Female Representation, Patriarchal Imperatives and the Malleability of the Female Role in Official First World War Propaganda

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Table of Contents

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Abstract

This thesis aims to contribute to the wider and much understudied debates regarding female representation in British iconography during the First World War. Specifically, analysis will pertain to the official propaganda posters sanctioned by the British government, which constituted the most ubiquitous form of propaganda during the period. In examining the evolution of the female role throughout the conflict, discussion will be centred on the four distinct tropes of female representation, being the depiction of women as victims, women as allegories and women in both quintessentially feminine, and inherently masculine roles. Throughout, it will be evidenced that within each trope of female representation, traditional conceptions of femininity were maintained as far as was possible, thus contributing to the notion that femininity is a historical construct that is malleable according to the exigencies of the period.

Using a vast array of primary sources, with the foundational examples being drawn from archives including that of the Imperial War Museum and Temple University Libraries, analysis will evidence that previous historiography has been insufficient, tending to discuss women's experience of war through a narrative of progress and an exercise in measurement of statistics. Rather, the thesis aims to contribute to existing debates in focusing on the cultural understandings of gender identity.

Introduction:

It is indisputable that the First World War had an ineffaceable impact on soldiers and civilians across Europe and provoked immeasurable economic, diplomatic, social and cultural upheaval. Of the number of seismic shifts heralded by the conflict, one that has unsurprisingly captivated the contemporary scholar is that of the changing nature of gender relationships and structures during this period. Despite the burgeoning campaign for women's suffrage and female autonomy throughout the 1860's, on the eve of the First World War in August 1914 women's position within society remained subordinate to their male counterparts, with their lives continuing to be regulated by the Victorian ideology of 'The Angel in the House'.[1] The premise of this was that society was divided into two separate spheres of gender, defined as public and private. Women were expected to naturally take a role in the inherently domestic, private sphere, whilst men dominated the public sphere with regards to employment, wages and social liberties, consonant with the male breadwinner model.[2] It must be highlighted that the ideology of separate spheres of gender could be transcended by social class, evidenced in that just under six million women were in paid employment prior to the outbreak of war, the majority of which being working-class women seeking employment out of economic necessity.[3] However, in examining the 1911 census, it is evident that the work that women were undertaking during this period fit relatively neatly within the pre-war confines of gender identity.[4] For example, 1,400,000 women were engaged in domestic service, whilst a great number of women assumed roles

[1] Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (*Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012), p. 139; Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: Macmillan, 1866), 4th Edn.
[2] Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory Britain 1900-2000* (London: Allen Lane, 1996), p. 92.
[3] Susan Pyecroft, 'British Working Women and the First World War', *The Historian*, 56 (1994), p. 702.
[4] Pyecroft, 'British Working Women', p. 702.

in manufacturing industries, specifically that of clothing and textiles.[5] In these industries, women constituted 68.3% and 59.44% of the total workforce respectively.[6] Conversely, women were excluded from trades considered to be inherently masculine, an example of which being construction, in which they constituted just 0.06% of the workforce.[7] In using the participation and exclusion of women in these sectors as a microcosm of Edwardian Society, it can largely be asserted that 'A woman's place was in the home, and if she went out to work it was as a low paid worker', in a quintessentially feminine industry.[8]

However, this notion was significantly challenged by the exigencies of the first truly global conflict. At the beginning of the war, women's roles remained relatively domestic, revolving around exhorting men to go to war and generally 'keeping the home fires burning'. However, as initial war fever subsided and the rate of recruitment dwindled, the insufficiency of the British army in comparison to the conscript armies of other belligerent nations became stark. This prompted the British government to pass the first Military Service Bill on the 27th January 1916, imposing conscription on single men and childless widowers between the ages of 18 and 41. Subsequently, with the introduction of the second bill on the 25th May 1916, this compulsory military service was extended to married men.[9] Thus, women were called upon to become active participants in the war effort to address this mass exodus of men from the workforce. They became visible in occupations such as munitions, and organisations such as that of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), and the Women's Land Army (WLA) participating in great numbers. For example, 57,000

[5] Violet C Butler, *Domestic Service* (Bell & Sons, London, 1916), p. 9.
[6] 1911 Census.
[7] 1911 Census.
[8] Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989), p. 7.
[9] Laura Ugolini, 'The 'Recruiting Muddle': Married Men, Conscription and Masculinity in First World War England', *First World War Studies,* 9 (2018), p. 75.

women served at home and abroad with the WAAC, whilst 'Tommy's Sister' number over 1 million.[10] Thus, women were actively transgressing the gender boundary that deemed belligerency a male enterprise, with thousands of women assuming roles that awarded them a 'fluctuating status between victim and pseudo-combatant'.[11]

However, this is not to suggest that traditional conceptions of gender were rendered irrelevant during the conflict. Rather, it would be more accurate to suggest that the boundaries of separate spheres were simply redrawn and revised as far as was necessary to conform to the exigencies of the period. This is prodigious in the representations of gender identity and the notions of separate spheres in visual culture, specifically that of the propaganda poster. In examining the depiction of women during the conflict it is clear that there were four main identifiable tropes of female representation, with a clear evolution of, and thus malleability of the female role according to the needs of the conflict. In the early stages of the war, a distinct protective rhetoric reliant on the deeply internalised patriarchal values of the male protector and vulnerable female victim emerged, with women and children becoming a powerful emblem of a threatened domestic peace, encouraging men to enlist.[12] Such issues were further supported by the representation of women as allegories. Whilst Britannia did to some extent, embody more traditionally masculine characteristics, the motherland was still identifiable as a maternal figure, and thus became a core part of

[10] 'The Vital Role of Women in the First World War', Imperial War Museum https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-vital-role-of-women-in-the-first-world-war [Accessed 01.07.21]; Angela Woollacott *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munitions Workers in the Great War* (Berkeley, London, California: University of California Press, 1994), p. 2.
[11] Jonathan Rayner, 'The Carer, the Combatant and the Clandestine: Images of Women in the First World War in *War Illustrated Magazine'*, *Women's History Review,* 27 (2018), p. 519.
[12] Rayner, 'The Carer', p. 519.

the emerging propaganda machine.[13] Although such images were prevalent throughout the conflict, following the introduction of conscription for men in January 1916, the ubiquitous representation became that of women in positions of virtue, service and sacrifice, contributing to the war effort in the public sphere, in both quintessentially female roles such as that of nursing, alongside a carefully controlled depiction of the modern, military women working in occupations such as that of the manufacture of munitions, the WAAC and the WLA. However, whilst these occupations could not be contained entirely in the pragmatic and prescriptive constructions of gender that characterised the pre-war period, in examining various examples of propaganda posters, it is clear that the propagandist effectively maintained patriarchal imperatives in emphasising the ways in which the women remained subordinate to their male counterparts. It is evident that propaganda gave no indication as to the emergence of a feminist movement, or the beginnings of a renegotiation of gender, and rather acted as a substantial reaffirmation of traditional notions of femininity.[14] Thus, in exploring the representation of women, the study of First World War propaganda can further enhance the conceptualisation that feminine identity exists as a historical construct, something that was and continues to be malleable and adaptable according to the exigencies of the period.[15]

Whilst, at present, there is a great deal of historiography relating to the female experience of the First World War more broadly, there is very little scholarship that examines the depiction of women and femininity in visual culture. Arguably, this can be attributed to two specific trends in historiography, the first of which being that social and cultural histories

[13] Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* (Chapel Hill; N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p.
[14] Gail Braybon 'Winners or Losers: Women's Symbolic Role in the War Story', in *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918,* Ed. by Gail Braybon, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2005), p. 86.
[15] Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) Reissued 2nd Edn.

were relatively slow to develop in the aftermath of the conflict. Rather, analysis of the military experience took primacy, whilst the limited social histories that were being published were largely preoccupied with the idea of the lost generation, a group that is both implicitly and explicitly male.[16] The female experience of war was not awarded any significant academic attention prior to the growth of the field of social history during the 1960's and 1970's. It is in this context however, that a vociferous debate ensued regarding the impact of the conflict on British women, and the extent to which one can regard the war as a watershed in gender relations. The catalyst for this was Arthur Marwick's 1968 publication *The Deluge*; in which he constructed a narrative that evidenced an inherent connection between war and modernity, suggesting that it allowed women of all classes a similar degree of emancipation.[17] Marwick quantifies this with reference to higher wages, increased familial authority, and a greater degree of self-consciousness, which he suggests are enduring changes. Such narratives were subsequently reiterated in David Mitchell's '*Women on the Warpath'*, evidencing a clear preoccupation with conceptualising the war as a period of progression.[18] Whilst such works are now commonly understood to be inherently flawed, it is indisputable that they are significant in that they informed the course of historiography for a number of subsequent decades, giving rise to innumerable publications during the 1980's and 1990's that existed to argue the ephemeral nature of wartime change. In constructing such arguments, historians looked to evidence the reflowering of domestic ideology, and emphasise the masculine backlash against feminism

[16] Gail Braybon 'Winners or Losers: Women's Symbolic Role in the War Story', in *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918,* Ed. by Gail Braybon, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2005), p. 86.
[17] Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) Reissued 2nd Edn.
[18] David Mitchell, *Women on the Warpath: The Story of the Women of the First World War* (London: Johnathan Cope, 1966)

and the gains that women had made.[19] As such, analyses referred to issues such as the expulsion of women from the workforce, the 1919 Restoration of Pre-war Practices Act, or the derision that women were subject to if they remained in work in the post war period. As a result, a common consensus was developed, that that war did not constitute a watershed in gender relations, but rather offered transient change. Whilst the studies produced during this period are indispensable to the broader understanding of war and society more generally, in referring back to a lack of cultural historiography, it is evident that the desire to disprove Marwick's watershed interpretation became somewhat of a limiting agenda.[20] Whilst the narrative of progress is valuable, this debate had the effect of producing approaches that largely existed as an exercise in measurement, meaning that historiography largely failed to identity the cultural understandings of gender during and after the war.[21]

However, there is one exception to this, being Higonnet and Higonnet's 'The Double Helix', which is perhaps one of the only examples of new conceptualisations emerging in this period.[22] The thesis suggests that women's changing roles during the conflict must be considered as existing within a persistent system of gender relationships. Using the imagery of two intertwined strands on an axis, likened to the male and female positions within

[19] Susan Grayzel, 'Liberating Women? Examining Gender, Morality and Sexuality in First World War Britain and France', in *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918,* eds. by Gail Braybon (Oxford: Berghahn, 2004), pp. 113 - 135; Sue Bruley, *Women in Britain Since 1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999); Deirdre Beddoe*, Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989); Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* (London: Pandora,1987); Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Susan Kingsley Kent, 'Love and Death: War and Gender in Britain 1914-1918', in *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War,* ed. by Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 153 – 174.

[20] Joan Scott, Rewriting History', in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars,* ed. by Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel and Margaret Collins Weitz (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 19 – 31.

[21] Kent, 'Love and Death', p. 154.

[22] Margaret R Higonnet and Patrice R.L Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars,* ed. by Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel and Margaret Collins Weitz (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 31 – 51.

society, Higonnet and Higonnet assert that throughout the conflict, the female position on the helix remains constantly subordinate to that of its male counterparts, irrespective of the progression in women's roles during this period.[23] They suggest that this is attributable to masculine combat on the front line being more prestigious than other role during wartime, thus meaning that whilst women were undertaking various new roles, the gulf between the sexes was maintained.[24] Whilst the context of the relationship between men and women was evolving, this aspect of consistency allows for Higonnet and Higonnet to come to the general conclusion that the war did not have the effect of fundamentally altering the pre-war social and political order, but rather exacerbated it. However, whilst evidence of this was prodigious in visual culture, specifically the propaganda poster, Higonnet and Higonnet do not affirm their arguments with analysis of propaganda. Thus, whilst their conceptualisation of gender in wartime is of indubitable value, it offered clear potential for further study in relating this to visual culture.

However, despite this, the sheer number of depictions of women in British propaganda and the range of femininities that they portray have remained relatively understudied.[25] There are two distinct issues that this may be attributed to. Firstly, in examining the historiography pertaining to propaganda more broadly, it becomes apparent that a great deal of earlier scholarship was preoccupied with defining the term and examining the psychology of propaganda, rather than analysing the content of wider cultural production through the lens of cultural history.[26] Whilst this has advanced, with a number of contemporary scholars

[23] Higonnet and Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', p. 45.
[24] Higonnet and Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', p. 35.
[25] Pearl James, *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), p. 274.
[26] Cantril Hadley 'Propaganda Analysis', *The English Journal,* 27 (1938), pp. 217 – 221; Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (London: Bodley Head,

now producing detailed analyses of the propaganda, it is evident that there is much greater amount of literature pertaining to the propaganda of the Second World War, which is understandable for a number of reasons. Firstly, the British government officially created the Ministry of Information (MOI) in 1939, to handle official news, although evidence suggests that the planning for the conduct of propaganda had started earlier, in 1935. This meant that Britain was in a far greater state of readiness than she had been in 1914. Further to this, during the interwar period, technological advances in broadcasting and cinema had meant that the MOI was able to produce an extraordinarily wide-ranging collection of propaganda material in comparison to that of the First World War.[27] Thus, there is a great deal more for the historian of propaganda to analyse when examining the period of 1939 – 1945, contributing to the issue of First World War propaganda remaining relatively under researched.

Whilst there are a limited number of cultural histories that do examine the propaganda of the First World War, with regards to female representation, there are a clear number of paucities to be addressed. Primarily, despite the fact that the clear malleability of the female role in propaganda is of great relevance to broader cultural understandings of gender, contemporary academia rarely studies this at length. Rather, analyses of propaganda have remained largely androcentric in approach. In exemplifying this, one can refer to the historian Philip Taylor, perhaps one of the most notable scholars on propaganda in conflict. In Taylor's *British Propaganda in the First World War,* aside from a brief

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2008); Richard Lambert *Propaganda* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1944); Alexander Laskin, 'Defining Propaganda: A Psychoanalytic Perspective' *Communication and the Public,* 4 (2009), pp. 305-314; Raymond Dodge 'The Psychology of Propaganda' *The Official Journal of the Religious Association,* 15 (1920), pp. 241 – 252.

