demonstrate that women were intelligent, rational, and educated individuals who should not be denied the right to participate in high politics.

The early 20th century produced a quantity of cat postcards, with a number of the depicted cats representing women. In the anti-suffrage postcard, "I want my Vote!"[81] (1900s, Appendix 9), there is an endearing-looking black and white kitten with green eyes and a red tongue on a WSPU tricolour background. It is hissing unhappily. In contrast, the postcard "I'll never be a 'Foolagain'"[82] (1900s, Appendix 10) depicts a warrior cat. One of its eyes, presumably injured due to a struggle, is covered with a piece of red garment. Its expression is determined and serious, and its rather unkempt fur makes the cat appear weathered. The cat has long been a popular theme in visual media. In the last several decades, cats have been the subject of countless humorous videos and memes on the Internet. In the Edwardian period, however, cats were depicted through the medium of postcards. "Some postcards featured cats just being cats: sipping milk from saucers, playing with yarn, basking in the sunlight. Others dressed cats up as humans, working jobs and taking part in domestic scenes." Cats were viewed as lovely and dignified creatures connected to the feminine domestic sphere. Nevertheless, it is wise not to forget that cats are also creatures not afraid to attack when provoked. Like other popular themes, cats soon became political, particularly in relation to the suffragettes.[83] "The indoor cat represented the passive, ideal homemaker, and the outdoor cat was brazen, feral and fallen."[84] The indoor respectable-looking cat, or more accurately, the woman in "I want my Vote!"[85] (1900s, Appendix 9) is displaying a fit of anger because she is unsatisfied with the political

[79] Virginia Woolf, "Professions for Women," in *Selected Essays*, ed. David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140-144.
[80] Woolf, "Professions for Women," 144.
[81] *I want my Vote!*, 1900s, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/973435/>.
[82] F. Hartmann, *I'll never be a "Foolagain"*, 1900s, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/973629/>.
[83] Aidan Walker, "'Postcards are the email of their day': How cat memes went viral 100 years ago," *BBC*, September 25, 2024, accessed December 21, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20240923-100-year-old-cat-memes-that-predate-the-internet>.
[84] "Animals," Votes and Petticoats, accessed December 21, 2024, <https://exhibits.library.jhu.edu/omeka-s/s/VotesAndPetticoats/page/animals>.
[85] *I want my Vote!,* 1900s.

situation women found themselves in at the time. It is for her desire to achieve the vote and thus exceed her role that she is satirised. On the other hand, "I'll never be a 'Foolagain'"[86](1900s, Appendix 10) shows an outdoor untamed cat, a woman who will not surrender. Although humiliated and injured, she will fight for the cause. As demonstrated, cats in postcards did not always represent animals; at times, they were used to portray women in a political context.

Similarly to cats, children were also a popular means of depicting women in postcards. The postcard "We Want Our Vote!"[87] (1900s, Appendix 11) portrays two little girls sitting beside each other and weeping loudly. "Fellow Women, Our Day Dawns at Last"[88] (1907, Appendix 12) shows a slightly older girl wearing large glasses. Behind a desk with a newspaper in front of her, she appears to be happily counting with her fingers. Children were often used in postcards not only because they are endearing and sweet but also because they "represent nature and purity, as unaffected by society; and they remind parents of their own children and strengthen the card's persuasive power." In relation to the suffragettes, there were two main approaches to their portrayal as children. Anti-suffragists used the image of a restless, irritable, and demanding child to express how they viewed the suffragettes and their struggle. Whereas supporters of women's suffrage made women assume the form of innocents who inherently, as human beings, deserved the right to vote.[89] Thus, in "We Want Our Vote!"[90] (1900s, Appendix 11), the babies, in fact, symbolize bothersome women who inconvenience, frustrate, and pain anti-suffragists with their tactics. The little girl in "Fellow Women, Our Day Dawns at Last"[91] (1907, Appendix 12), on the other hand, symbolizes that it was time for women to benefit from what should rightfully be theirs. In other words, children, particularly girls, were used in postcards to further the agenda of both anti-suffragists as well as suffragist supporters.

Women in certain posters and postcards of the era could be seen submitted to various forms of punishment. For example, a woman's abnormally long tongue is being cut off with a pair of large scissors as she has a rope tied around her neck in "That Ugly Mouth"[92] (Appendix 13). The caption reads, "THAT UGLY MOUTH, WHY DON'T YOU SHUT IT?? IF I HAD

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[86] Hartmann, *I'll never be a "Foolagain"*, 1900s.
[87] Valentine and Son, *We Want Our Vote!*, 1900s, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/973431/>.
[88] E.T.W. Dennis & Sons Ltd, *Fellow Women, Our Day Dawns at Last*, 1907, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/973427/>.
[89] "Children as Symbols," Votes and Petticoats, accessed December 21, 2024, <https://exhibits.library.jhu.edu/omeka-s/s/VotesAndPetticoats/page/children-as-symbols>.
[90] Valentine and Son, *We Want Our Vote!*, 1900s.
[91] E.T.W. Dennis & Sons Ltd, *Fellow Women, Our Day Dawns at Last*, 1907.
[92] *That Ugly Mouth*, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/974060/>.

YOUR TONGUE, LIKE THIS I'D CUT IT!". In the postcard "Peace at Last. At Norwich"[93] (Appendix 14), presumably, a man is nailing a woman's tongue to a table with a wooden hammer. The woman is crying. A crying woman is also present in "Peace at Last!"[94] (Appendix 15). Her lips are tightly sealed with a black lock, and she has the so-called Scold's Bridle around her head. Other forms of punishment can be seen in "We Parted on the Shore. Peace at Last."[95] (Appendix 16), where a woman is being thrown off a cliff into the sea by a smiling man. Lastly, the postcard "Just Room for Little Mary 'Peace at Last'"[96] (Appendix 17) depicts the devil that has impaled a screaming woman on a pitchfork and is going to throw her into a fire. A man, possibly her husband, stands nearby and smiles. The rising impact of the WSPU resulted in the formation of a number of anti-suffrage organizations whose members were called the antis. The Women's National Anti-Suffrage League (WNASL) was formed in 1908 in London by bishops, members of parliament and prominent women from various social, political and economic backgrounds. Mrs Humphry Ward was a founding leader of the WNASL, a well-known author, and one of the most notable anti-suffragettes.[97] She believed, as many others did, that "'the admission to full political power of a number of voters [women] debarred by nature and circumstance from the average political knowledge and experience open to men' would weaken the country and 'would be fraught with peril'."[98] The Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage united its forces with the WNASL to create the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage. Lord Curzon, for example, was one of its representatives.[99] Women in anti-suffrage postcards are being punished and silenced because their beliefs do not correspond with the principles of the antis. "Peace at Last" was a commonly used phrase. It illustrates that the antis will no longer be bothered and opposed by suffragettes, who, after being incapacitated, will return to their "rightful place" in society. The Scold's Bridle, one of the punishments depicted, was a women-only form of punishment, the earliest implementation of which was documented in Scotland in the 16th century. Iron-made and "[r]esembling a muzzle or cage for the head it had a padlock at the rear and a projecting spike that would have been held firmly inside the mouth when the bridle was closed". The Scold's Bridle was intended for women who

[93] *Peace at Last. At Norwich*, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/1465337/>.
[94] Tony, *Peace at Last!*, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/974530/>.
[95] A. & E. Coppock, *We Parted on the Shore. Peace at Last.*, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/1464077/>.
[96] A. & E. Coppock, *Just Room for Little Mary "Peace at Last"*, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/1464087/>.
[97] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!,* 110-11.
[98] *The Times*, July 22, 1908, 4, quoted in Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!,* 111.
[99] Marlow, *Suffragettes*, 81.

spoke in an ill manner. Evidence points to the fact that it would have been used on the order of a spouse and that the woman would have been publicly paraded in the Bridle to be further punished.[100] By depicting women as if being punished in pain, anti-suffragists reinforced the idea that women should not be involved in important political matters, and if they attempted to be, they would be silenced.