[27] David Welch, *Persuading the People: British Propaganda in World War II* (London: The British Library, 2016), p. 17.

reference to the 'munitions miracle', the only discussion on female representation is how they were used to exhort men to go to war.[28] Similar assertions can also be made regarding historian Lisa Todd's work on gender and sexuality within propaganda, with the vast majority of her analysis pertaining to the way in which women were depicted as a victim of wartime aggression.[29]

However, there are a couple of notable studies that do examine how traditional notions of femininity were manifested in the propaganda disseminated throughout the conflict. For example, in Michelle Shover's 'Roles and Images of Women in World War I Propaganda', the various ways in which women were presented are explored at length.[30] Shover covers a number of tropes of female representation, organising her analysis within the subsections of 'Service', and 'Women as Symbolic Figures'. She concludes that whilst propaganda presents a controlled expansion of women's roles in order to meet the wartime needs of public policy, the government consistently reinforced traditional sexual roles wherever possible. Such a study is incredibly valuable in that it represents progression from the androcentricity of previous works and further elucidates knowledge of cultural understandings of gender roles. However, it must be highlighted that throughout her analysis, Shover makes reference to the representation of women in British, French, Italian, American and German propaganda, and as a result draws relatively broad conclusions regarding the upholding of patriarchal imperatives in propaganda across Europe.[31] Thus, whilst her work contributes

[28] Michael Sanders and Philip Taylor, *British Propaganda in the First World War 1914 – 1918* (London: Macmillan 1982)
[29] Lisa Todd, 'The Hun and the Home: Gender, Sexuality and Propaganda in First World War Europe', in *World War I and Propaganda,* ed. by Troy Paddock (Leiden : Brill, 2014)
[30] Michelle J Shover, J 'Roles and Images of Women in World War I Propaganda', *Politics and Society,* 5 (1975), pp. 469 – 486.
[31] See also Pearl James, 'Images of Femininity in American World War I Posters', in *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture,* ed. by Pearl James *(*Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), pp. 273 – 312,

greatly to the broader narratives surrounding cultural understandings of gender, her analysis of British propaganda is limited to just four posters, in no way constituting a detailed analysis of women in British propaganda. Rather it highlights an existing paucity in literature and the potentiality for further study.

Thus far, this paucity in literature has remained relatively underdeveloped. There is one example of scholarship that endeavoured to address the issue, being Stacey Reed's *Victims or Vital: Contrasting Portrayals of Women in WW1 British Propaganda.*[32] However, Reed's analysis fails to advance historical enquiry to new terrain, continuing to present largely broad, ineffective and doubtful conclusions. Firstly, Reed examines female representation only within two distinct tropes of 'victim' and 'vital' and chooses to omit analysis of female allegories entirely. Whilst Reed suggests that examining female representation within such broad categories allows for 'discussion, nuance and overlap', in actuality, the result is that her work is too simplistic to be of significant value to the existing debates. Further to this, whilst Reed does identify the changing depictions of women according to the exigencies of the period, contrasting examples of atrocity propaganda with recruitment iconography, she examines them as two distinct, separate tropes and fails to acknowledge the continuities between them. She does not identify the ways in which femininity remains a central tenet of propaganda, rather suggesting that the two tropes of representation can simply be understood as evidence of the 'conflicted and changing role of women in society'. Thus, whilst this does not constitute an exhaustive survey of all of the available literature, such analysis evidences a clear paucity in scholarship. In examining female representation and the extent to which the propagandist was able to balance the wartime state's need for

[32] Reed, Stacey 'Victims or Vital, Contrasting Portrayals of Women in WW1 Propaganda' *History 385* (2014), pp. 81 – 92.

women's labour and the perceived necessity of preserving existing gender roles, historical enquiry can be advanced to a new terrain, further elucidating knowledge of cultural understandings of gender roles, gender identity and femininity.[33]

Whilst British propaganda posters constituted just one of the number of examples of visual culture in just one of the belligerent nations, thus making the source base somewhat limited, it will still be possible to draw strong conclusions regarding the upholding of patriarchal imperatives during the conflict. As this thesis is limited by the imposition of a 30,000-word limit, examining propaganda posters alone will allow for a more thorough, in depth of analysis that would not be possible when considering further examples of visual culture. Further to this, as the review of available literature has evidenced, the weaknesses of various other studies, including that of Shover's work, is the breadth of analysis, in that it pertains to various examples of visual culture in a number of belligerent nations. Thus, in limiting the source base to British propaganda posters, the thesis will contribute to rectifying a lack of depth studies. With regards to examining the propaganda poster, as opposed to other potential forms of visual culture, given the constraints imposed on this thesis, is logical to examine the most ubiquitous type of propaganda disseminated during the conflict. The poster's popularity as a means of disseminating information and moulding the perceptions of its audience can be attributed to a number of issues. Primarily, whilst various factors had allowed for literacy rates to improve exponentially throughout the nineteenth century, in the Edwardian period, whilst the majority of young people were literate, approximately ten percent of the population of Edwardian England were illiterate, with elderly, middle aged and unskilled workers having little to no grasp of reading and

[33] Lucy Noakes, 'Women's Military Service in the First World War', *Women, War and Society*, Cengage Learning (2005), p. 5.

writing.[34] However, as propaganda posters often used little to no text, and relied more heavily on imagery, its messages were inescapable regardless of the viewers literary ability. Thus, propaganda posters were produced in copious amounts.

Therefore, the propaganda poster is an ideal form of visual culture from which to evidence that femininity and patriarchal imperatives were upheld in all tropes of female representation. Thus, this thesis will examine the four identifiable tropes of female representation, and how they evolved throughout the conflict. Chapter one will address the depiction of women as victims of the brutality of the German army, using specific examples of primary source material pertaining to the so called 'Rape of Belgium'. The second chapter will further analysis in examining female allegories, primarily the depiction of Britannia, but also extending analysis to her allied counterparts, specifically that of the French allegory Marianne, and the American Columbia. It will be evidenced that both of these tropes of female representation were relatively consistent with the strict pre-war confines of gender, and thus, the depictions of women naturally conformed to pre-existing patriarchal structures. However, in the third and fourth chapters, analysis will focus on the changing nature of female representation following the introduction of conscription in 1916. Chapter three will focus on the influx of women into the quintessentially feminine pursuit of nursing, whilst the fourth and final chapter will analyse the depiction of women in traditionally male roles, specifically that of the women involved in the manufacture of munitions, or organisations such as that of the Women's Land Army, and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. In doing so, it will be evidenced that patriarchal imperatives were never rendered irrelevant, irrespective of the changing nature of women's roles.

[34] W. B Stephens, *Education in Britain 1750 – 1914* (St Martin's Press, 1998), p. 96.

All of the images that are referred to throughout this dissertation can be found in the appendix from page 93.

Chapter One: Victimisation, Martyrdom and Gender Appropriate Duty

Whilst British entry into the war had remained an uncertainty until late July 1914, the country's period of 'Splendid Isolation' came to a conclusion when Britain joined the war in defence of its national interests in early August. As Britain's foreign policy was largely based on the protection of its global system of colonies, dependents and territories, mounting concerns regarding French defeat and the impact on the balance of power in Europe were decisive. Such issues were further compounded by the continued Anglo-German naval arms race that had been at occurring since 1898. However, apropos to the issue of female representation and propaganda, it was Germany's violation of the 1839 Treaty of London in invading the neutral Belgium that was perhaps the most important, and offers the greatest insight into the cultural understandings of gender, and the way in which this interacted with the notion of victimisation.[35] The depiction of women as victims was ubiquitous in the recruitment propaganda pertaining to the invasion of Belgium, as Britain relied solely on voluntary enlistment from August 1914 until the introduction of conscription for men aged 18 – 24, upon the enactment of the two 1916 Military Service Bills. Whilst the number of voluntary men soon proved inadequate in maintaining the army, between August 1914 and December 1915, 2,466,719 men joined the British army voluntarily, a significant figure.[36] The reasons for this have been debated and analysed within contemporary historiography, and it has been widely concluded that such numbers were a result of a culmination of factors. For example, one must consider the emergence of the 'Pals' battalions, in which men who worked or lived in the same communities were encouraged to join on the understanding that they would fight together. Further to this, a number of men perceived

[35] Michael Howard, *The First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 31.
[36] Peter Simkins, 'Voluntary Recruiting in Britain 1914 – 1915', https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/voluntary-recruiting [Accessed 02.02.22]

enlistment as a potential form of escape from an unvarying life and job, and perhaps even as a prospect of adventure.[37] However, whilst it is difficult to determine exactly the effectiveness of propaganda, it is indisputable that such figures were also bolstered by the nationwide atrocity propaganda campaign, in which the alleged barbarism of the German and Austro-Hungarian enemy was used as a justification for the conflict.

The German army had invaded Belgium with the intention of avoiding the heavily fortified Franco-German border, allowing them free passage through the low countries to attack the French army from the North. However, upon Belgium refusing the German army passage, the country was invaded by force, throughout which a series of large-scale massacres occurred accounting for the death of 5521 Belgian men, women and children.[38] Whilst the vast majority of the victims were men of military age, the themes of allied atrocity propaganda became the barbarous attacks on women and children, with all available forms of media saturated with accounts of brutal sexual assaults, mutilation and murder.[39] As it is commonly understood, people respond most readily to signals corresponding to their own values, a process described by Nicholas O'Shaughnessy as a 'co-production in which we are willing participants, it articulates the things that are half whispered internally'.[40] Thus, the depiction of the violence of the invasion allowed for a distinct protective rhetoric reliant on the deeply internalised patriarchal values of the male protector and vulnerable female

[37] Simkins, 'Voluntary Recruiting'.
[38] Sophie de Schaepdrijver, 'The German Atrocities of 1914', https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/civilian-atrocities-german-1914 [Accessed 04.03.22]
[39] Jo Fox, 'Atrocity Propaganda in World War One', Online Video Recording, YouTube, 5 December 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeGveZWF500&t=2s [Accessed 04.02.22]
[40] Shover, 'Roles and Images', p. 472; Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 4. Such a point is also reiterated in the following: Edward Bernays; Mark Crispin Miller, *Propaganda* (Brooklyn, New York: Ig Pub, 2005), p. 37; Hadley Cantril, 'Propaganda Analysis', *The English Journal*, 27 (1938) p. 217; Troy Paddock, *World War I and Propaganda* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 6.

victim to emerge. In fostering this justification towards the war and encouraging men to enlist, the propagandist constructed a highly gendered portrayal of Belgian occupation, termed 'The Rape of Belgium', emblematic of the links that propagandists created between war, sexual imperatives and the sanctity of the domestic sphere.

It is evident that for Britons, the nature of the struggle was largely defined by this representation of women and children as a powerful emblem of a threatened domestic peace.[41] However, it is interesting to note that such peace was often depicted as an inherently rural England, as evidenced in the "Your Country's Call" poster, with men prompted to answer their country's call, in defence, not of the 'city streets of London or Manchester, but the fields, hills and thatched cottages of rural Britain'.[42] However, Britain had experienced a period of rapid urbanisation during the nineteenth century, contributing to a substantial rural depopulation that resulted in the percentage of people living in urban areas constituting 78.1% of the population, thus making the image of rural Britain somewhat obsolete in actuality.[43] The iconography of the period failing to address this demographic change, and rather reflecting the ideology and 'ideal' of England and Englishness as essentially 'rural', evidences that the propagandists desire for preservation extended beyond that of the most distinct patriarchal imperatives, and rather penetrated all aspects of cultural production.[44] It evidences that whilst the propagandist, somewhat

[41] Rayner, 'The Carer', p. 519; Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War 1914 – 1918,* (New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc, 1986), p. 25.
[42] "Your Country's Call", Poster (1915), Jowett and Sowry, Leeds (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/27751 [Accessed 14.02.22]; Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England' in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, ed. by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London; Dover; N.H: Croom Helm, 1986.), p. 62.
[43] 'Table 9.1, Urban and Rural Populations in England and Wales 1801 – 1971', cited in R. Lawton 'Rural Depopulation in Nineteenth Century England', in *English Rural Communities: The Impact of a Specialised Economy,* ed. by Dennis R. Mills (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 195.
[44] Howkins, 'The Discovery', p. 62.

superficially, presents the war and enlistment as a fight on behalf of Belgium, it rather acts as evidence of a distinct desire for the maintenance of an idealised pastoral past, inextricably connected to the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres. It is evident that the reassertion of tradition, both with regards to gender roles and more generalised idylls, found expression in the propagandist's justification of war.

Often the propagandist juxtaposed this archetypal image with images of a decimated Belgium, with one such example accompanied by text that declared that 'England's homes remain secure, their mothers and wives safe, with their children able to play without fear of harm', whilst the opposing image of Belgium suggested that 'their mothers and wives were murdered and worse, and their children dead or slaves'.[45] Such comparative imagery existed as the premise of much atrocity propaganda related to the Belgian issue, allowing propagandists to encourage men to enlist not only to be fighting for the freedom of Belgium, but rather fighting 'for the freedom of Europe, and to defend your mothers' wives and sisters from the horrors of war'.[46] It is indisputable that statements such as this existed within the pragmatic and prescriptive constructions of gender that had characterised the Edwardian period, in the creation of distinct links between war, female vulnerability and the sanctity of the home.[47] In presenting this deliberately feminised image of women as victims

[45] "The Hun and the Home", Poster (1914), Dangerfield Printing Co Ltd (Printer), Wilson, David WFB (Artist), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/38225, [Accessed 07.02.22]
[46] "Britain is Fighting For the Freedom of Europe", Poster (1905-03). Straker Brothers Ltd, 194-200 Bishopsgate, London EC (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30367 [Accessed 14.02.22]; "Germany's Battle Cry is Germany Over All", Poster (1915-01), Howard Jones Ltd London (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30325, [Accessed 14.02.22]
[47] Rayner, 'The Carer', p. 519.

that require male protection, the propagandist valorised the notion that masculinity was dependent on the defence of traditional gender and sexual relations.[48]

Thus, it is evident that the official propagandist sought to maintain traditional understandings of masculinity by establishing a generalised idiom of violence within iconography, imagery that's veracity was seemingly confirmed in the consistent horrifying, exaggerated accounts of violence, that also saturated other areas of cultural production. Whilst this thesis does not exist to wholly examine and analyse general cultural production, it is interesting to make reference to material other than that produced by the government, to gain insight into how such narratives were perpetuated more widely and how this gave official propaganda a narrative from which to emanate. The first official reports of atrocities appeared in *The Times* on the 26th August 1914, and quickly became innumerable in the subsequent months. Whilst many articles simply sought to provide the British public with generalised updates on the Belgian issue, the most notable reportage was that detailing shocking supposed eyewitness accounts of unimaginable violence committed against women and children. Such source material is ubiquitous, and thus due to the brevity of this thesis, unfeasible to examine. However, articles such as that published by *The Times,* and *The Daily Mail* are an exemplar of the narrative created within the media. Whilst *The Times* published numerous articles on the 'Rape of Belgium', particularly graphic is that of a testimony of a supposed witness to a German solider 'chop off the arms of a baby that clung to its mother's skirts', whilst *The Daily Mail* published accounts of the 'Inhuman Germans' that subjected a Belgian girl to having both of her ears cut off, whilst the baby that she held

[48] Kent *Making Peace,* p. 30.

was struck by a German bayonet.[49] Violence against innocent civilians also became a central theme in popular literature, with authors such as that of William Le Queux describing to his readers the horrors perpetrated by the German army, including that of how 'tortures were inflicted on helpless old men, women, and children, peaceful villagers were hanged, innocent children were savagely sabred by German officers, wounded soldiers and officers shot and mutilated'.[50] Similar anti-German sentiments were also expressed in art, with the most notable being Edmund J Sullivan's *The Kaiser's Garland,* a collection of elaborate illustrations, including that entitled 'The Gentle German'.[51] The illustration shows a German solider, bayonetting a small-winged allegory, encouraging the viewer to actively visualise atrocities. Such propaganda is clear evidence of the propagandist use of a unitary conception of gender roles and identities, employing the contemporary understanding of masculinity as assertiveness, being active and quick to take initiative, and the corresponding supposedly opposing, defining characteristics of femininity, such as that of gentleness, emotionality and a maternal nurturing nature in order to encourage enlistment.[52]

However, apropos to the maintenance of patriarchal imperatives and exploitation of traditional gender roles in recruitment propaganda, perhaps the most relevant depiction of women is that of the extensive propagandist depiction of women as victims of specifically sexual violence. In examining official propaganda, one can observe the creation of a connection between war and sex, almost an eroticism of conflict, in which men were called

[49] *The Times,* 28 August 1914, p. 7; *The Daily Mail,* 15 September 1914, p. 3.
[50] William Le Queux, *German Atrocities: A Record of Shameless Deeds* (London: 1914)
[51] "The Gentle German", Edmund J Sullivan, *The Kaiser's Garland,* 1915, in Mark Bryant, *World War One in Cartoons* (London: Grub Street Publishing, 2014), p. 30.
[52] "The Gentle German", Edmund J Sullivan, *The Kaiser's Garland,* 1915, in Mark Bryant, *World War One in Cartoons* (London: Grub Street Publishing, 2014), p. 30; Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford; Cambridge; Massachusetts: B. Blackwell, 1990), p. 91.

upon to defend women as 'sexual property'.[53] Whilst the invasion was as aforementioned, characterized by a generalised idiom of violence, it is commonly understood that the Belgian issue was largely presented in a way that 'dwelt of perverse sexual acts, lurid mutilations, and graphic accounts of child abuse of often dubious veracity'.[54] It is this, the propagandist representation of Belgium as the 'raped and mutilated maiden left to die', which allowed for the sexual implications of the Belgian issue to be presented within a framework of traditional gender relations, in which men were those who protected, women those who required protection.[55]

Such chivalrous imagery consistently found expression in the atrocity campaigns of the official propagandist. One such example, entitled 'Remember Belgium', depicted a German solider standing on the body of a dead woman, his feet poised as if intending to stand on a new-born baby laid beside her.[56] The image is accompanied by extensive text, including that of an exchange supposedly occurring between a German General, Boehn, and Alexandra Powell. Boehn, in refuting the claims of unnecessary violence on behalf of the German army, is posed the following questions - 'how about the woman's body I saw with the hands and feet cut off? How about the little girl two years old shot in her mother's arms by an Uhlan and whose funeral I attended at Heystopdenberg? How about the old man hung from the rafters by his hands and roasted to death by a bonfire built under him?'. Whilst this is yet further evidence of the creation of a generalised idiom of violence, the

[53] Kent, *Making Peace,* p. 26.
[54] Kent, *Making Peace,* p. 23.
[55] Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War,* p. 25; Kent, *Making Peace,* p. 30; Nicoletta Gullace, "*The Blood of Our Sons" Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) p. 43.
[56] "Remember Belgium", Poster (1914-10), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow, Middlesex (Printer), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow, Middlesex (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28602 [Accessed 17.02.22]

poster also includes a British soldier's diary, which is perhaps the most pertinent to a debate regarding the upholding of patriarchal imperatives through the presentation of sexual violence. The extracts reads as follows:

We have got three girls in the trenches with us, who came for protection. One had no clothes on, having been outraged by the Germans. I have given her my shirt and divided my rations among them. In consequence I feel rather hungry .... Another poor girl has just come in, having had both her breasts cut off. Luckily I caught the Uhlan officer in the act, and with a rifle at 300 yards killed him. And now she is with us, but, poor girl, I am afraid she will die. She is very pretty, and only about 19, and only has her skirt on .... '

It concludes by asking the viewer 'Should YOU stand by while such things go on?'. The use of such a lurid account of violent sexual assault indubitably represents the female body as the subject of the male aggression of the central powers, unleashed by the realities of war, whilst the emphasis on sexual difference represents the British soldier aiding the victims as the epitome of heroism as defined in traditional gendered terms.[57] Whilst such accounts were dubious, they were effective in justifying the conflict in terms of the safety of the family and the sanctity of the woman's body', crucial aspects of the ideology of separate spheres and thus inherently emblematic of the dominant pre-war gender discourses of the Edwardian period.[58]

Despite this specific example, for the most part official propaganda posters did not present such graphic images of the 'Rape of Belgium', as it was unnecessary in conveying the urgency of enlistment, for this was largely achieved in a myriad of other ways, including the

[57] Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.
[58] Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons,* p. 2.

official narrative being supplemented with that perpetuated in other areas of cultural production. Whilst the German campaign in Belgium was indubitably brutal, much of this production constituted a torrent of largely false stories that can only be described as atrocity-mongering. For example, in returning to the example of William Le Queux's *A Record of Shameless Deeds,* he refers to the 'screams of dying women raped and horribly mutilated by German soldiers accused of variously of cutting off the feet, hands or breasts of their innocent and hapless victims'.[59] Such a narrative was further validified in that reports of a similar nature continued to saturate the press, with an exemplar article being that of *The Daily Mail,* asserting that 'witnesses have detailed to us several outrages on women. In one case we have evidence of the rape of a girl by four soldiers'.[60] It is evident that this, the flamboyant nature of British cultural production allowed for much of the government produced iconography to lack such sexually violent intensity. Rather, in being aware that the press had contributed to the creation of what historian Gullace has termed 'a set of seemingly irrefutable moral imperatives', the propagandist simply called for their viewers to 'Help to End the War, elaborating only in suggesting 'punishing the Germans for their barbarous treatment of unoffending civilian populations'.[61] Similarly, other posters called for viewers 'Remember Belgium, Enlist Today', with this specific poster depicting a solider at the forefront of a scene in which a mother and her young child flee from a town set alight.[62] Whilst such iconography continued to uphold patriarchal imperatives in highlighting the importance of the family and the supposed threat the Germans posed to

[59] Le Queux, *German Atrocities*, p.
[60] 'Huns' Killing of the Unarmed', *The Daily Mail,* February 18, 1915.
[61] Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons,* p. 18; "Help to End the War", Poster (1915-01), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow, Middlesex (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2003675278/ [Accessed 14.01.22]
[62] "Remember Belgium, Enlist To-Day", Poster (1915-03), Henry Jenkinson Ltd, Kirkstall Leeds (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30264 [Accessed 14.02.22]

the sanctity of the aforementioned rural Britain, such imagery succeeded in reinforcing the notion of victimisation, whilst lacking explicit brutality.

However, whilst newspapers and popular literature played an indisputably crucial role in creating this narrative of violence from which propaganda could emanate, perhaps most relevant to this discourse is the way in which propagandist ascribed validity to the atrocity stories through the publication of the Bryce Report. The wide circulation of atrocity stories in the media, and the growing concerns regarding the credibility of the sources prompted the British government to appoint, in December 1914, a committee to investigate the alleged atrocities. The committee was headed by Lord Bryce, previously the British ambassador to Washington, on the basis that this would ensure that the report would be carefully considered. However, the 1200 depositions that constituted the report's primary evidence were of dubious validity, a fact widely recognised amongst committee members.[63] Despite this, the report concluded that the pillage and arson that had been described were widely committed acts, in addition to several cases of aggravated rape committed under the threat of death, and sometimes followed with the murder of a victim. The report went on to valorise the stories of mutilation, concluding that the cutting off of one or both hands of women and children occurred with frequency, whilst other forms of mutilation occurred in cases of sexual perversion.[64] Whilst this is not to suggest that the Bryce Report constitutes an example of the government actively publishing false information, it rather evidences a careful avoidance of the verification of evidence, so as to contribute to the narrative of

[63] Trevor Wilson, 'Lord Bryce's Investigation Into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium 1914-15', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 14 (1979), p. 370.
[64] 'The Bryce Report', *The Avalon Project, Documents in Law History and Diplomacy*, Yale Law School, Lilian Goldman Law Library, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brycere.asp [Accessed 04.02.22]

violence and victimisation.[65] Evidence that concluded that the atrocities were in fact fabrication would significantly devalue the Belgian issue, and thus the report evidences a significant discrepancy between actuality and the presented amplification of the acts of violence. As this was sanctioned by the government, it is indisputable that the Bryce Report blurred the lines between official propaganda and that of other areas of cultural production.[66] Whilst of dubious validity, the official sanction of the report allowed it the increasingly valuable commodity of publicly accepted truth, thus valorising the sexually violent overtones in which the propagandist had marketed war.[67] As the Bryce Report was open for global public consumption, having been translated into twenty-seven languages, it informed almost all of the official propagandist depictions of women directly subsequent to its publication, presenting them as victims in need of male heroism. Thus, whilst it does not constitute an example of visual iconography, it is crucial to understanding the representation of gender as depicted in First World War poster art.

Whilst the 'Rape of Belgium' took primacy apropos to atrocity propaganda for much of the first year of the conflict, a continuation of this women as victims' trope that had developed in response to the Belgian issue was applied to the more immediate threats to the safety of British people occurring in December 1914, specifically that of the naval bombardments of Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby. Beginning early on the morning of the 16th December 1914, the costal towns became the first example of civilians actively targeted on British soil, and thus 'Hartlepool and Scarborough became watchwords for German aggression and provided the first wave of what became iconic images of attacks on civil spaces: bombed-

[65] Wilson, 'Lord Bryce's Investigation', p. 378.
[66] Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, p.
[67] Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons,* p. 18.

out homes and female and youthful casualties'.[68] Posters calling for the viewer to 'Remember Scarborough!' were ubiquitous, with the propagandist emphasising the notion of defencelessness, suggesting that the German's have 'shown what is made of their culture' in murdering defenceless women and children.[69] More graphic posters depicted such scenes, including that of a bombed house in Scarborough, with the image caption suggesting that the home had been that of a working man whose wife and children were now sadly deceased as a result of the bombardment. The poster was intended to act as somewhat of a microcosm, a singular example of tragedy that constituted just one of many, with the propagandist asserting that the bombardment was responsible for the deaths of 78 women and children, whilst a further 228 were injured. It asks the viewer, 'Men of Britain Will You Stand This?'.[70] Other posters employed different means of upholding patriarchal imperatives, including for example a poster depicting Britannia standing upon a cliff top bearing a sword. On one side, the viewer sees a burning town, representative of Scarborough, whilst on the other a group of men cheer the allegorical figure on. Whilst the militancy of Britannia may suggest that she does not fit into the traditional notion of separate spheres, as Grayzel has asserted, women held a stable ubiquitous rhetoric in the form of motherhood throughout the conflict and Britannia clearly represents the 'motherland'.[71] Thus, in the poster using the female voice of Britannia in urging the viewer

[68] Susan Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain From the Great War to the Blitz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014), p. 23.
[69] "Remember Scarborough", Poster (1914-12), Harrison and Sons Ltd (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Printer/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30290 [Accessed 07.02.22]
[70] "Men of Britain, Will You Stand This?", Poster (1915), Johnson Riddle and Co Ltd, Penge, London SE20 (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30329 [Accessed 07.02.22]
[71] Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*.

to 'Remember Scarborough, Enlist Now!'.[72] As with the 'Rape of Belgium', the official depiction of this attack was supplemented with the coverage that the bombardment was afforded in the news, which largely sensationalised the attack in representing Scarborough as 'a town under siege, riddled with shells and almost entirely consumed by fire'.[73] This acts as further evidence that the propagandist both informed and was informed by wider cultural production.