In conclusion, this chapter provides an overview of several ways in which the appearance of women was portrayed in posters and postcards at the beginning of the 20th century. With the widely discussed and criticised rise of physical activities among women, modified clothing, such as the convertible skirt for cycling, gained popularity in the second half of the 19th century. Modified clothing enabled women to enter the public sphere with greater ease and became frequently depicted in postcards. The colours purple, white and green, which became associated with the suffragette movement after the WSPU introduced the colours at Women's Sunday in 1908, were implemented into visual media to identify WSPU members. By opposers of women's suffrage, suffragettes were generally portrayed as masculine and unattractive in appearance in visual media. Therefore, the WSPU ensured that suffragettes dressed and were depicted in a fashionable and feminine manner to oppose such a portrayal. Furthermore, suffragette supporters depicted suffragettes in postcards in academic robes to emphasize women's intellect and the absence of the right to engage in important political matters. Not only were women depicted as either naive or warrior-like cats by the opposers and supporters of the cause, respectively, but also as bothersome or innocent children. Finally, women could be seen tortured in posters and postcards from the beginning of the 20th century for their aspirations. To conclude, visual media presented the appearance of women in a diverse manner.

[100] Armagh County Museum, "Scold's Bridle," *A History of the World*, June 28, 2010, accessed December 22, 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/MUbKwlRsRZ6YP-4QuviCdA>.

3. The Representation of Women's Activities in Posters and Postcards

In posters and postcards from the close of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the so-called New Woman was frequently portrayed standing next to or riding a bicycle. The postcard "The New Woman"[101] (1900s, Appendix 1) depicts the New Woman, a woman who is embarking on a bicycle ride. The New Woman defied the traditional notions and stereotypes of Victorian womanhood and advocated for women's equality and rights. She was portrayed predominantly negatively in the media as the public feared that such women were losing their femininity. Thus, they were viewed as a threat to the established social system.[102] Assumed it could have a negative impact on a woman's reproductive health, strenuous physical activity for women was regarded unfavourably in the Victorian period. As motherhood was the basis for the cult of domesticity, cycling, a form of exercise in which women developed an interest, induced fear in society. Initially, traditionalists opposed the idea of allowing women to cycle.[103] Physicians advocating against the practice maintained that cycling could be detrimental to a woman's health and cautioned against its potential risks. Doctor Shadwell, for instance, claimed that cycling could negatively impact the nervous system, cause headaches, brain disorders, inflammation of the appendix or Graves' disease.[104] Furthermore, he claimed that cycling could result in "the peculiar strained, set look termed the 'bicycle face.'"[105] Other, more progressive physicians held the view that riding a bicycle within reasonable limits was beneficial to a woman's health and, as a suitable substitute for walking, it "could contribute to offsetting the adverse effects of a sedentary lifestyle and enhancing their reproductive functions".[106] By the 1890s, cycling had gained widespread popularity among women in the United Kingdom. The public opposition gradually subsided, and cycling began to be embraced.[107] Women pursued cycling for various reasons. Firstly, purchasing a bicycle was a practical decision as it was significantly more cost-effective than riding a horse, which required further costly equipment and maintenance. Secondly, cycling enabled women to travel throughout Britain and visit close acquaintances with greater ease. Additionally, cycling provided a peaceful retreat from the crowded city to the fresh air of the countryside after an exhausting day. Among other reasons,

[101] Living Picture Post Card Co, *The New Woman*, 1900s.
[102] Hannah Ross, "Revolutions: How Women Changed the World on Two Wheels with Author Hannah Ross," interview by Rosamund Humphrey, *Camcycle*, YouTube, August 5, 2021, video, 6:12-18:14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PYcrSo5Sac>.
[103] Kiersnowska, "Female Cycling," 89-90.
[104] A. Shadwell, "The Hidden Dangers of Cycling," *The Medical Age* 15 (1897): 202–205.
[105] Shadwell, "The Hidden Dangers of Cycling," 205.
[106] Kiersnowska, "Female Cycling," 92.
[107] Kiersnowska, "Female Cycling," 91-92.

women utilized their bicycles for shopping purposes or attending dinner engagements.[108] The bicycle emerged as a symbol of women's freedom, independence, mobility and empowerment. By challenging traditional femininity, it became associated with the New Woman and, furthermore, served as a means of portraying her in visual media.

The New Woman and the suffragettes were presented as neglectful mothers. Firstly, the postcard "The New Woman"[109] (1900s, Appendix 1) depicts a woman who, as she leaves the room, commands her husband John to "[h]ave dinner ready at 1 o'clock". Thus, John is tasked with doing the laundry and caring for their two young children, who are seated on the floor, playing. Secondly, the postcard "The Suffragette Not at Home"[110] (Appendix 18) is set in a family's home, where the lady of the house is not present. Her husband, Tim, on the other hand, is present and he is caring for their two sons. He is preparing tea; however, when he pours the boiling water into the teapot, he scolds the cat. The elder son attempts to prepare a piece of toast, and the younger child is seated at the table, concerned. On the wall hangs a notice which states: "WOMENS' SUFFRAGE" and "LIST OF MEETINGS". On the floor, there is a note from the woman stating: "Dear Ted, afraid shall be late – important committee meeting – Alice". Lastly, the Postcard "A Happy New Year"[111] (ca. 1911, Appendix 2) carries the words: "WHY DON'T YOU TURN OVER THIS NEW LEAF." and "DO A BIT OF THIS". The text is accompanied by an image of two women. The first woman is campaigning for suffrage. She is fleeing from a policeman, with the Houses of Parliament positioned behind her. Furthermore, she is holding a banner with the words "VOTES FOR WOMEN" while two pamphlets slip from her grasp. The behaviour of the first woman is contrasted with an angel in the house-like woman, calmly cradling a baby in her arms. The Victorian period marked the introduction of industrial capitalism with which, apart from prosperity and countless opportunities, arose uncertainty and uneasiness. Consequently, the so-called cult of domesticity became fundamental to Victorian society. As the romanticized perception of the family and home it became a means for middle-class Victorian men to retreat from the unforgiving and competitive sphere of work, commerce and public affairs. Furthermore, the cult of domesticity alleviated the tension between Christian values, which became applied in the private sphere, and

[108] F. J. Erskine, *Lady Cycling: What to Wear & How to Ride* (London: British Library Publishing, 2014), 2–5.
[109] Living Picture Post Card Co, *The New Woman*, 1900s.
[110] C.W. Faulkener & Co Ltd, *The Suffragette Not at Home*, postcard, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, <https://collections.womenslibrary.org.uk/museum/museum-object/973440/>.
[111] McGill, *A Happy New Year*, ca. 1911.

capitalism, which dominated the public sphere.[112] A Victorian woman's place became the private domestic domain, for which she was thought to have a physiological predisposition. Her primary concern was to nurture her family.[113] Children held a fundamental role in the cult of domesticity. Sons contributed to establishing the social standing of a middle-class family, providing the family with power and influence. Although parents could fulfil their aspirations and sense of achievement through their sons, daughters were particularly important in middle-class families.[114] This was attributed to the fact that:

> the mother of the little woman-child sees in her the born queen, and, at the same time, the servant of the home; the daughter who is to lift the burden of domestic cares and make them unspeakably lighter by taking her share of them; the sister who is to be a little mother to her brothers and sisters; the future wife and mother in her turn, she is the owner of a destiny which may call on her to endure much and to suffer much, but which, as it also brings her love much [...] is well worthy of an immortal creature [...]. A family without a girl [...] lacks a crowning grace.[115]

At the beginning of the 20th century, the commonly held belief was that if a woman sought to fulfil her own aspirations, such as female suffrage, she prioritised her interests over her family's well-being. Such behaviour rendered her an inattentive and unfit mother and wife who was no longer self-sacrificing as the angel in the house was expected to be.[116] The New Woman and the suffragettes, however, were of a different opinion. When suffragette Rose Lamartine Yates was sentenced in 1909 to serve one month in prison for obstructing the police, she stated in court that she had an infant son and that she had discussed with her husband what she would tell her child if he ever inquired about her contribution to the women's struggle. She realized that she would feel ashamed if she had to acknowledge that she had taken no action. That realization was one of the reasons she stood before the judge that day, prepared to accept her punishment.[117] By depicting women as neglectful, absent mothers, postcards shamed women for diverging from the cult of domesticity and threatening the established social order by pursuing greater equality.