Further to this, the historian may also consider the impact of the Bryce Report in inspiring the gendered representation of other acts of war, such as that of the bombardment of British sinking of the RMS Lusitania and the execution of Edith Cavell, which were consistently presented in highly gendered terms.[74] The sinking of the RMS Lusitania occurred on the 7th May 1915, when the British ocean liner was torpedoed by a German U-Boat, accounting for the death of 1198 of the civilians on board, including that of 270 women and 94 children.[75] Whilst this means that 834 of those that drowned were men, indubitably a vast majority, women and children continue to take primacy when the subject of the propaganda pertained to the detriment of civilians. Such an issue is a repeated pattern, as reflected in the aforementioned 'Rape of Belgium' in which the majority of the victims were men of military age, yet the Belgian issue was wholly presented as an attack on women and children, and thus a threat to the traditional constructs of society. For example, the 1915 'Cold Blooded Murder!' poster, existing to highlight a number of the supposed war crimes perpetrated by the German army, places 'The sinking of the Lusitania With Hundreds

[72] "Remember Scarborough! Enlist Now", Poster (1915-01), Lucy Kemp-Welch (Artist), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow Middlesex (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/14989 [Accessed 14.02.22]
[73] Illustrated Police News', 24 December 1914.
[74] Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons,* p. 27.
[75] Official Report of Lord Mersey, Wreck Commissioner of the United Kingdom, cited in Thomas A Bailey, 'The Sinking of the Lusitania', *The American Historical Review,* 41 (1935), p. 57.

of Women and Children', at the top of the poster in the largest font.[76] As such, this precedes claims such as 'Germans have ill-treated British prisoners', and 'Inflicted unspeakable torture by poison gases on our brave troops at Ypres', again awarding the sanctity of the family primacy.

Apropos to Edith Cavell, this overt emphasis on the safety of women is continued yet differs from preceding propaganda in evidencing the creation of a sub trope within that of women as victims, being martyrdom, yet further evidence as to the malleability of the female role to conform to the exigencies of the period. Cavell, a 49 year old nurse working in Brussels, became involved in helping those in occupied Belgium to escape across the Dutch border to the neutral Netherlands. As a result, Cavell was arrested on the 15th August 1915 and charged with aiding the escape of 200 British and French soldiers.[77] Following a short trial, she was executed by a German firing squad on the 12th October 1915, and her image was used extensively in subsequent propaganda posters to further galvanise public opinion against the Germans, and encourage recruitment. Whilst the issue of public opinion is particularly difficult to determine and measure, it is evident that this recruitment propaganda was effective, with Cavell's death credited with an enlistment rate unparalleled after the first few months of the war, giving her somewhat of a posthumous celebrity status.[78] Perhaps the most well-known government produced image of Cavell exists on the

[76] "Cold Blooded Murder!", Poster (1915), Roberts and Leete Ltd, London (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30601 [Accessed 14.02.22]
[77] Guy Richard Hodgson, 'Nurse, Martyr, Propaganda Tool: The Reporting of Edith Cavell in British Newspapers 1915 – 1920', *Media, War and Conflict,* 10 (2017), p. 241.
[78] Katie Pickles, 'Edith Cavell – Heroine: No Hatred or Bitterness for Anyone?', *History Now,* 3 (1997), p. 4; Shane M Barney, 'The Mythic Matters of Edith Cavell: Propaganda, Legend, Myth and Memory', *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques,* 31 (2005), p. 221.

'Murdered by the Huns' poster that urges men to enlist in order to 'stop such atrocities'.[79] However, her image was also prevalent within a number of other areas of cultural production, appearing in numerous of forms of media, specifically that of popular magazines and newspapers. Publications such as that of the *Illustrated London News* featured images of Cavell, with one such example being artist A Forestier's allegorical drawing of Cavell, bearing the caption 'Faith and Courage in Death'.[80] The lifeless body of Cavell appears in the forefront of the image, with the German solider responsible for her death in the background. Over Cavell's body hovers a winged allegorical figure, shining light onto her corpse. It goes on to suggest that Cavell had died like a heroine, referring to her as 'the heroic English nurse so brutally executed by the German military authorities', furthering the notion of women as victims, whom were 'bearing the greatest burden of this terrible war'. Cavell's image was also used on the cover of *Illustrated London News,* captioned 'The Heroic Miss Edith Cavell'.[81] Such commemorative images were ubiquitous, with popular magazines such as that of *War Illustrated,* similarly dedicating the inside cover of the issue to her, subsequent to her execution. Cavell was also depicted in more infrequent examples of cultural production. One specific, full sized image of Cavell was produced on a British postcard to be sold as a souvenir for the 1916 Belgian Soldiers Fund, bearing the caption 'The Belgian Solider Has No Home'.[82] It is indisputable that the function of some of these images was solely the adulation of Cavell and her wartime contribution, however, for the most part, the propagandist function of the images is clear. Despite Cavell's direct

[79] "Murdered by the Huns", Poster (Date Unknown), Record Print, Windsor (Printer), The Essex County Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30888 [Accessed 07.02.22]
[80] "Faith and Courage in Death", *The Illustrated London News,* 30 October, 1915.
[81] "The Heroic Miss Edith Cavell", *The Illustrated London News,* 23 October, 1915.
[82] "Edith Cavell", Postcard (1916), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1030002855 [Accessed 29.03.22]

contribution to war effort and her role in what could be considered espionage, wholly unacceptable for women at the beginning of the conflict, her death was modelled to fit within the feminine notion of service, support and sacrifice thus allowing her martyr status.

Whilst the brevity of this thesis largely limits analysis of propaganda to Britain alone, it is also interesting to highlight how similar images were presented by transatlantic propagandists, with Cavell's death being acknowledged in Australia, Egypt, France, Italy, the United States, Canada and Russia. As such, it is evident that the use of gendered imagery to foster support for the conflict and simultaneously perpetuate gendered ideals extended beyond British propaganda and can thus tell the historian much about the discourse surrounding gender on a more global scale. It is evident that Cavell was significant specifically in propaganda produced in Australia, with posters such as that of 'Boys Remember Nurse Cavell', produced immediately after her execution. The poster depicts a German solider standing over the body of Edith Cavell with other members of the firing squad silhouetted in the background, whilst a spectral figure, characterizing justice, hovers alongside the scene.[83] Similar imagery, depicting a German solider standing over Cavell's body was also produced in alternate areas of cultural production, including that of graphic postcards, urging the viewer to 'Remember Edith Cavell', a victim of murder. Whilst such imagery was produced directly subsequent to her execution, the longevity of her posthumous status is evidenced in that her image continued to be used following the conclusion of the conflict.[84] For example, she is depicted in an Australian poster urging the

[83] "Boys Remember Nurse Cavell", Poster (1915), Virgil Reilly (Artist), State Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Australian War Memorial, https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C103771 [Accessed 29.03.22]
[84] "Remember Edith Cavell", Postcard (Date Unknown), Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Canadian War Museum, https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/propaganda/anti-german-materials/remember-edith-cavell/ [Accessed 29.03.22]

public to buy war bonds, suggesting that late nurse Cavell gave all, and thus the viewer should invest.[85]

Interestingly, and perhaps of greatest relevance to the discussion of the upholding of patriarchal imperatives, in both British and transatlantic source material, Cavell is depicted in her nursing uniform. Whilst the emphasis on traditional gender roles in the propaganda depicting women as active participants will be explored at length in subsequent chapters, the use of societally acceptable remembrances of Cavell across the globe evidence that propaganda both relied upon and perpetuated gendered ideals to bolster recruitment.[86] Images of Cavell in nursing uniform were ubiquitous, as the profession was the perfect amalgam of the female in a nurturing role, sacrificial, selfless, patriotic, and above all, non-threatening to the notion of separate spheres of influence.[87] It is this, the employment of gendered-spatialisation despite Cavell's active engagement in the conflict that evidences the propagandist preserving the feminine sphere of influence, and thus the sexual balance of power. In continually moulding women in this manner, from victimhood to martyrdom, the propagandist conformed to popular understandings of gender and allowed for women to act as a cause from which propaganda could emanate.

Whilst this evidences that the depiction of women largely existed for a male audience for the purpose of recruitment, in perpetuating the notion of the male protector, in examining the depiction of femininity at the beginning of the conflict, one must also analyse the more limited examples of iconography that's purpose was more visibly twofold, existing also for a

[85] "She Gave All" Poster (1918), E B Studios Sydney (Printer), Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30025 [Accessed 29.03.22]
[86] Barney, 'The Mythic Matters of Edith Cavell', p. 221.
[87] Rayner, 'The Carer', p. 522; Tammy Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914 –1918* (New York: New York University Press), p. 165.

female audience. Such iconography implicated women in recruiting in a way that differed from their depiction of as victims of violence, rather representing them as having a moral responsibility to encourage men to enlist, a trope of female representation that may be referred to as gender appropriate duty. The production of such posters was accelerated in early 1915, when voluntary recruitment was steadily declining, and many appeared to echo the call to arms directed at men in giving women a specific and active role in the conflict. However, although differing from preceding propaganda, such depiction continued to reflect the gendered representation of war and conflict in that the gulf of difference between the sexes continued to be emphasised, acting as a further example as to the malleability of femininity. Gender appropriate duty found expression in some of the most prominent posters of the period, including that of E J Keeley's Women of Britain Say Go, depicting two women and a child watching a procession of men march toward war from the safety of their home.[88] Similar iconography includes that of the poster 'Go Its Your Duty Lad', in which an older woman with her arm around a young man of military age, urges him to 'Join Today'.[89] Whilst such propaganda does to some extent exist for a male audience, as the use of a woman's voice to exhort men to enlist, coupled with such imagery allowed men to wholly invest in the idea that that they were protecting their families and this image of the home, the poster largely exists to remind women of their patriotic obligation.

Such an issue has been explored at length by historian Nicoletta Gullace, who asserts that apropos to female representation, aside from victimisation and martyrdom, this

[88] "Women of Britain Say Go!", Poster (1915), Hill, Siffken and Co Ltd, London (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/14625 [Accessed 07.02.22]
[89] "Go! It's Your Duty Lad", Poster (1915), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow, Middlesex (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30640 [Accessed 07.02.22]

responsibility for the morality of war was the other most predominant depiction of women and femininity. Gullace suggests that this sacrifice of what she terms 'the blood of our sons', was the feminine duty most equitably aligned to that of soldiering, with the posters that appeal to this sense of duty acting as evidence that women continued to be targeted by a specific gender discourse, that furthered their already deeply internalised idea that femininity entailed self-sacrifice.[90] The propagandist consistently exploited this, in suggesting to the women who were understandably reluctant to send their husbands, brothers and sons to war, that men were holding back on their account, asking them 'won't you prove your love for your country by persuading them to go?'.[91] The poster goes on to pose the question 'when the war is over and someone asks your husband or son what they did in the great war, is he to hang his head because you would not let him go?'.

Whilst this acts as evidence of the marketing of recruitment as a patriotic obligation and domestic duty, apropos to the malleability of the female role, and the vigorously adaptable nature of patriarchy, this also evidences the government emphasis on the need for female stoicism. Whilst stoicism may not be a quality most quickly applied to the notion of femininity, it is an essential component of the sacrificial and supportive attitude that women were expected to display and is thus a prominent theme. The propagandist encouraged such stoicism, and in some cases fervent patriotism, by consistently emphasising the suffering that had occurred thus far in the conflict. Posters addressing the women of the nation reminded them of atrocities such as that of the German invasion of Belgium, asking them 'Have you thought what they would do if they invaded this country?',

[90] Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p. 73

[91] "To the Women of Britain", Poster (1915), The Romwell Press, Strand London (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28300 [Accessed 14.02.22]

this asking them to appropriate action, and emphasising the importance of this in the success or failure of war.[92]

As such, the propagandist constructed women as a gendered weapon, a notion furthered illustrated in the propaganda that equated a man's willingness to enlist with the worth he believed his significant other to hold. There were examples of this narrative perpetuated in propaganda that existed solely for men, the most clear example of which however being Irish, rather than British, yet irrespectively exemplar of this. The poster asked men 'Have you any women folk worth defending?'.[93] However, as aforementioned, much of this propaganda was largely intended for a female audience, specifically that of one poster produced by the government, and subsequently reproduced in other media outlets such as that of newspapers, entitled 'To the Young Women of London'.[94] This poster posed the question, 'Is your best boy wearing Khaki? If not, don't you think he should be?'. The propagandist goes on to suggest that if a woman's partner was shirking his military responsibility, an obligation inextricably bound up with the notion of masculinity, the time may come when the viewer may find herself neglected. In this sense, the propagandist asks women to examine their sense of worth, in asking 'If he does not think that you and your country are worth fighting for, why do you think he is worthy of you?'. Conversely, presenting men with the suggestion that they could be spurned if they did not enlist, as this could imply a lack of masculinity, and thus an inability to satisfy the expectations of their

[92] "To The Women of Britain", Poster (1915), Bemrose and Sons Ltd, London and Derby (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30467 [Accessed 14.02.22]; Susan Grayzel, 'Women's Mobilisation For War', https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/womens_mobilization_for_war [Accessed 04.02.22]

[93] "Have you Any Women-Folk Worth Defending" Poster (1915-03), Hely's Ltd (Printer), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31624 [Accessed 14.02.22]

[94] "To the Young Women of London", Poster (1915-02), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow, Middlesex (Printer), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30765 [Accessed 14.02.22]

loved ones.[95] In this sense, the propagandist allowed women to transgress the traditional gender boundaries in taking an active role in defining the parameters of masculinity in wartime, yet this existed to reaffirm the distinction between the home front and the front line.