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[112] Gorham, The Victorian Girl, 3-4.
[113] Kiersnowska, "Female Cycling," 88-89.
[114] Gorham, The Victorian Girl, 5-6.
[115] Sarah Tytler, "Girls," *The Mother's Companion*, vol. 1 (1887): 14, in Gorham, *The Victorian Girl*, 5-6.
[116] "Postcard, Mummy's a Suffragette," Google Arts and Culture, accessed February 26, 2025, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/postcard-mummy-s-a-suffragette/MAHzJybjULolig?hl=en>.
[117] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 139-140.

Postcards of the time period depicted women employing various militant tactics that became associated with the WSPU. In the postcard, "She Cant Do It Now!!"[118] (Appendix 19) a woman has broken a glass window with a hammer and is facing the consequences of such an act. The copy of the Votes for Women newspaper she holds under her arm as she breaks the window indicates she is a WSPU member. The postcard contains the inscription: "The old coke-hammer would come down crash / And somebody's plate-glass window bash / In her present abode there are none to smash / so SHE CANT DO IT NOW !!". The violent act of shattering windows originated with Mary Leigh and Edith New. The suffragettes shuttered two windowpanes at 10 Downing Street in 1908 in protest of the poor treatment of their fellow suffragettes. Leigh and New were sentenced to serve two months in Holloway Prison.[119] The WSPU formally implemented window-smashing as a militant strategy in 1911, and toffee hammers were often used to shatter windows. Over 250 London office and shop windows were broken during the window-smashing campaign in March 1912.[120] Members of the public did not appreciate the damage inflicted on their property in the name of the cause, and one of the ways their dissatisfaction was expressed was through the ridicule of suffragettes in visual media.

Setting fire to pillar boxes was another WSPU militant tactic depicted in postcards. In the postcard "Kill That Fly!"[121] (ca. 1912, Appendix 20), a woman is about to throw a lit match into a pillar box filled with tar and paraffin oil. The postcard states: "KILL THAT FLY! The Fire Fly." Setting fire to pillar boxes was introduced to the WSPU by Emily Davison as opposition "against the vindictive sentence recently passed on Mary Leigh [her friend] and to call upon the Government to put women's suffrage in the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament in February 1912".[122] In December 1911, Emily set aflame three pillar boxes in London. On the first occasion, she threw a burning, letter-sized bundle that contained cotton saturated in kerosene into a pillar box. Saddened that the newspapers did not mention her attack, she confessed her crime to a policeman. He, however, claimed not to be aware of the incident and did not arrest her, choosing not to draw attention to her endeavour. On the second and third occasions, she dropped a lit box of matches into a pillar box. Not yet caught, she took the step

[118] Donald McGill, *She Cant Do It Now!!*, postcard, in *Rise Up Women!,* by Diane Atkinson, 281.
[119] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 107.
[120] "Broken Windows Smashed by Suffragettes," London Museum, accessed February 3, 2025, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/v/object-454737/broken-windows-smashed-by-suffragettes/>.
[121] Harold C. Earnshaw, *Kill That Fly!*, ca. 1912, postcard, in *Rise Up Women!,* by Diane Atkinson, chapter 15.
[122] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 279.

of calling the London News Agency, confessing to the three fires and inquiring which pillar box she should set aflame to be guaranteed an arrest. Ultimately, she fulfilled her goal of being arrested when she failed to set aflame another pillar box in London.[123] She commented on her bail: "Fancy my being worth £1000! I am amazed! It is a grand advertisement for the cause, isn't it?"[124] Other suffragettes soon began to adopt Emily Davison's approach.[125] Similarly to breaking windows, the public was appalled by the attacks on pillar boxes and, through postcards, urged that such militant acts be stopped.

Another activity associated with the WSPU that was depicted in visual media was jiu-jitsu. In the cartoon "The Suffragette that Knew Jiu-Jitsu. The Arrest."[126] (1910, Appendix 22) a woman is using her knowledge of the martial art of jiu-jitsu to defend herself from a large group of policemen. A "Votes for Women" sign is attached to the fence behind her. She has defeated several men who are lying on the ground in pain or impaled on a fence. The remaining officers regard her with shock and horror. The woman depicted in the cartoon was Edith Garrud, an expert in jiu-jitsu, a self-defence technique originating from Japan. She began pursuing the martial art in 1899.[127] Demonstrating her skills at the Women's Exhibition in May 1909, Garrud defeated "a burly six-feet tall, fifteen stone policeman even though she was an inch under five feet tall", her target "lost his dignity, his balance, and his helmet, whereat militant members of the audience shrieked with delight".[128] Garrud taught classes in which the members of the WSPU were encouraged to learn how to protect themselves from enraged audience members and police officers.[129] Jiu-jitsu was a suitable choice for suffragettes not only because it was not expected that a woman could defend herself but also because "[it] emphasised using the attacker's force against them, channelling their momentum and targeting their pressure points."[130] As Mrs Pankhurst was a key figure in the suffragette movement, it was important to ensure her protection. Thus, she was presented with a group of bodyguards trained in jiu-jitsu by Edith Garrud. The young women of various occupations and social classes carried hidden Indian clubs for further protection.[131] The group was officially known as the Bodyguard and

[123] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 278-279.
[124] Emily Wilding Davison, "A Letter to Comrades," in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 150.
[125] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 362.
[126] A. Wallis Mills, *The Suffragette that Knew Jiu-Jitsu. The Arrest.*, 1910, cartoon, in "'Suffrajitsu': How the suffragettes fought back using martial arts," by Camila Ruz and Justin Parkinson, *BBC*, October 5, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34425615>.
[127] Camila Ruz and Justin Parkinson, "'Suffrajitsu': How the suffragettes fought back using martial arts," *BBC*, October 5, 2015, accessed February 17, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34425615>.
[128] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 147.
[129] Ruz and Parkinson, "Suffrajitsu."
[130] Ruz and Parkinson, "Suffrajitsu."
[131] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 459-461.

referred to as the Amazons by the media. In connection with the suffragettes, jiu-jitsu became termed "suffrajitsu". Although jiu-jitsu was an exceptionally useful tool for the WSPU, the public viewed the martial art as unfeminine, violent and radical; suffrajitsu thus became a means to satirize the women's suffrage movement in visual media as it challenged conventional gender expectations.