As such, the gendered representation of war and conflict, and its clear roots in Edwardian Britain were maintained, with iconography reflecting a reaffirmation of gender roles, rather than a reconstruction or re drawing. Whilst it is evident that femininity was altered and moulded to conform to the exigencies of the period, accounting for the seamless transitions between victimisation, martyrdom and gender appropriate duty, the vigorously adaptable nature of patriarchy shines through in that the propagandist consistently employed gender norms, stereotypes and constructions to counteract the destabilising effects of war.[96] The notion that femininity is but a historical construct becomes ever more plausible in the analysis of First World War iconography.

[95] Jo Fox 'Propaganda For Patriotism and Nationalism', Online Video Recording, YouTube, December 5 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxMhgncLxKY [Accessed 04.02.22]
[96] Todd, 'The Hun and the Home', p. 140.

Chapter Two: Women as Allegories

Whilst the depiction of women as victims dominated much of the official propaganda disseminated during the First World War, in examining the posters in which women appear, the sheer number of them and the range of femininities they portray is striking.[97] Thus, undertaking a discussion regarding the upholding of patriarchal imperatives and the malleability of the female role in propaganda requires the historian to consider various other tropes. This includes the ubiquitous female allegories; iconic figures used in order to set and strengthen national identity and promote patriotism in gendered terms. Allegorical figures took numerous forms, being both real people presented in mythologised form, or figures that came from old myths or popular folklore, the use of which was a theme common to all of the belligerent nations.[98] Thus, such imagery has great significance in the discourse surrounding the maintenance of patriarchal imperatives within First World War iconography.

Interestingly, whilst images of women have functioned as a vehicle of allegory in Western art for centuries, such iconography both throughout history, and specifically during Great War, has received significantly less academic attention than other depictions of women.[99] One plausible explanation for this is that allegorical imagery employed a number of seemingly contradictory elements. In representing women as emblems of the nation, the propagandist was investing femininity with a power which was denied to women by a society in which masculine authority was paramount.[100] Indubitably, this made allegorical imagery much more difficult to accommodate within the dominant pre-war gender discourses, which has allowed proponents of the watershed interpretation to assert that wartime iconography acted as 'the site of a breakthrough for an entirely new figure, the

[97] Pearl James, *Picture This: World War One Posters and Visual Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), p. 274.
[98] David Welch, 'Propaganda For Patriotism and Nationalism, https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/patriotism-and-nationalism [Accessed 18.05.22]
[99] James, *Picture This,* p. 276.
[100] Richenda M Roberts 'ART OF A SECOND ORDER' The First World War From The British Home Front Perspective', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012, p.

'Emancipated Girl'.[101] However, this chapter will rather evidence that whilst allegorical imagery allowed for a certain degree of transgression of the gender boundary in that it showed that women did not have one place, the 'organicist, familial rhetoric' of the Edwardian period remained and was consistently, subtly reaffirmed.[102] Visual culture largely reflected agreement with the traditional understandings of appropriate gender roles as far as was possible whilst conforming to exigencies of the period.[103] As allegories were versatile, depicted as 'classically-sometimes romantically – draped heroic figures who project alternately stateliness, sensuality or furious wrath', in some cases this upholding of patriarchal imperatives was more complex, particularly in images in which allegories appeared militant.[104] Yet each image evidences to some extent the gendered structure of subordination that had characterised the pre-war period, an issue identified by historians Higonnet and Higonnet as the 'Double Helix'. Such a thesis has validity not only with regards to Great Britain's Britannia, but rather globally, with each of the allied nations embodied by a female figure, including that of Belgium depicted in the guise of womanhood, Marianne representing France and the United States' Lady Liberty and Columbia.

Indisputably, each of these national identities evolved as personifications based on human stereotypes, and it is this evolution that has been the focus of much academia relating to allegorical imagery.[105] A number of historians have explored how the contemporary understanding of Britannia as representative of the motherland, a symbol of national pride, strength and unity was reached, as the positive abstract principles with which we now relate her have not always been applicable. Britannia's personification rather started in the Roman period, in which she appeared as a symbol of submission following one of Hadrian's victories in Britain, which was subsequently recorded on a

[101] Rayner, 'The Carer', p. 519; James, *Picture This,* p. 273.
[102] James, *Picture This,* p. 275; Higonnet and Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', p. 45.
[103] Shover, 'Roles and Images', p. 471.
[104] Shover, 'Roles and Images', p. 479.
[105] Roy T Matthews, 'Britannia and John Bull: From Birth to Maturity', *The Historian,* 62 (2000), p. 799.

coin.[106] Featuring Hadrian's portrait on the obverse, Britannia was depicted on the reverse in a wholly submissive pose. She is wearing classical robes, her spear cradled in her left arm, her shield at rest, armour cast off', a representation of Britannia that became the accepted symbol of Great Britain for the succeeding 1500 years.[107] However, this depiction was altered slightly in the early seventeenth century, in which a handful of more dominant images of Britannia emerged, perhaps the most prominent of which being featured in Henry Peacham's 'Minerva Britannia'.[108] In this image, Britannia emanates strength and confidence, striding toward a ship wearing drapery and an armoured breastplate. Historian Roy Matthews suggests that this image is based on the old antique Roman model, when 'Romanes overran her land', and symbolises Britannia using her newfound maritime power to usurp Rome.[109] However, despite images such as this, depictions of allegories with a focus on militant strength did not become commonplace. Rather, by the 1780's, the image of Britannia had become one that largely symbolised traditional notions of femininity, depicting her as 'either a caregiver or maternal figure, or as a woman that needed the support of a man'.[110] This image was solidified in the mid to late 1800's, particularly by the publication *Punch Magazine,* which had been in circulation since 1841. Britannia often featured in the satirical publication, particularly in times of conflict, the one in closest proximity to the First World War being that of the 1899 Boer War. This conflict inspired the publication of images such as that of the 'Britannia Consolatrix', in which Britannia is depicted comforting a mother and her two children after her husband has left to fight.[111] In images such as these, it is evident that propagandist depiction of allegorical figures in the pre-war period maintained a clear emphasis on a dichotomy between men and women, with

[106] Matthews, 'Britannia and John Bull', p. 799.
[107] Matthews, Britannia and John Bull', p. 800; Matthews, 'Britannia and John Bull, p. 800.
[108] Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britannia* (London: Printed in Shoe-Lane at the figure of the Faulcon by Wa. Dight, 1612)
[109] Matthews, Britannia and John Bull, p. 802.
[110] Tamara L Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (Aldershot : Ashgate, 2003), p. 125.
[111] "Britannia Consolatrix".

Britannia represented as remote from conflict, thus adhering to the ideology of separate spheres of gender.

However, such depictions of Britannia were indubitably challenged by the context of a global war, and thus the historian sees a distinct change in visual culture, with Britannia's role becoming much more versatile than it once was. The context of this issue is global, as the use of female allegories to represent the nation on domestic and foreign affairs was common to all of the belligerent states.[112] Prior to the conflict, it is evident that Britannia could function solely as a maternal figure or caretaker, but the context of a global war, which at its inception required voluntary military service, allowed for her to take on numerous other forms. Historian Madge Dresser has suggested that these can be categorised as 'the vulnerable virgin, courted or threatened by the powers of the day; the compassionate and weeping Madonna, who mourns the nation's tragedies; 'she who must be obeyed,' the formidable matronly persona; and the war-like Athena, who is the most conventionally emblematic and stylised of the four types'.[113] Dresser's summary highlights the seemingly contradictory elements of Britannia's persona in that she is often portrayed in a way that supports traditional notions of femininity, in imagery in which she is depicted as mother to the nation's children and a victim of the enemy's brutalisation.[114] Yet, conversely, there are numerous images of Britannia produced in wider visual culture in which she appears more militant and combative. As belligerency existed only as a male enterprise, this direct involvement in conflict does not immediately seem to reflect the emphasis placed on the female domestic virtue that characterised the Edwardian period. Allowing Britannia this central place in conflict, rather than depicting her as remote from the strife of war makes her a fascinating subject for the examination of gender roles, as despite women between supposedly unsuited by nature to military participation, she appears to

[112] James, *Picture This,* p. 277.
[113] Madge Dresser, 'Britannia,' in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of National Identity: Volume III: National Fictions*, ed. by Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 40.
[114] Hunt, *Defining John Bull,* p. 123.

exist outside of the ideological structure of separate spheres, clad in armour and closely associated with battle.[115]

This Britannia is depicted in numerous posters, including that of the 'National Service', in which she is pictured holding a union jack, pointing the group of men following her towards what the viewer assumes to be Europe, urging them to 'Defend your island from the grimmest menace that ever threatened it'.[116] Such an emphasis on Britannia's role being to exhort men into conflict is ubiquitous, evidenced in other posters such as that of the aforementioned 'Remember Scarborough' poster, and that of the 'Every Man' poster, both produced in 1915.[117] In both posters, the understanding of Britannia as a figure existent only to guide the nation's men is clear. For example, in the poster produced in response to the bombardment of Scarborough, Britannia is depicted at the forefront of the scene, holding a union jack flag in one hand and brandishing a sword in the other. Following Britannia, a procession of men cheer, whilst the propagandist asks the viewer to follow suit in joining the army to avenge the killings. Similarly, the 'Every Man' poster depicts Britannia standing in front of a group of civilian men, gesturing towards a recruitment poster that is on display. Whilst it is indisputable that posters such as these do transgress the gender boundary to some extent, in allowing Britannia a degree of strength and presence that was traditionally understood as inherently masculine, her function being to exhort men to conflict is indicative of her vulnerability. In urgently asking for men's help, urging them to 'enlist now', or 'enrol today', Britannia's dependence on the enlistment of civilian men is clear. Thus, despite her somewhat militant, masculine persona in these images, depictions of Britannia continue to be reflective of

[115] Alexandra Campbell-Moffat, 'Representations of Women in Punch Magazine During the First World War 1914 – 1918', Unpublished Master of Philosophy Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2018, p. 18.
[116] "National Service", Poster (1917), Septimus E Scott (Artist), David Allen and Sons Ltd, 17 Leicester Street, London, W Belfast, Harrow, Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin (Printer), Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/24062 [Accessed 06.05.22]
[117] "Remember Scarborough", Poster (1915), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow, Middlesex (Printer) Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/14989 [Accessed 14.02.22]; "Every Man – What is Your Answer to Your Country's Call", Poster (1915), Lucy Kemp-Welch (Artist), Wilson and Whitworth Ltd, Romford (Printer), Essex Times (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30789 [Accessed 06.5.22]

traditional understandings of gender roles. Historian Susan Grayzel explores this and asserts that whilst these images appear much different to the images of women as victims, we may view this as evidence of the stable ubiquitous rhetoric that women held in the form of motherhood throughout the conflict. She understands Britannia to be representative of the 'motherland', who despite being militant is still identifiable as a maternal figure, encouraging her 'sons' to go off and fight.[118] Such an assertion has relevance not only to the allegory Britannia, but rather has a global context, evidenced also in the iconography of the allied nations, particularly in both French and American propaganda. For example, in the French poster "Pour le Drapeau! Pour la Victoire! [For the Flag! For Victory]", Marianne stands centrally, holding a sword towards the sky in her right hand, and a war torn Tricolore in her left hand.[119] However, as with the images of Britannia, this traditionally masculine military strength is offset by her obvious reliance on civilian men, indicated by the massed formations of French troops that are following her into battle. This is also reflected in American iconography, in posters such as that ""I Shall Expect Every Man Who is Not a Slacker to be at My Side Throughout This Great Enterprise", which shows Liberty armed, encouraging men to follow her into battle.[120] It is evident that these posters maintained a marked distinction between exhortation and participation, furthered by the fact that such posters were produced in a period in which women were prohibited from fighting. Thus, these images created such distance from civilian women that they could successfully unify the nation whilst maintaining the traditional notion that femininity could be understood as synonymous with peace.[121]

The use of feminine, abstract principles was commonplace in First World War iconography but also prior to the conflict, as this feature of allegoric representation has its origins in verbal rhetoric,

[118] Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War,* p. 86.
[119] "Pour le Drapeau! Pour la Victoire! [For the Flag! For Victory]", Poster (1917), Georges (Artist), Devambez Imprimerie, Paris (Printer), Banque Nationale de Crédit (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/24042 [Accessed 06.05.22]
[120] "I Shall Expect Every Man Who is Not a Slacker to be at My Side Throughout This Great Enterprise", Poster (Date Unknown), Herbert Paus (Artist), Printer Unknown, U.S Navy Department, U.S Navy Recruiting Bureau (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/21257 [Accessed 07.05.22]
[121] James, *Picture This,* p. 296.

following the rules of grammar. In Greek and Latin, many abstract nouns, including justice, temperance, fortitude, hope and justice are feminine in grammatical gender.[122] Aside from the use of the peace, the propagandist also created a synonymity between Britannia and the principle 'justice', to maintain pre-war gender discourses. Posters such as that of 'Heroes of the Sea' which depicts Britannia holding a round shield decorated with the union jack, and a sword inscribed with the word justice.[123] She stands upon a cliff with the sword pointed towards the sky, with an image of a hand holding a flaming torch appearing from the water below. Again, whilst Britannia is obviously armed, thus transgressing the gender boundary to some extent, the continuous association between Britannia and these feminine abstract principles are subtle examples of traditional notions of femininity being maintained. Again, the context of this was global, with allied propaganda also making and sustaining these links for the duration of the conflict. For example, American propaganda, such as the "Columbia Calls" poster features the allegorical figure alone, holding a sword in one hand and an American flag in the other.[124] Alongside her image is a poem, part of which reading 'The stars and stripes will lead us on a mighty hope for right, that peace will reign forevermore, and war from earth take flight'. Whilst, similarly to Britannia, Columbia initially appears to exist outside the notion of separate spheres, this evidences the synonymity created between peace and femininity, creating distance between Columbia and American women. Thus, the historian may understand wartime allegories' newfound versatility as evidence of the propagandist altering the domestic rhetoric slightly to contain the disruptions of the war, rather than representing a breakdown of ideological structures.[125]

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[122] James, *Picture This,* p. 276.
[123] "Heroes of the Sea", Poster (Date Unknown), Artist Unknown, Hill Siffken and Co Ltd, London (Printer), King George's Fund for Sailors (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30140 [Accessed 06.05.22]
[124] "Columbia Calls", Poster (CA 1916-1917), Frances Adams Halsted (Designer), Vincente Aderente (Painter), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/85 [Accessed 07.05.22]
[125] Higonnet and Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', p. 45.