Militant tactics such as breaking windows, setting fire to pillar boxes and assaulting police officers often resulted in women being arrested and, in some cases, imprisoned. A woman serving her prison sentence can be seen in the postcard "She Cant Do It Now!!"[132] (Appendix 19) or the poster "The End of the Hunger Strike"[133] (ca. 1910, Appendix 3). The imprisonment of suffragettes began in 1905 when Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney, a prominent working-class member of the WSPU, interrupted a meeting of the Liberal Party at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester and were removed from the premises. They were subsequently arrested for assaulting the police and causing an obstruction. Refusing to pay their fines, they were escorted to Strangeways Gaol.[134] Imprisonment was not a decision the women made lightly. Rather, it was a bold and daring step, as they did not know how the public would react. Nevertheless, their effort yielded positive results.[135] After her release from prison, Annie Kenney wrote a letter to her sister stating that "[t]here were over one hundred people waiting. I had a lovely bouquet of flowers sent me from the Oldham Socialists. [...] Manchester is alive I can assure you. Last night a protest meeting was held for me [...] over 2000 people were there." Concerned that her family members may not fully approve of her actions, she added: "The only thing I am sorry about is those at home"[136] That year, 1905, marked the shift of the Women's Social and Political Union towards militancy, with suffragette Hannah Mitchell commenting on the aftermath of the first suffragette imprisonment that "[t]wenty years of peaceful propaganda had not produced such an effect, nor had fifty years of patient pleading which had gone before. The smouldering resentment in women's hearts burst into a flame of revolt. There began one of the strangest battles in all our English history."[137] In prison, suffragettes would spend their time writing poetry. The Holloway Jingles, for example, is a collection of poems written in Holloway Gaol and published in 1912. Not only did the poetry of imprisoned suffragettes serve as a form

[132] McGill, *She Cant Do It Now!!*.
[133] Reed, *The End of the Hunger Strike,* ca. 1910.
[134] Manchester Guardian, "Miss Pankhurst and the Police: Assault and Obstruction" in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 35-36.
[135] Sean Coughlan, "Imprisoned suffragette letter discovered," *BBC*, September 21, 2018, accessed February 4, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/education-45576262>.
[136] Coughlan, "Imprisoned suffragette letter discovered."
[137] Hannah Mitchell, "The Hard Way Up," in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 37.

of expression, but it also had an educational purpose for suffragettes who were not imprisoned and for the public. It allowed suffragettes to address and manage their feelings regarding imprisonment and to preserve their soundness of mind and identity. By writing poetry, the women could connect with other suffragettes who found themselves under similar circumstances and express a sense of fellowship, unity and compassion. Imprisonment was romanticised, and the poetry was written in an inspiring and encouraging voice, which enabled the women not to forget the essence and objective of their cause.[138] As imprisonment contributed significantly to the WSPU's agenda, anti-suffragists depicted women's imprisonment in a derisive manner to advance their own interests and combat the sympathies the suffragettes had gained.

Businesses, at times, incorporate current social or political issues into their advertising strategies. At the beginning of the 20th century, companies employed the visual of a hunger-striking suffragette in their posters. The poster "The End of the Hunger Strike"[139] (ca. 1910, Appendix 3) depicts an imprisoned suffragette on hunger strike, sitting on a bench in a cell. A policeman is looking through her cell window and smiling, as he knows that the suffragette will no longer be troublesome because she will be unable to resist the delicious steaming bowl of Plasmon Oats porridge in front of her. By doing so, she will terminate her hunger strike. The poster artfully employs the phrase "(V)OATS FOR WOMEN", which can either stand for OATS FOR WOMEN or VOATS [pronounced as "votes"] FOR WOMEN – the WSPU's slogan. The phrase "Votes for Women" dates back to 1905, when the Conservative Government's time in office was coming to a close. Christabel Pankhurst firmly believed that the Liberals, the successors of the Conservatives, "must be challenged in the fundamental principle of Liberalism – government of the people by the people, even such of the people as happen to be women".[140] Thus, at the Free Trade Hall meeting of the Liberal Party in Manchester the same year, Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney unfurled their banner with the straightforward question: "WILL YOU GIVE VOTES FOR WOMEN?". That was the moment when the WSPU slogan and rallying call to all suffragettes, "Votes for Women", was born.[141] Four years after the slogan was established, in 1909, Marion Wallace-Dunlop was the first imprisoned suffragette to go on a hunger strike in the name of the cause. She did so on her own accord. During her

[138] Marta Bagüés Bautista, "Deeds and Words: The *Holloway Jingles* and the Fight for Female Suffrage," *ES Review. Spanish Journal of English Studies*, no. 42 (2021): 284-287. <https://revistas.uva.es/index.php/esreview/article/view/5638>.
[139] Reed, *The End of the Hunger Strike,* ca. 1910.
[140] Christabel Pankhurst, "Unshackled," in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 34.
[141] Pankhurst, "Unshackled," in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 34-35.

almost four-day fast in Holloway Prison, after which she was discharged, a physician inquired what she intended to consume. Marrion responded: "My determination", to which he replied: "Indigestible stuff, but tough no doubt".[142] Wallace-Dunlop worried that other suffragettes would adopt her approach and claimed that "'young healthy women with normal appetites' would find starvation 'horrible'"; still, she advised them to stay hydrated and "lie down all the time, to think of other things, and above all to keep their minds on the funny side of it all".[143] Marion Wallace-Dunlop and countless other suffragettes went on hunger strikes because they disagreed with their imprisonment in the second division rather than holding the status of political prisoners. Political prisoners, placed in the first division, were permitted to dress in their own garments, handle unlimited correspondence, be provided with books, and interact, communicate, and gather with other prisoners. On the other hand, ordinary criminals in the second division had to wear clothing provided by the prison, clean floors and be isolated from others.[144] In using the widely debated topic of hunger strikes and commonly heard suffragette slogans in posters, companies fuelled their commercial interests and capitalized on the suffragette movement.

Hunger striking and the subsequent force-feeding, which suffragettes incorporated in their posters, became a means to further the WSPU's political aims. In the poster "The Modern Inquisition, Treatment of Political Prisoners Under a Liberal Government"[145] (1910, Appendix 21), a suffragette is force-fed in prison. A doctor is pouring a substance through a funnel into her nose, four people are attempting to restrain her, and a woman is tying the prisoner's foot to the chair. The content of the poster reads as follows: "ELECTORS! Put a stop to this Torture by voting against THE PRIME MINISTER". In the early 20th century, force-feeding was practised only on mentally ill patients who refrained from eating.[146] However, as suffragettes began hunger-striking in prisons, the authorities became aware of the risk that the women could die of starvation and be viewed as martyrs, which would reflect poorly on the administration. This realisation resulted in prisons implementing the practice of force-feeding. Different methods were used to force-feed women. Firstly, the feeding cup method, in which a cup was

[142] "Why Did Suffragettes Go on Hunger Strike?," London Museum, accessed January 28, 2025, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/london-stories/why-did-suffragettes-go-on-hunger-strike/>.
[143] *Elizabeth Crawford: Frederick Hankinson*, 267-269, quoted in Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 158.
[144] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 52.
[145] Women's Social and Political Union, *The Modern Inquisition, Treatment of Political Prisoners Under a Liberal Government*, 1910, poster, London Museum, London, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/v/object-290747/the-modern-inquisition-treatment-of-political-prisoners-under-a-liberal-government/>.
[146] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 169.

used to pour liquid food directly into the prisoner's mouth. Secondly, feeding by oesophageal catheter/tube, which involved the catheter being inserted through the mouth into the stomach and liquid foods such as broth, eggs, milk or custard poured through it. And thirdly it was the nasal tube method, which was similar to the oesophageal catheter. However, the tube was not as wide, a gag was unnecessary, and the process was lengthier. Such force-feeding methods presented the danger that the liquid food could enter the lungs.[147] Prisoners who resisted force-feeding often experienced "broken teeth, bleeding, vomiting and choking".[148] A suffragette described her experience of force-feeding as follows:

> My mouth was forced open and a tube inserted and pushed down my throat a foot or more. I was gagged by a cork with a hole through which the tube went, liquid was poured down through a funnel, the tongue was pressed down and the tube forced down the gullet. The sensation caused horrible choking and stunned feeling. When the tube was withdrawn it seemed as if my inside was pulled out.[149]

Several doctors denounced force-feeding, calling it dangerous, cruel, and appalling. Such doctors labelled force-feeding as torture. Other doctors defended the practice and viewed force-feeding as risk-free and causing no distress.[150] Ultimately, explicit and detailed posters of force-feeding exposed the cruel methods which were used to silence suffragettes, exerted pressure on the government to change its policies and alarmed the public, thus succeeding in amplifying the WSPU's political message.

In their posters, apart from force-feeding, suffragettes employed the imagery of a woman falling prey to a cat. The WSPU poster titled "The Cat and Mouse Act Passed by the Liberal Government"[151] (1914, Appendix 6) depicts a green-eyed ginger cat clutching a limp woman wearing a WSPU sash in its sharp teeth. This imagery is associated with the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act of 1913. The purpose of the Act was to release suffragette hunger strikers so that they may recover their deteriorated health. Subsequently, the suffragettes would be seized and imprisoned once again. This process was to be repeated until their prison term was complete.[152] Furthermore, it was reported that "[i]n order that they may

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[147] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 181.
[148] London Museum, "Why Did Suffragettes Go on Hunger Strike?."
[149] *Votes for Women*, October 8, 1909, 20, quoted in Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 168.
[150] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 169-170.
[151] Women's Social and Political Union, *The Cat and Mouse Act Passed by the Liberal Government*, 1914, poster, London Museum, London, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/v/object-479134/the-cat-and-mouse-act-passed-by-liberal-government/>.
[152] *Daily Herald*, April 2, 1913, in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 187.

be at call when wanted, the prisoners will be watched and beset day and night by detectives and police-spies, their correspondence intercepted, telephone communication tapped, servants, where possible bribed."[153] Under this act, suffragettes were allowed to hunger strike and force-feeding was not permitted. Frederic Pethick-Lawrence, a great supporter and beneficiary of the WSPU, dubbed the Act the "Cat and Mouse Act" as the routine of repeatedly releasing and seizing suffragettes resembled a cat-and-mouse game. The cat represented the British government or authorities, and the mouse a hunger-striking suffragette.[154] A WSPU member commented that "[f]or the moment while the cat is about the mice are away and it will be some little time before they allow themselves to be caught. The fact is, that we shall make the Act as ridiculous as anything the Government has done to frustrate our movement, and we have many things in store of which they little dream."[155] The temporarily released suffragettes often chose not to recuperate at home, where they would be under strict surveillance, but instead seek refuge at safe houses. For instance, at the Brackenburys' "Mouse Castle" or the home of Ida Wylie in St. John's Wood, referred to as the Mouse Hole.[156] When the "mice" recovered, they would skilfully escape and attempt to remain concealed with the aid of wigs and costumes that made them unrecognisable.[157] Simultaneously, they engaged in further rebellious activities. The Act thus did not fulfil its purpose, and force-feeding was reintroduced in 1913.[158] Through satirizing the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act in posters, suffragettes aimed to ridicule the government, expose its hypocrisy, and undermine its authority while gaining sympathy and support for their cause.

A summary of this chapter reveals that women were depicted undertaking various activities. The New Woman was frequently portrayed standing next to or riding a bicycle as the bicycle became a symbol of women's independence and freedom. Depicted as leaving the home, not being present in the household or campaigning for suffrage in the centre of London instead of caring for their families, women – the New Woman and the suffragettes were presented as absent and neglectful mothers. Suffragettes often appeared undertaking militant activities associated with the WSPU, such as breaking windows, setting fire to pillar boxes or employing the martial art of suffrajitsu. Such activities we utilized in visual media to satirize the suffragette cause. In addition, postcards and posters depicted WSPU members imprisoned,

[153] *Daily Herald*, April 2, 1913, in *Suffragettes*, ed. Joyce Marlow, 188.
[154] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 384-385.
[155] *Elizabeth Crawford: Elsie Duval*, 179-180, quoted in Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 387.
[156] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 397-398.
[157] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 406.
[158] Atkinson, *Rise Up Women!*, 385.

hunger striking and subjected to the unsettling and controversial practice of force-feeding. Finally, due to the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act of 1913, women presented themselves as victims of the authorities, satirically symbolized by cats. To conclude, visual media portrayed women of the period engaging in numerous activities.

Conclusion

Due to the social climate of the beginning of the 20th century, which was marked by two conflicting forces – the enduring Victorian values and the New Woman model of womanhood, alongside the suffragette movement – there was a varied approach to portraying women's appearance in visual media. Critics of the New Woman phenomenon produced postcards in which women wore modified clothing. This type of clothing, promoted by the Rational Dress Society, allowed women to participate in traditionally masculine activities, such as cycling, in a safer manner. The convertible skirt, for instance, was met with strong resistance from a society which perceived it as unfeminine. Since the Women's Sunday in Hyde Park on 21st June 1908, members of the WSPU became easily recognisable due to their newly adopted colour scheme of purple, white and green, which was implemented into countless anti-suffrage posters and postcards of the period. Opposers of women's suffrage created the stereotype of the unattractive and masculine suffragette. By depicting suffragettes as frightening monsters and women who, by campaigning for suffrage, lost their physical looks, femininity and fashion sense, the media satirised the movement and made an attempt to undermine the cause. Suffragettes, aware of the negative stereotype surrounding their appearance, were encouraged by their leaders and the Votes for Women newspaper to dress stylishly and appear feminine at all times in order to improve their image, counter the criticism and not endanger the campaign. Women were willing to spend a significant amount of money, perhaps money that was scarce for some, to ensure this objective. As evident from newspaper advertisements of the period, their clothing was intended not only to be fashionable but also practical. Such clothing ensured their preparedness for various weather conditions and suffragette activities. Historically, women's education was inferior to men's. However, throughout the Victorian period, the education of middle-class girls was transformed and by the beginning of the 20th century, women were permitted to attend universities, although they could not generally receive their diplomas. The stigma surrounding women's education nevertheless continued to be observable. Women were thus depicted in academic dress in posters to emphasize their intelligence and advocate for their desired inclusion into high politics. Similarly to today, cats were a popular theme in Edwardian Britain. With respect to women's potential involvement in high politics, two types of cat postcards could be identified. The first type of cat postcards depicted an indoor domestic cat, unduly upset by the perceived "minor" social issue of women's right to vote. Opposers of suffrage used this image to satirize the suffragette cause. The second type of cat postcards, employed by suffrage supporters, on the other hand, portrayed a feral and injured cat determined to achieve women's

suffrage. Women were depicted as children in a manner similar to their portrayal as cats. Anti-suffragists portrayed women as bad-tempered and bothersome children, while supporters of women's suffrage presented the children as innocent and deserving of the basic human right to vote. For suffragette supporters, the imagery of children made postcards more persuasive due to the fact that it invoked in adults the image of their own offspring and their child's purity. Anti-suffragists, of whom the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League and the Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage were a part, disagreed with the WSPU's objective. Thus, posters by the antis depicted women in pain, punished, tortured, and silenced for their beliefs in women's equality. It can thus be observed that the portrayal of women's appearance in posters and postcards from the early 20th century varied in approach rather than being fixed or uniform.