As combative allegorical imagery indubitably represented the greatest challenge to domestic rhetoric, yet still evidenced the upholding of patriarchal imperatives, alternate depictions of Britannia can be considered as overtly reflective of Edwardian ideology. Whilst Britannia's maternal nature had been utilised in the creation of a bond between the nation and the solider, pre-war gender discourses are most clearly illustrated in the continued emphasis on Britannia's maternalism. Whilst there are numerous examples of this, some of the most interesting were produced in the relatively unexamined 'National Baby Week' campaigns, that were centred around the issue of high infant mortality, urging the public to 'Save the Babies'. Many of the posters that were produced during this period evidence the way in which narratives on infant mortality, maternalism and war rhetoric converged, with posters produced suggesting that it was 'More Dangerous to be a Baby in England Than a Solider in France'.[126] Britannia was introduced to such narratives in a number of posters, one specific example, entitled 'National Baby Week', showing Britannia cradling a baby and protecting two small children from the figure of death that is looming behind her.[127] The idea of Britannia being a crucial figure in ensuring the safety of children was also used in the context of the 'Rape of Belgium'. In the poster 'Belgium Night', Britannia is depicted leaning towards an emaciated woman that is kneeling with her back to the viewer and her arms around three small children, an image that is captioned 'they must not starve'.[128]

Traditional models of womanhood were not only embodied by Britannia, but again by other allegories, with the notion of maternalism global in context, appearing in both official propaganda and wider visual culture. In France for example, images of Marianne that conformed to pre-war gender discourses were ubiquitous, disseminated in all forms of wartime cultural mobilisation to

[126] Linda Bryder, 'Mobilising Mothers: The 1917 National Baby Week', *Medical History,* 63 (2018), p. 2; "Save the Babies", Poster (1917), Printer Unknown, National Council of Baby Week (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30111 [Accessed 06.05.22]
[127] "National Baby Week", Poster (Date Unknown), Septimus E Scott (Artist), National Council of Baby Week (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/24061 [Accessed 06.05.22]
[128] "Belgium Night", Poster (1916), John Hassall (Artist), Crowther and Goodman, London (Printer), National Committee For Relief in Belgium (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/12342 [Accessed 06.05.22]

incite women to be utterly devoted to their family and country.[129] Similarly, to the images of Britannia, Marianne was often depicted as the protector of the nation's children, an example of which being the illustration of her on the "Souscrivez au cinqième emprunt [Subscribe to the Fifth Loan]" poster.[130] Marianne is depicted in a red Phrygian cap, symbolic of liberty, traditional dress and a long cloak. Beneath her cloak, she has her arms around a young boy and girl in traditional Alsatian dress. The emphasis on her role in keeping them safe, highlighting the traditionally feminine characteristics of nurture and care allows Marianne to represent the ideals purportedly motivating the combatant nations in highly gendered, traditional terms, an issue that also relevant when examining the role of allegories in atrocity propaganda.

Much atrocity propaganda used the depiction of civilian women as victims of brutalisation, as it was an effective call to action, specifically for married men that in having wives and children, could identify with the propaganda on deeply personal terms. However, the suffering inflicted upon the occupied, and the hopelessness of women in these situations was also graphically expressed in gendered depictions of allegorical figures, specifically with regards to issues such as that of the 'Rape of Belgium', the execution of Edith Cavell and the sinking of the RMS Lusitania.[131] Depicting allegorical figures in this way had a slightly different function in that they symbolised the general national values for which Britons fought in the conflict, allowing for the creation of a 'national family', a traditional structure that must be defended against the barbarism of the Germans. One specific example that depicts Britannia as a victim is the 'Take Up the Sword of Justice' poster, in which she is depicted in the forefront of a scene of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania, in which

[129] Philippa Louise Read, 'Female Herosim in First World War France: Representations and Lived Experiences', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 2016, p. 61.
[130] "Souscrivez au Cinquième Emprunt [Subscribe to the Fifth Loan]", Poster (1918), M L Pinel (Artist), Imprimerie H Chachoin, Paris (Printer), Union Amicale d'Alsace Lorraine (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/21802 [Accessed 06.05.22]
[131] Jo Fox, World War One Atrocity Propaganda, https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/videos/world-war-one-atrocity-propaganda [Accessed 07.05.22]

children can be seen drowning around her.[132] She is offering the male viewer a sword, asking them to help her in defending their country against such attacks. Graphic images of allegories and dying children were also present in allied propaganda, including a very similar image produced in a recruitment poster for the US navy. Columbia is depicted walking across a stretch of water filled with drowning children from a sunken ship that occupies the background of the poster, urging the viewer to join the navy and stop such atrocities.[133] Whilst Britannia and other allegories had been used in a number of other posters to represent strength and unity, these posters successfully neutralise these traditionally masculine depictions, by evidencing the vulnerability of allegories without the aid of civilian men. In turn, these images also encouraged men to support the sacrificial attitude towards war, with such imagery effectively denying men vulnerability, a crucial issue in the context of recruiting men to go to fight in the potentially deadly, physically and psychically damaging conditions that existed at the fighting front'.[134]

Globally, the use of allegories to deny male vulnerability were specifically used in posters pertaining to issues in France and Belgium. The portrayal of 'feminised' France and Belgium as victims of Germany's ruthless militarism saturated all areas of cultural production. Whilst this thesis primarily exists to examine official iconography, such wider cultural production remains relevant in that such forms of media were being consumed simultaneously and can offer the historian a valuable insight into understandings of gender during this period. Such imagery was prevalent in American newspapers, specifically that of the *New York Tribune,* that consistently printed political cartoons relating to current affairs. For example, with the 1915 sinking of the RMS Lusitania, the paper printed an image showing Columbia in mourning, whilst the female personification of Belgium

[132] "Take Up the Sword of Justice", Poster (1915), Bernard Partridge (Artist), David Allen and Sons Ltd, Harrow, Middlesex (Printer), Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/21133 [Accessed 06.05.22]
[133] "Shall This Continue – Join the Navy", Poster (First World War, Date Unknown), Morgan Litho Co, Cleaveland (Printer), Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/33855 [Accessed 07.05.22]
[134] James, *Picture This,* p. 285.

comments 'at least they only drown your women'.[135] The personification of Belgium continued to feature in a number of publications, specifically to draw attention to the treatment of Belgian women in what we now know as the 'Rape of Belgium'. In a cartoon titled as such, the woman 'Belgium' is crushed in a German hand.[136] All of these depictions of female allegories largely neutralise those in which they are dressed in robes and armed for battle, as it evidences that even with body armour and weapons, without the voluntary service of male civilians, she is defenceless. Thus, many allegorical figures, rather than being emblematic of strength were arguably representative of a weakness more readily associated with traditional notions of femininity.[137] The seemingly helpless state of Britannia and the other allegories in atrocity propaganda helped to inspire notions of masculine patriotic protection, allowing the British empire and women of the empire to be viewed in similar terms as objects of protection and prizes in victory.[138]

Thus, it is evident that allegorical imagery both in official iconography and wider visual culture consistently reflected agreement with traditional understandings of appropriate gender roles, rather than acting as evidence of the transgression of the gender boundary.[139] As these allegories were used to navigate a period of intense social and political change, their depictions are not entirely consistent with pre-war gender discourses and often immediately appear to evidence an emerging 'pseudo-autonomy' for women. However, it is clear that when explored more deeply, visual culture consistently evidenced idealism rooted in mid-Victorian notions of gender. Even within the military depictions of Britannia and other allegories, the emphasis on her maternal role is clear, and in many of these images she is shown to be seeking the support of civilian men, making these seemingly threatening depictions more consistent with the traditional notions of masculine protection and female vulnerability. Thus, the idea that this propaganda acted as the site of a breakthrough for the

[135] "At least they only DROWN your women", *New York Tribune.*
[136] "The Rape of Belgium", *New York Tribune.*
[137] Roberts, 'ART OF A SECOND ORDER' p. 273.
[138] Roberts, 'ART OF A SECOND ORDER', p. 273.
[139] Shover, 'Roles and Images', p. 471.

'Emancipated Girl' is inherently flawed, at most it could be suggested that the domestic, familial rhetoric was altered slightly to contain the disruptions of war. Whilst the new environments that women, specifically allegories were being depicted in suggests that the gender boundary had been transgressed, it is clear that men remained as leaders of women. Perhaps this is most cleverly phrased by Higonnet and Higonnet, whom suggest that 'in the grammar of social structure, women are auxiliary verbs; despite all substitutions, the syntax remains the same'.[140]

[140] Higonnet and Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', p. 38.

Chapter Three: Women in Quintessentially Female Roles

The discussion of women in First World War iconography has thus far centred on the two specific tropes of women as victims of the enemy, and women as allegories, both of which were used reliably to exhort men to go to war, particularly during Britain's period of voluntary enlistment. Such depictions of women were heavily reliant on pre-war gender discourses and structures to evoke the positive, emotional responses that were necessary to achieve continued support for the conflict.[141] However, as the conflict progressed and women were called upon to directly participate in the war effort both on the home front and within theatres of war, such depictions evolved considerably, with the notion of male protector and female vulnerability less prevalent as women began to occupy a fluctuating status between victim and pseudo combatant.[142] One must preface such a statement with an acknowledgement that the gendered experience of war was often transcended by the factor of social class, with different types of war work seen as socially acceptable or problematic for different groups.[143] With regards to middle- and upper-class women, whom did not have to participate in the war effort as an issue of economic necessity, it is indisputable that their initial calls to duty were largely patriotic, overlaid with connotations of noblesse oblige, and unequivocally feminine in nature. Many such calls were related to domestic economy, including that of addressing the inherently feminine 'Food Question', and activities such as knitting for Tommy.[144] However, as the number of men engaged on the battlefield increased, the propagandist urged women to extend their traditional, private responsibility of philanthropic 'work' into social work, by engaging in the traditionally feminine pursuit of nursing.[145] Whilst quintessentially feminine, the environments in which nurses were expected to work, and the tasks that they were required to perform posed a significant challenge to the notion of war as a male enterprise, immediately and indubitably

[141] Shover, Roles and Images, p. 473.
[142] Rayner, 'The Carer', p. 519.
[143] Janet Watson, 'Khaki Girls, VADs, and Tommy's Sisters: Gender and Class in First World War Britain', *The International History Review*, 19, (1997), p. 33.
[144] "The Ministry of Food Requires Girls", Poster (1917-11), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/41289 [Accessed 11.08.22]
[145] Watson 'Khaki Girls', p. 36.

challenging the crucial distinctions between combatant and non-combatant, public and private. However, even within the depictions of women that were more difficult to accommodate within traditional gender ideology, it is clear that the differences between men and women roles were never rendered irrelevant. Rather, femininity was simply moulded to conform to the exigencies of the period, evidence as to the vigorously adaptable nature of patriarchy in First World War iconography.

Apropos to the propaganda relating to domestic economy, traditional notions of femininity and the upholding of patriarchal imperatives was ensured in that domesticity and motherhood remained a constant bulwark against radical innovation.[146] The initial, widespread reluctance to take middle- and upper-class women away from their homes meant that propaganda elevated traditional domestic tasks to the level of military service, centring on the importance of women 'keeping the home fires burning'. Women were encouraged to display 'observational' patriotism in helping the front-line troops through activities such as 'gathering parcels for war refugees and rolling bandages for the Red Cross.[147] However, most specifically they were asked to support the war effort from their kitchens by conserving food and reducing kitchen waste, as food distribution continued to suffer from the strains imposed by the war. One specific comestible that featured in such campaigns was bread, as Britain was heavily reliant on imported grain from America, that was ever threatened by German attacks on merchant ships. Posters relating to this were ubiquitous and included that of "She Helps Her Boy Save Ships", "Don't Waste Bread!" and "The Kitchen is the Key to Victory", all of which depicted women cooking in their kitchens, paragons of domestic virtue, their modest depiction congruous with pre-war gender discourses.[148] In addition to this, their status as

[146] George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 61.
[147] Robb, *British Culture*, p. 38.
[148] "She Helps Her Boy to Save Ships", Poster (Date Unknown), Clarke and Sherwell Ltd, London (Printer), Ministry of Food (Publisher/Sponsor), League of National Safety (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28697 [Accessed 11.08.22]; "Don't Waste Bread!", Poster (Date Unknown), Clarke and Sherwell Ltd, London (Printer), Ministry of Food (Publisher/Sponsor), Food Controller (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum,

subordinate to their male counterparts is further illustrated in the way in the relationship between domestic economy and the combat of the British solider is cultivated, specifically within two of these posters. The propagandist directly juxtaposes the images of women on the home front with those of men engaged in combat. In the "She Helps Her Boy to Save Ships" poster, a modestly dressed woman is depicted pouring flour onto some measuring scales, her hair swept back. Her image is superimposed against one of a sailor resting against his gun. Similarly, in the "Don't Waste Bread!" poster, a woman similar in physical appearance and dress, is depicted cutting a loaf of bread. Her image is juxtaposed with one of a conflict between a German U Boat and a British ship. This is significant in that it reflects the importance of women engaging with the conflict through domestic tasks, whilst also acknowledging men, or the soldier, as the central figure of war. Whilst women engaging with the war effort in any capacity is to some degree, evidence as to the transgression of the gender boundary, this emphasis on positioning women as an aid to the central figure of war rather than being the central figure of war is testament to the validity of the double helix thesis, inherently linked to the maintenance of patriarchal imperatives.