In addition to women's appearance, the activities women were portrayed undertaking in posters and postcards were presented in varying manners. In the second half of the 19th century, women began cycling, sparking an outcry in a society that believed women were risking their childbearing ability and potentially becoming unsexed by engaging in strenuous physical activity. This fear was reflected in visual media, where the New Woman, a woman who enjoyed cycling for the freedom and independence it offered, was depicted negatively. Furthermore, women were portrayed as absent, neglectful, inattentive and unfit mothers and wives. The cult of domesticity, which arose in the Victorian period, valued above all the ideal of family life. Women were expected to remain within the private domestic sphere and care for their children and husbands. By pursuing women's rights, women were seen as challenging their traditional roles, for which they were shamed in visual media. Postcards of the period depicted various WSPU activities, such as shattering windows or setting fire to pillar boxes. Shattering windows entered the WSPU's catalogue of militant activities at the instigation of suffragettes Mary Leigh and Edith New while setting fire to pillar boxes was prompted by Emily Davison. All three women believed that suffragettes were being mistreated by the authorities, and they demanded justice. Excluding suffragette supporters, the general public largely disapproved of the violence, damage to property and disruption caused by such acts. For this reason, the militant actions of suffragettes were satirized by the media. A comparable dynamic was present within the domain of suffrajitsu, as it too was depicted predominantly negatively in the media. Suffragettes sought to acquire the martial art of jiu-jitsu in order to defend themselves and the leaders of their movement. Having learned jiu-jitsu, women became confident and self-reliant. No longer were they viewed as fragile or passive, thus challenging society's image of the angel in the house. Following the 1905 incarceration of Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney, imprisonment

became a prevalent punishment for suffragettes who employed militant methods. The women demonstrated their courage and determination through poetry written in prison, for instance. By sharing their experiences of harsh physical and psychological conditions and treatment in prison, they garnered public sympathy. Opposers of women's suffrage countered the increasing support the suffragettes received from the public by ridiculing women's prison sentences in posters and postcards as futile pursuits. Upon their imprisonment in the second division as common criminals, rather than holding the status of political prisoners in the first division, suffragettes resolved to undertake hunger strikes, which lasted several days, as a form of protest. Companies utilized the visual of suffragette hunger strikes in their advertising campaigns to promote their products. Force-feeding was implemented by the authorities in prisons to avert the death of hunger-striking suffragettes and prevent them from becoming martyrs of the women's suffrage movement. Suffragettes responded to this practice by depicting in posters the agonizing and harrowing force-feeding methods, such as feeding by the oesophageal catheter or the nasal tube, which they were forced to endure. The WSPU's use of this strategy provoked public outrage, gained widespread media attention, placed demands on the government to address women's suffrage and strengthened the movement's resolve. The Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act of 1913, known as the Cat and Mouse Act due to its nature, aimed to, firstly, prevent suffragettes from falling victim to hunger strikes and secondly, to avoid further damage to the government's reputation on account of its practice of force-feeding suffragettes. The Act failed to maintain governmental control over the women, as many suffragettes escaped from their homes and sought refuge in safe houses, where they regained their strength and subsequently resumed their activism. By satirizing this fact in posters, suffragettes undermined the government's credibility and garnered public support. In summary, women in visual media were portrayed engaging in various activities, which were presented in distinct manners by different creative groups aiming to further their objectives.

In conclusion, it can be observed that women were portrayed both favourably and unfavourably in visual media, depending on the perspective of the portrayer. Firstly, opposers of the women's rights movement, including those who resisted the ideals of the New Woman and the actions of the suffragettes, depicted women as dressed in inappropriately modified clothing, as grotesque masculine beings, as naive cats, troublesome children, and as individuals deemed deserving of punishment and endurance of significant suffering. Additionally, they portrayed women as justly imprisoned anarchists who participated in arson, bombings, vandalism and combat and, furthermore, as uninvolved and self-centred mothers and wives who

prioritized their own interests – women's emancipation – over their own families. Secondly, women's rights advocates portrayed women as intellectuals in academic dress, as sensibly dressed and well-behaved ladies, as warrior cats, bright children and victims of the government's unjust demoralizing practices and policies, such as force-feeding or The Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act of 1913. Lastly, a subset of posters and postcards did not aim to directly paint women in a favourable or unfavourable manner. Rather, companies employed the imagery of women to strengthen their brand recognition and marketing strategies. For instance, Plasmon utilized the image of a hunger-striking suffragette to promote its oats, which, according to the advertisement, the self-starved suffragette could not resist. Thus, it can be concluded that the opposers of women's emancipation reinforced traditional notions of femininity in British visual representation of the early 20th century, while supporters of the cause predominantly challenged such notions. Therefore, individual parties promoted their own agendas, enabling posters and postcards to convey varied and often contradictory messaging.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl na základě shromážděného korpusu pohledů a pohlednic prozkoumat, jakým způsobem byly na počátku 20. století, v době, kdy viktoriánské ideály stále přetrvávaly, avšak ženy usilovaly o větší svobodu, zobrazovány ženy. Předkládá hypotézu, že dobové plakáty a pohlednice přispívaly k udržování tradičních představ o ženskosti, ale zároveň je i popíraly.

První kapitola poskytuje teoretický rámec soudobých a viktoriánských genderových stereotypů, konceptu tzv. Nové ženy a hnutí sufražetek pro následující dvě analytické kapitoly. Kapitola vymezuje rozdělení rolí ve viktoriánské době: mužům patřila veřejná sféra – oblast podnikání, profesního života, politiky a pohybových aktivit, zatímco ženy striktně obývaly sféru soukromou a pečovaly o domácnost, manžela a děti. Žena, která tuto roli přijala, byla vnímána jako tzv. anděl v domě, naopak žena, která ji odmítala, byla považována za nepřirozenou a opovrženíhodnou bytost. V 80. letech 19. století došlo ke zrodu feministického ideálu New Woman neboli Nová žena. Tato žena toužila po vetší svobodě a volnosti – po vzdělání, kariéře a rovnosti pohlaví v politice a veřejném životě. Nepřála si, aby jejím jediným posláním bylo manželství a mateřství. Následně se na počátku 20. století zformovalo hnutí sufražetek Ženská sociální a politická unie (WSPU) v čele s Emmeline Pankhurst. Sufražetky usilovaly o získání volebního práva, aby měly možnost iniciovat změny v oblasti pracovních podmínek, práv dětí, vzdělání, veřejných služeb a dalších oblastí. K dosažení svých cílů využívaly radikální militantní metody, jako ničení cenných obrazů, zakládání požárů, iniciování explozí nebo připoutávání se k zábradlí. Genderové stereotypy spojují téma viktoriánských ideálů, Nové ženy a hnutí sufražetek. Jedná se o limitující a v případech, kdy dochází k porušování lidských práv, nebezpečné představy o rolích, které mají muži a ženy ve společnosti vykonávat. Ideální žena, vnímána jako pečující, citlivá, poddajná a něžná a muž, racionální, logický, odvážný, silný a praktický, jsou považováni za osoby s protikladnými vlastnostmi. Genderové role jsou ovlivňovány sociálními, kulturními a historickými činiteli a jsou formovány a udržovány společností. Muži tradičně upevňují genderové role přísněji než ženy a od mužů společnost také vyžaduje přísnější dodržování genderově očekávaného chování. Gender tedy není inherentní, nýbrž je naučený a působí na jedince již od prenatálního období.

Druhá kapitola předkládá několik způsobů, jakými byl zobrazován vzhled žen na dobových plakátech a pohlednicích. Ve druhé polovině 19. století se ženy ve větší míře začaly zúčastňovat pohybových aktivit. K tomuto bylo potřebné modifikované oblečení, které prosazovala například organizace Rational Dress Society. Společnost však na takovéto oblečení

nahlížela negativně, neboť je nepovažovala za ženské, a tato skutečnost se promítla do vizuálních médií. V roce 1908 na významné demonstraci v Hyde Parku představila WSPU své symbolické barvy – fialovou, bílou a zelenou, které od té doby začaly být využívány k rozpoznávání sufražetek i na plakátech a pohlednicích. Odpůrci hnutí sufražetek vykreslovali ženy, které usilovaly o volební právo, jako maskulinní a nepřitažlivé, protože s jejich záměrem nesouhlasili a snažili se toto hnutí poškodit. WSPU si byla vědoma tohoto stereotypu a vyzývala své členky, aby se oblékaly stylově a žensky. Příznivci hnutí zobrazovali sufražetky v absolventském oděvu. Chtěli tím zdůraznit, že tyto ženy byly inteligentní a racionální, a že si zasloužily podílet se na důležitých politických rozhodnutích. Počátkem 20. století byla kočka populárním motivem ve vizuálních médiích. Jedním z typů koček, které symbolizovaly ženy, byla kočka domácí, roztomile se vztekající, protože její požadavek na volební právo nebyl vyslyšen. Druhým typem kočky byla divoká a zraněná šelma, odhodlaná dosáhnout volebního práva. Také děti na pohlednicích představovaly ženy. Odpůrci hnutí využívali zobrazení neutěšitelných a nepříjemných dětí jako přirovnání k sufražetkám. Přívrženci WSPU naopak zobrazovali nevinné, bystré děti, které si zaslouží lepší budoucnost, plnou rovnosti a příležitostí. Děti činily tyto pohlednice přesvědčivějšími, protože v dospělých vyvolávaly představu vlastních potomků a jejich nevinnosti. Kritici sufražetského hnutí, mezi které patřil například spolek Women's National Anti-Suffrage League nebo Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage, vykreslovali ženy v bolesti, trestané, mučené a umlčované za své přesvědčení o rovnosti žen. Lze tedy říci, že vzhled žen byl zobrazován různorodými způsoby.