Such a dynamic was not only a feature of official propaganda but rather pervaded all other areas of wider cultural production, specifically literature, be that in poetry, periodicals, or drama. However, in relation to domestic economy, somewhat overlooked examples, including that of the cookbooks also give the historian an insight into the omnipresent nature of propagandist narratives. One specific example in which domestic economy was elevated to the level of combat, was the *Win the War Cookery Book*, which urged women to consider their efforts in the kitchen as an essential component of British victory. One specific section read 'The British fighting line extends and now you are in it. The struggle is not only on land and sea; it is in your larder, your kitchen and your dining

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https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28678 [Accessed 11.08.22]; "The Kitchen is the Key to Victory", Poster (Date Unknown), Hazell, Watson and Viney Ltd, London (Printer), Ministry of Food (Publisher/Sponsor), Food Controller (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28676 [Accessed 11.08.22]

room. Every meal you serve is now literally a battle'.[149] The propagandist placing the kitchen on the front line and making domesticity somewhat of a military duty was not only relevant to British propaganda, but rather assumed a global context, with similar depictions and narratives appearing in much of the propaganda in the allied nations. In America for example, the equation between victory and domesticity was made in posters such as that of "Are YOU a Victory Canner?", and Food Administration poster "Corn, the Food of the Nation, Serve Some With Every Meal – Appetizing, Nourishing, Economical", the latter depicting a woman serving food, surrounded by containers of hominy, cornmeal and grits.[150] It is indisputable that this represents a slight shift in the notion of belligerency as an exclusively male enterprise. However, as cooking was an essential component of domestic economy, this fit comfortably within the parameters of pre-war gender discourses, and simply evidences the malleability of the female role to conform to the demands of the conflict.

Such emphasis on domestic economy, or 'observational patriotism' was not only limited to the 'Food Question', but also encompassed another aspect of traditional domesticity, being sewing, or 'Knitting for Tommy'. At the beginning of the conflict, the knitting of scarves and socks for the soldiers was a widespread response specifically amongst middle class women, which was supported in official propaganda and wider cultural production.[151] Sewing and knitting patterns became a constant feature of weekly magazines and journals, including that of *Woman's World, The Queen Magazine* and *Mother and Home,* appearing as early as September, just weeks after Britain had declared war on Germany. For example, *The Queen Magazine's* first pattern was published on the 5th of September, giving instructions for making a crocheted sock and a nurse's spencer, with the

[149] M. F. K Fisher, *The Art of Eating* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1990), p. 313.
[150] "Are YOU a Victory Canner?", Poster (1918), Printer Unknown, F M Lupton (Publisher/Sponsor), Carleton Digital Collections, https://contentdm.carleton.edu/digital/collection/RiceCounty/id/5187 [Accessed 19.08.22]; "Corn, the Food of the Nation, Serve Some With Every Meal – Appetizing, Nourishing, Economical", Poster (1918), Lloyd Harrison (Artist), Landauer Inc, Baltimore (Printer), United States Food Administration (Publisher/Sponsor), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2002711987/ [Accessed 16.09.22] See also "She's Doing Her Part to Help Win the War", Poster (1918), Howard Chandler Christy (Artist), Printer Unknown, United States Food Administration (Publisher/Sponsor), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2003652812/ [Accessed 03.10.22]
[151] Robb, *British Culture,* p. 39.

magazine continuing to publish refined and improved knitting ideas for items such as Warleigh mittens, as late as 16th November 1916.[152] The official propagandist encouraged such gender appropriate activities in publishing posters that indicated the positive impact of this, such as an untitled image, depicting an older woman knitting, alongside an image of a smiling soldier wearing a knitted scarf.[153] Such images, as with those related to food, expertly stressed women's role as the supporters of men, rather than belligerents in their own right, an issue that again had a global context, with other allied nations encouraging such an example of gender appropriate duty. For example, in the US, posters such as that of the 'Our Boys Need Sox' asked women to 'knit their bit', whilst posters such as that of the "You Can Help, American Red Cross", depicted a young woman knitting, her gaze averted and her clothes modest, evidence of how women could contribute to the war effort whilst conforming to notions of Edwardian respectability.[154] Whilst much of the propaganda existed to urge women to produce clothes for soldiers, they were also asked to make personal sacrifices with regards to their own dress. Posters appeared requesting that women moderate their dress habits in order to release material and labour for war production, going so far as to suggest that 'To Dress Extravagantly in a Time of War', was unpatriotic.[155] Again, whilst such posters showed women contributing to the war effort such tasks were confined to the private sphere, and thus indisputably, quintessentially feminine.

However, maintaining the pre-war gender discourse of female passivity became increasingly more difficult as the conflict progressed, and the urgent need for female participation in the public sphere

[152] Lucinda Gosling, 'Knitting for Tommy', https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/knitting-for-tommy/ [Accessed 13.08.22]
[153] "Untitled", Poster (Date Unknown), A W Ford and Co Ltd (Printer), Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/10156 [Accessed 19.08.22]
[154] "Our Boys Need Sox", Poster (Date Unknown), American Lithographic Co, New York (Printer), American Red Cross (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/33901 [13.09.22] "You Can Help, American Red Cross", Poster (1918), W T Benda (Artist), Printer Unknown, American Red Cross (Publisher/Sponsor), Library of Congress, https://library.ccsu.edu/dighistFall16/exhibits/show/women-and-dress--women-s-contr/item/265 [Accessed 16.09.22]
[155] Shover, 'Roles and Images', p. 475; "To Dress Extravagantly in a Time of War", Poster (1916), Roberts and Leete Ltd, London (Printer), National War Savings Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/29735 [Accessed 13.09.22]

become more marked. As more men became engaged on the front line, nurses became the category of female labour recruited earliest in the war, with a number of women joining organisations such as the Women's Volunteer Reserve, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Services or QAIMNS, or the Voluntary Aid Detachment or VAD. Whilst the war did offer some opportunity for women of different classes to interact, within the nursing profession class largely dictated which of these organisations' women volunteered with, and the positions that they were allowed to take.[156] As nursing was a pre-existing career, class biases meant that middle- and upper-class women often opted to volunteer with the Voluntary Aid Detachment, as it offered them a way to serve the war effort without undergoing formal nurses training.[157] The VAD had been founded in 1909, under the joint auspices of the British Red Cross and the St John's Ambulance Society, with the intention that recruits would provide civilian support in the event of war, freeing trained personnel for military efforts.[158] The original scheme for voluntary aid for the wounded was simply a practical measure to fill a gap in the Territorial Medical Service, and as such, these women were situated at home in case of invasion', receiving only basic medical training.[159] However, as the conflict progressed, more nurses were needed to meet military and domestic needs, which saw as many as 600 of these women being appointed to various military hospitals both at home and abroad every week[160]. As early as September 1916, 8000 VADS were serving in military hospitals, with thousands more joining by the wars end.[161]

Thus, whilst nursing was intended to be a non-threatening role that allowed women to fulfil their supposed natural role of sacrifice and caregiving, it became one of the nearest approximations to

[156] Rachel Michelle Brown, 'Women and World War One: Perspectives on Women's Role in WWI Literature', Unpublished Masters Thesis, Central Washington University, 2021, p. 4.
[157] Brown, 'Women and World War One', p. 26.
[158] Janet Watson, 'Wars in the Wards: The Social Construction of Medical Work in First World War Britain', *Journal of British Studies,* 41, (October 2002), p. 487.
[159] Sharon Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women: Identity and Ideology in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 142.
[160] Marion Rosseau, 'To What Extent Did Being a Nurse During WW1 Represent a Kind of Emancipation for British Women?', Unpublished Masters Thesis, Université Grenobles Alpes, 2013, p. 9.
[161] Arthur Marwick, *Women at War 1914 – 1918* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 83-84, Ouditt, *Fighting Forces,* pp. 15 – 27.

the male experience of battle, particularly for those women that served in France.[162] In these instances, there is evidence to suggest that women felt a growing parity between themselves and the soldier, with the gendered idealism with which they entered the war being quickly eroded by the practical experience of the warzone.[163] Such an example is that of the diary of VAD Helen Beale, who consistently equated her experience with that of the soldier through her use of militaristic language, clearly viewing her experience of hospital nursing as somewhat of a metaphorical battlefront.[164] Beale suggests that volunteering with the VADS abroad gave her 'the opportunity of being treated just like they treat men'.[165] In the context of pre-war gender discourses, the only appropriate manner in which the women were to view nursing was as an entirely patriotic pursuit that would be concluded at the wars end. However, diary entries such as this one evidence that in reality, the experience made a number of women keen to establish themselves and gain recognition as equally capable as their male counterparts. This is particularly relevant for trained nurses, who often used the conflict to further their bid for professional status, 'staking out a purview of female power within the male dominated medical hierarchy'.[166] However, this was not only an issue in that it did not adhere to pre-war understandings of gender, but also because there were growing concerns on the home front surrounding the morals and behaviours of nurses. As the majority of nurses were middle- and upper-class unmarried women, their upbringing had ensured that they had 'never looked upon the nude body of an adult male', yet their role required them to perform tasks that involved having intimate contact with male bodies.[167] As such, nursing became a focal point for fears about degeneracy, specifically regarding the potential of sexual contact between nurses and soldiers, an issue that had been raised a century prior by Florence Nightingale, who was anxious

[162] Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War,* p. 165; Knight, Lynn 'Introduction', in *We That Were Young,* ed. by Irene Rathbone (New York: The Feminist Press, 1989), p. xiii -
[163] Rosseau, 'To What Extent', p. 28.
[164] Watson 'Wars in the Wards', p. 495.
[165] Helen Beale, to Margaret S. Beale, 10 January 1916, BP.
[166] Watson, 'Wars in the Wards', p. 491.
[167] Samraghni Bonnerjee, 'Nursing Politics and the Body in First World War Life-Writing', Unpublished English Literature PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2018, p. 146; Susan Grayzel, *Women in the First World War (*London; New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 41.

about the possibility of nurses 'making love' to the men that they cared for.[168] Therefore, despite nursing being a historically, quintessentially female role, it posed a number of issues to maintenance of patriarchal imperatives. The role existed within the public sphere and often directly in theatres of war and facilitated, often for the first time, the close interaction between women and men outside of their families. Therefore, the upholding of patriarchal imperatives within propaganda was an issue of great complexity.

Such complexity was compounded in that due to the nature of their work, depictions of nurses were unique in being the only ones in which women assumed the dominant role, opposing the traditional sexual balance of power. Nurses were presented as the figure of strength, often aiding the wounded, passive, if not helpless, solider on the battlefield or in hospitals or other medical facilities. Watson refers to them as 'half-men', bereft of vigour and virility.[169] Images of this dynamic, opposing the notion of male protector and female vulnerability that had characterized the pre-war period were ubiquitous, and again had a global context, with such poster designs interchangeable across national boundaries and war zones. Apropos to British propaganda, the wounded soldier's dependence on women is evident in numerous posters, an exemplar of this being the 'Serbian Red Cross' poster.[170] The poster encouraged the viewer to send a contribution to the Serban Red Cross Society through use of an emotive image of a nurse depicted outside of a Red Cross tent, attending to a solider who appears slumped on the ground, his left arm bandaged. Similar imagery was produced in the allied nation states, with the French publishing posters such as 'Aidez la Croix Rouge', which depicts a Red Cross nurse tending to a wounded Canadian solider,

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[168] F. B. Smith, *Florence Nightingale: Reputation and Power* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 155.
[169] Janet Watson, 'Khaki Girls', p. 37.
[170] "Serbian Red Cross", Poster (Date Unknown), G Street and Co Ltd, London (Printer), The Serbian Red Cross Society in Great Britain (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30123 [Accessed 21.08.22] See also "The YMCA Service for Relatives of Dangerously Wounded", Poster (Date Unknown), Edgar Wright (Artist), Young Men's Christian Association [YMCA] (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/38824 [Accessed 22.08.22]; "In Aid of St Dunstan's Hostel", Poster (Date Unknown), The National Institute for the Blind, London (Printer), The National Institute for the Blind, London (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30081 [Accessed 22.08.22]

whilst, in the US, perhaps the most famous nursing poster 'If I Fail, He Dies' was published, depicting a nurse tending to a wounded solider on the battlefield.[171] Again, this image is superimposed onto one of soldiers charging into battle, acknowledging the soldier's role as the central figure of war and women's role in supporting them, effectively creating some degree of distance between them, despite the similarity in their experiences of conflict.[172] Despite this, it is indubitable that each of these posters appear otherwise to largely oppose the general notion of weakness that was readily associated with women during this period, with traditionally feminine physical frailty or dependence on the opposite sex replaced by male vulnerability and injury. However, the historian must consider the context of the period, being the beginning of a total war with severely understaffed field and base hospitals on the Western Front. In light of this, such imagery can be understood as, not a watershed in gender relations, but evidence as to the porosity of the gender boundary for the success of essential recruitment. For many women, the prospect of active service was one of adventure, offering a possibility to satisfy their desires to travel in a way that was not possible with civilian nursing.[173] Therefore, images of active service such as these were of great use in encouraging women to join the effort.

Whilst this is evidence of the destabilisation of the gender boundary, in examining other elements of this iconography, the historian may assert that despite this, images of nurses otherwise simply evidence a shift from private to public patriarchy.[174] This is perhaps most discernible in examining the way in which iconography presented a convergence of war rhetoric and the role of the Red Cross nurse with religious, maternal imagery. The propagandist presented the occupation as one overlaid

[171] "Aidez la Croix Rouge [Help the Red Cross]", Poster (Date Unknown) A G Racey (Artist), Montreal Lithographing Co Ltd (Printer), Canadian Patriotic Fund (Publisher/Sponsor), Canadian Red Cross (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/22347 [Accessed 21.08.22]; "If I Fail, He Dies", Poster (1918), Arthur G McCoy (Artist), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/00651856/ [Accessed 18.09.22]

[172] Watson, 'Wars in the Wards', p. 495.