Třetí kapitola zkoumá, jaké aktivity na plakátech a pohlednicích z počátku 20. století ženy vykonávaly. Plakáty a pohlednice zobrazovaly Novou ženu stojící vedle kola nebo jedoucí na kole. Cyklistika byla vnímána jako tradičně mužská aktivita, a proto se dámská cyklistika nesetkala s velkým pochopením společnosti. Kolo se tedy stalo pro ženy symbolem svobody a nezávislosti. Ženy, které bojovaly za rovnoprávnost, nejen pro sebe, ale i pro další generace, byly znázorňovány jako matky, kterým nezáleží na rodině a které nepečují o domácnost. Důvodem bylo, že opouštěly jim přisouzenou soukromou sféru. Média dále využívala militantní aktivity spojené s organizací WSPU k zesměšnění sufražetského hnutí na plakátech a pohlednicích. Jednalo se o rozbíjení oken, odpalování poštovních schránek a bojové umění jiu-jitsu, přezdívané suffrajitsu. V roce 1905 byly uvězněny první dvě sufražetky – Christabel Pankhurst a Annie Kenney. Nedlouho poté se trest odnětí svobody začal objevovat na plakátech. Sufražetky nesouhlasily s tím, že s nimi ve věženích nebylo zacházeno jako s politickými vězenkyněmi, ale jako s trestankyněmi, odsouzenými za kriminální aktivity. Právě proto se rozhodly podstupovat hladové stávky. Firmy této skutečnosti využívaly ve svých

marketingových kampaních. Stát se rozhodl sufražetky násilně krmit proti jejich vůli, protože se obával, že by ženy kvůli hladovým stávkám umíraly a stávaly se mučednicemi hnutí. Ženy využily veřejnou sympatii, kterou vyvolal strach a odpor vůči násilnému krmení, a díky tomu podpořily pokrok hnutí za volební právo prostřednictvím plakátů. V reakci na Zákon o kočce a myši (Cat and Mouse Act) členky WSPU zobrazovaly autority jako dravé kočky, které svírají ženy toužící po politické rovnosti v ostrých zubech. Tímto způsobem se stavěly do role oběti, satirizovaly neefektivnost zákona, podkopávaly autoritu vlády a získávaly podporu veřejnosti. Třetí kapitola poukazuje na to, že ženy na plakátech a pohlednicích vykonávaly mnoho různých aktivit.

Na závěr lze tedy usoudit, že jednotlivé zájmové strany prosazovaly své vlastní cíle prostřednictvím plakátů a pohlednic. Odpůrci boje za ženskou rovnoprávnost zobrazovali ženy jako nevhodně oblečené, ošklivé a neženské stvůry, naivní kočky, protivné a ubrečené děti a špatné matky i partnerky. Dále jako osoby, které si zaslouží být mučeny za své postoje a také vězněny, protože se podílely se na žhářství, bombových útocích a vandalismu. Naopak zastánci hnutí za ženská práva ženy zobrazovali jako vzdělané, elegantně oblečené dámy, kočky bojovnice, bystré děti a oběti nespravedlivých a demoralizujících praktik vlády, jako bylo nucené krmení nebo Zákon o dočasném propuštění vězňů ze zdravotních důvodů z roku 1913 (The Prisoners Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act of 1913). Třetí skupina, firmy, zobrazovala ženy na plakátech a pohlednicích způsobem, který využíval aktuální trend, přitahoval pozornost veřejnosti a zvyšoval zájem o jejich výrobky. Bakalářská práce dokládá, že plakáty a pohlednice buď posilovaly, nebo naopak popíraly tradiční představy o ženskosti. Byli to právě odpůrci emancipace žen, kteří v britských plakátech a pohlednicích z počátku 20. století posilovali tradiční představy o ženskosti, zatímco zastánci boje za ženskou rovnoprávnost takové představy převážně popírali.

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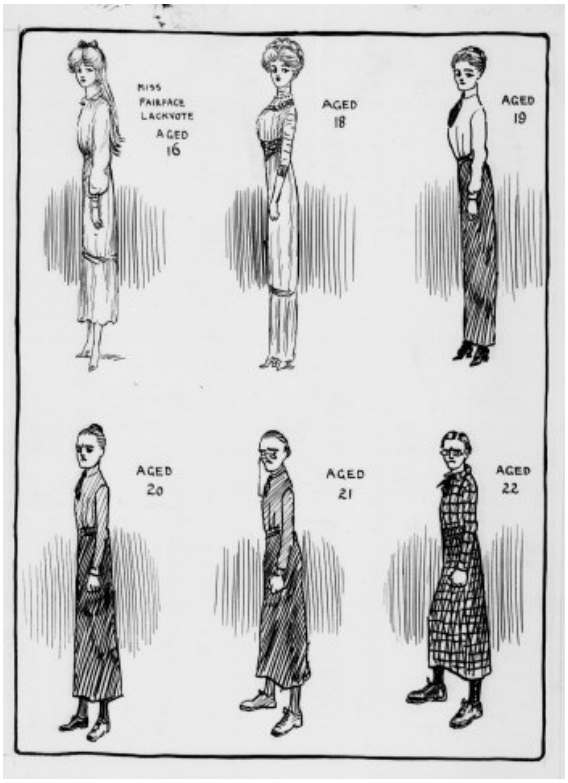
Appendices

Appendix 1

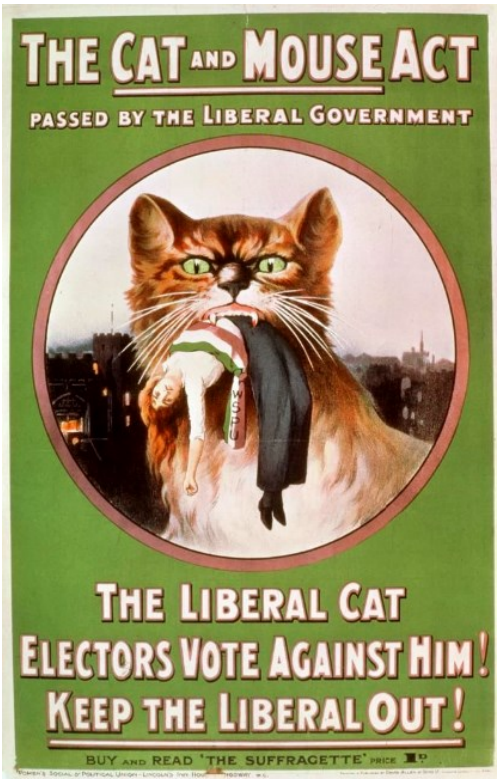
Appendix 2

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

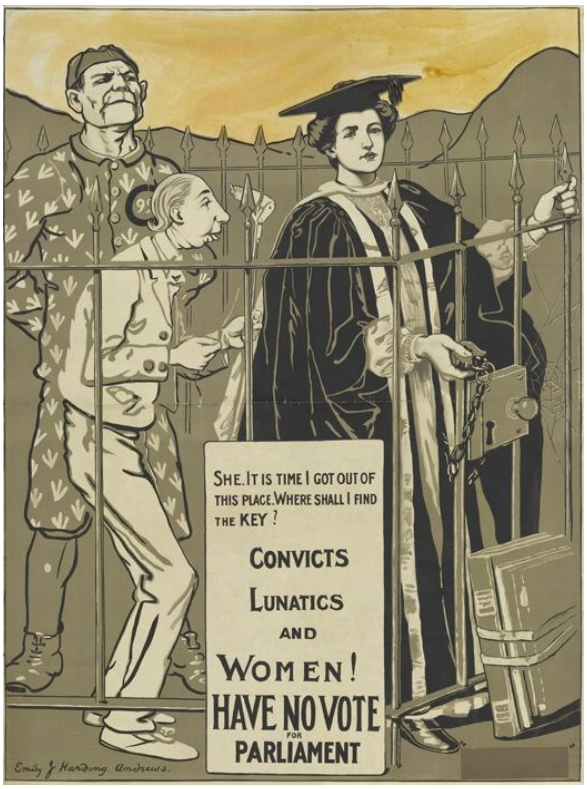


Appendix 5



Appendix 6

Appendix 7



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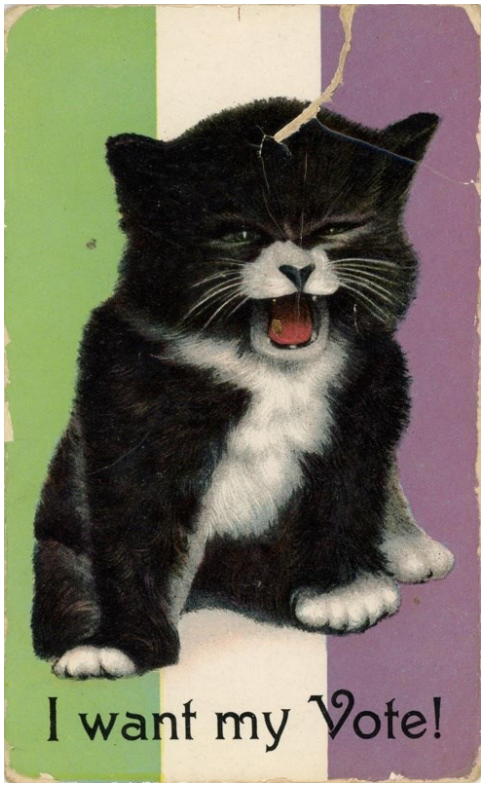
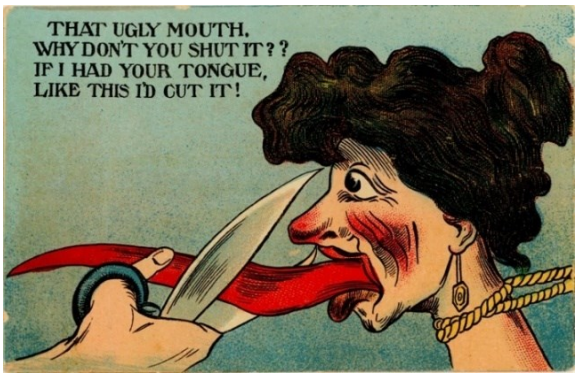


Appendix 9

Appendix 10

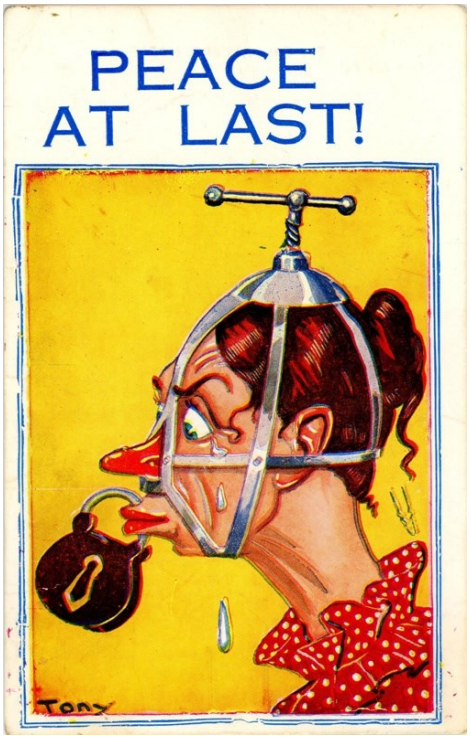
Appendix 11

Appendix 12



Appendix 13

Appendix 14

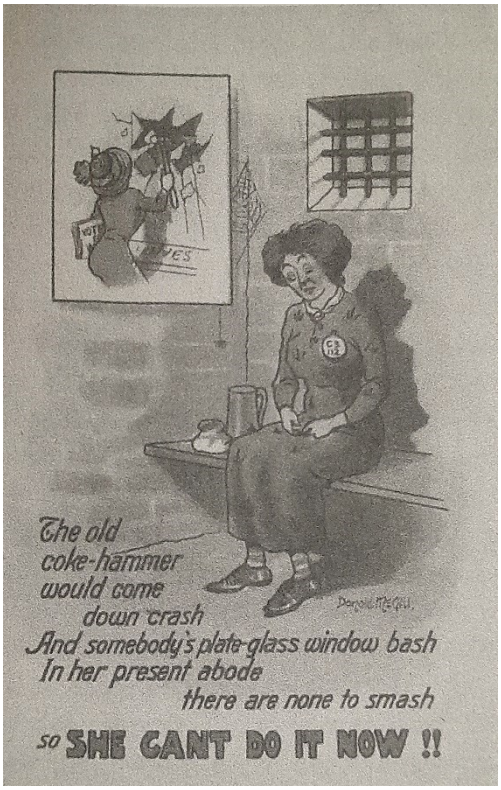


Appendix 15

Appendix 16

Appendix 17

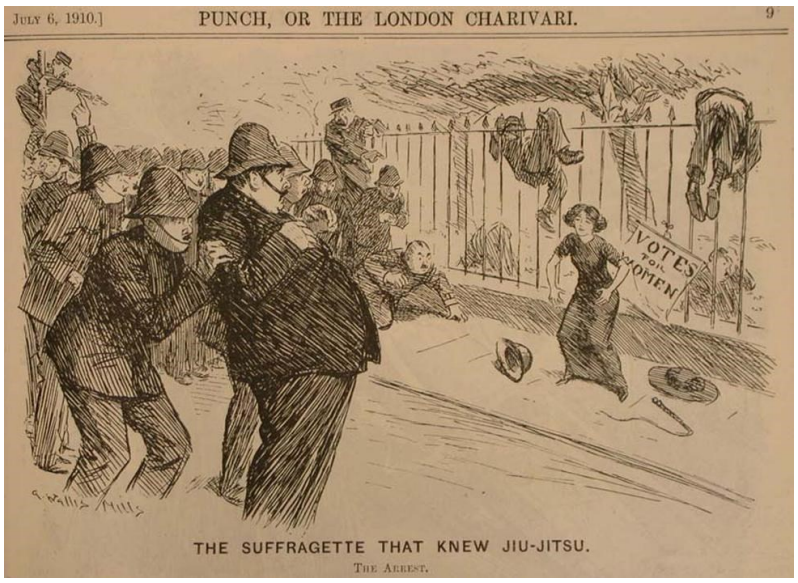
Appendix 18



Appendix 19

Appendix 20

Appendix 21


July 6, 1910.] PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI. 9
VOTES FOR WOMEN
THE SUFFRAGETTE THAT KNEW JIU-JITSU.
The Arrest.

Appendix 22