[173] Linda J Quiney, '"Bravely and Loyally They Answered the Call": St. John Ambulance, the Red Cross, and the Patriotic Service of Canadian Women During the Great War', *History of Intellectual Culture,* (2005), p. 5.

[174] Sylvia Walby, 'From Private to Public Patriarchy: The Periodisation of British History' *Women's Studies International Forum,* 13 (1990), p. 91.

with religious and moral imperatives, thus allowing participation to appear simply as a continuation of a long tradition of women acting in healing or nurturing positions as a religious calling.[175] In aligning the profession with religion, the propagandist could present idealized representations of women that drew on familiar tropes of femininity and virtue, in an effort to combat the destabilising effects that the reality of nursing was having on understandings of gender. In addition to this, the use of religious imagery and morality not only made nursing a gender appropriate duty, but also a class appropriate duty, elevating the profession from a working-class occupation, into a one for the middle and upper classes, who were understood to be closer to God, as per the structures created from centuries of monarchy in Britain.[176]

The relationship between nursing, religion and motherhood was cultivated in a number of ways, perhaps most specifically in making the Madonna nurse, rather than a civilian, the main symbol of caretakers during the war not only in Britain but rather globally.[177] Iconography, both in official propaganda and wider cultural production, consistently used the Madonna image to extol motherhood as a sacred calling, encouraging women to emulate the Virgin Mary.[178] In using imagery that had such distinct connotations of virginity and purity and maternalism, the propagandist expelled concerns of sexual interaction between wounded soldiers and nurses, allowing the viewer to understand nursing simply as an extension of women's pre-war caretaking duties. The poster that this is most exemplar of this, whilst not originally produced in Great Britain, was reproduced by the British propagandist, and by other propagandists in a number of belligerent nations and is thus relevant to such narratives. The American poster, entitled 'The Greatest Mother in the World', is clear evidence of the propagandists' ability to unify maternalism and nursing with religion, with the image having a number of indisputable, striking similarities with Michelangelo's *Pietà,* the famous

[175] Anne Hudson Jones *Images of Nurses: Perspectives From History, Art and Literature* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988)
[176] Brown, 'Women and World War One', p. 3.
[177] Brown, 'Women and World War One', p. 43.
[178] Robb, *British Culture,* p. 62.

sculpture now residing in St Peter's Basilica.[179] Both the sculpture and the poster depict a woman in flowing robes cradling a grown man, the *Pietà* depicting Mary holding the dead body of Christ, whilst the poster depicts a larger-than-life nurse cradling a badly wounded soldier on a stretcher. Whilst there is a key difference in that the solider is still alive and receiving the care to bring him back to full health, it has been suggested that the solider is emulative of Jesus' sacrifice for the greater good.[180] Whilst the colossal size of the nurse in comparison to the solider represents the enormity of her role, which would not in other contexts be conducive to the preservation of an idealised society, the dutiful, saintly representation of nursing combats this. Therefore, such imagery is reproduced in another American poster, entitled 'Keep This Hand of Mercy at its Work'.[181] Central to the image, the 'Hand of Mercy', clothed in the uniform of the Red Cross reaches down from the heavens, splitting the poster into two. The scene on the left of the image is dark, and depicts two silhouetted figures firing a cannon, and striking a civilian. On the right of the image, the hand shields and protects civilians from such brutalities, allowing them to walk together in sunlight, the epitome of godly intervention, meaning that traditional notions of femininity were not tainted.

Although the Madonna nurse was often used in these images, the relationship between religion and nursing was also cultivated in other depictions, such as those in which they were likened to angels.[182] With regards to British propaganda, this is evidenced in posters such as that of the 'Belgian Red Cross', depicting a Red Cross nurse with large angel wings bandaging a Belgian soldier's

[179] "The Greatest Mother in the World", Poster (1918-07-23), Alonzo Earl Foringer (Artist), Waterlow Bros and Layton Ltd, London EC3 (Printer), Relief Organisation, British Red Cross Society (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/9712 [Accessed 11.08.22]; Brown, 'Women and World War One', p. 45; Brown, Women and World War One', p. 45.
[180] Brown, 'Women and World War One', p. 45.
[181] "Keep This Hand of Mercy at it's Work", Poster (1917), R. G Morgan (Artist), Printer Unknown, American National Red Cross (Publisher/Sponsor), Temple University Libraries, https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p16002coll9/id/3549/ [Accessed 30.09.22]
[182] Jo Fox, 'Women in World War One Propaganda', British Library, https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/women-in-world-war-one-propaganda [Accessed 04.04.22]

head wound.[183] Such imagery also appeared in the propaganda published in the British colony of South Africa, for their respective Red Cross Society. The poster 'Our Day', for example, depicts two wounded soldiers in the foreground of a scene of a battlefield.[184] One of the soldiers is looking up to the dominant figure of the poster, an angel floating above the Red Cross symbol. Such imagery contributed to the understanding of these women as female servants of God, their maternal role emphasised in the perpetuation of the nurse as the ministering angel, entrusted with caring for a solider and relieving his pain.[185] In emphasising the maternal role of the Red Cross nurse, the propagandist allowed the viewer to understand the profession as the temporary relocation of Coventry Patmore's 'Angel in House' to the settings of war.[186] These women were still presented as feminine in that they embodied familiar feminine traits of humility, serenity and empathy, just within a different environment.

A number of fundamental attributes of the 'Angel in the House' were integrated into the depiction of nurses. Aside from the emphasis on their virtuous patriotism, the depiction of the Red Cross nurse was also characterised by other familiar and reassuringly feminine traits, including that of classic beauty and modest dress. As, indisputably 'clothing itself is a cultural marker of the gender boundary', the reassuringly feminine uniform of the VAD is clear evidence as to the upholding of patriarchal imperatives within iconography.[187] Despite the context of their role, dealing with brutal injuries including that of severed limbs and gunshot wounds, the VAD was always depicted perfectly put together in the ubiquitous, publicly heralded uniform of a crisp white apron, starched headdress

[183] "Belgian Red Cross", Poster (1916-08), Charles Buchel (Artist), Johnson, Riddle and Co Ltd, Penge, London SE20 (Printer), Belgian Red Cross Fund (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/3780 [Accessed 11.08.22]
[184] "Our Day", Poster (Date Unknown), Bannerman (Artist), Townshend, Taylor and Shashall, Cape Town (Printer), South African Red Cross (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1323 [Accessed 21.08.22]
[185] Brown, 'Women and World War One', p. 7.
[186] Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: Macmillan, 1866), 4th Edn.
[187] Angela Woollacott, 'Dressed to Kill: Clothes, Cultural Meaning and First World War Women Munition Workers' in *Representations of Gender from Prehistory to the Present,* eds. by M. Donald and Linda Hurcombe (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 198.

and red cross.[188] Posters such as that of 'V.A.D', are a perfect example of this, depicting three women in uniform, the caption appealing for 'V.A.D, nursing members, cooks, kitchen maids, clerks, housemaids, ward maids, laundresses, motor drivers, etc'.[189] Whilst the poster is encouraging women to join the VADS with the potential that they may participate in more traditionally masculine roles such as driving, this is counterbalanced by the uniform, that represented the quintessentially feminine work of the healer and nurturer.[190] The emphasis on the uniform was also significant in that it allowed the propagandist to continue to represent the occupation as a continuation of nursing as a religious calling. Whilst the relationship between nursing and religion was more pronounced in images of the Madonna nurse, or the angel, the uniform of the VAD's is also significant in that the long white gowns and the white cap specifically represented purity and evoked the monastic origins of nursing, contributing to the self-sacrificing image of women that earned them the title of 'White Angels'. Thus, it is evident that the depiction of nurses in uniforms were so ubiquitous because they served to reinforce the 'Virgin Mother' image that the propagandist was shaping. However, this is not to say that such depictions were limited to official propaganda and were rather a common feature of wider cultural production. Even within publications such as that of the satirical *Punch Magazine,* nurses were always depicted as reassuringly feminine, if not depicted in either their trademark white aprons and red crosses, or the scarlet cape of the QAIMS.[191] Similar imagery was a feature of art and photography, contributing to an overall dominant image of nurses during the period as, whilst braving danger, calm, efficient and gentle.[192]

Thus, whilst it is indisputable that the depictions of women were adapted for the particular circumstances of 'total war' and as such to some extent transgressed the notion of war as an exclusively male enterprise, it is clear that the distinctions between men and women's roles were

[188] Woollacott, 'Dressed to Kill', p. 199.
[189] "V.A.D", Poster, (1915), Joyce Dennys (Artist), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/7402 [Accessed 11.08.22]
[190] Woollacott, 'Dressed to Kill', p. 199.
[191] Campbell-Moffat, 'Representations of Women in Punch', p. 40.
[192] Rousseau, 'To What Extent', p. 9.

never rendered irrelevant.[193] Whilst this maintaining of patriarchal imperatives was effortless in the images of middle-class women specific to domestic economy, the representation of nursing was indubitably more complex. Given the desperate need for nurses on the Western front, coupled with the fears of degeneracy often associated with the role, the work of nurses was much more difficult to accommodate within the pre-war understandings of gender. However, it is evident that despite this, as far as was possible within such an intense period of political and social change, visual culture remained as consistent as possible with Edwardian gender discourses, albeit more subtly than in the images relating to domestic economy. As with depictions of female allegories, the representation of nurses appearing both in Britain and in other belligerent nations remained congruent with the pre-war meanings of womanhood in placing a great deal of emphasis on the maternal nature of their role. Traditional femininity continuing to take primacy was further illustrated in the relationship cultivated between nursing and religion, and the focus on their compassionate nature rather than the extent of their skill. Thus, the depiction of women in quintessentially female roles acts as further evidence that the conceptualisation of femininity is simply a historical construct.

[193] Alison S Fell, 'Remembering First World War Nursing: Other Fronts, Other Spaces', *Journal of War and Culture Studies,* 4, (2018), p. 269.

Chapter Four: Tommy's Sister, Land Girls and Members of the WAAC.

Hitherto, analysis has been centred on the earlier depictions of women that were, for the most part, securely housed within the walls of patriarchy, patriotism and conventional understandings of femininity.[194] However, it is evident that the issue of upholding patriarchal imperatives within iconography became far more complex as the conflict progressed, with an identifiable shift in propagandist depiction of women occurring from 1916 onwards. Specifically, this can be attributed to the introduction of the two Military Service Acts of 1916, which resulted in 2,504,183 men being conscripted into the British army between January 1916 and March 1919.[195] This mass exodus of men from the workforce placed a tremendous strain on the industry's most essential to the success of the war, making the pre-existing labour crisis more acute, and the use of female labour inevitable. Thus, the propagandist began to produce iconography that called for women to become active participants in wartime industries such as the manufacture of munitions or joining civilian organisations such as the Women's Land Army (WLA) or Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). As with the representation of women in nursing, such depictions made the upholding of patriarchal imperatives somewhat difficult in that they directly challenged the notion of belligerency as strictly male enterprise. However, in the depictions of munitionettes, Land Girls and WAACS, such issues were compounded in that these roles required uniforms that allowed women to dispense with traditional feminine clothing and taking on some of the visual trappings of masculinity.[196] Indubitably, the depiction of women in traditionally male or military garb was more difficult to accommodate within the restrictive constructions of wartime gender identity than the quintessentially feminine uniforms of the VADS. Thus, female participation gave new impetus to concerns regarding masculine women which subsequently found expression in wider cultural

[194] Ouditt, *Fighting Forces,* p. 64.
[195] Ilana Ruth Bet-El, 'Experience Into Identity: The Writings Of British Conscript Soldiers 1916-1918', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University College London, 1991, p. first unmarked page.
[196] Lucy Noakes, 'A Disgrace to the Country They Belong To: The Sexualisation of Female Soldiers in First World War Britain', *Gender Disturbance: Women and War in 20th Century United Kingdom,* 4 (2008), p.

production.[197] For the munitionettes and WAAC specifically, this issue was further compounded by their unprecedented proximity to the strife of war, augmenting the propagandist's challenge of presenting women's transgression into the public sphere as consistent with traditional notions of femininity. However, despite such challenges, traditional understandings of gender were never rendered irrelevant. Rather, the propagandist was able to uphold patriarchal imperatives and counter the narratives perpetuated in wider cultural production by simply redrawing the boundaries of separate spheres of influence to conform the exigencies of total war. In doing so, the propagandist could acknowledge the changing context of the relationship between men and women during this period, whilst evidencing that their experiences remained distinctly gendered, separate, and in relationships of power.[198]

Indubitably, the degree to which the boundaries of separate spheres were revised was largely dictated by the comparability of the role women were performing with the male experience of war. Yet, in examining the propaganda pertaining to the Women's Land Army, munitions work and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in turn, it is clear that for each occupation the same propaganda tools were used to varying degrees in order to preserve the strict dichotomy between men and women. Firstly, the ephemeral changes that women were experiencing with regards to employment and social policy were made relatively consistent with pre-war gender structures in framing them as an opportunity for women to serve the men that serve the nation, rather than permitting them belligerent status in their own right.[199] Further to this, the depictions of women in these roles were deliberately feminised, in order for them to be perceived as attractive, desirable, and at least in the short term, natural.[200] With regards to munitions and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, due to the inherently dangerous nature of the work, the propagandist also made efforts to manufacture a

[197] Noakes, 'A Disgrace to the Country', p.
[198] Kim Warren, 'Separate Spheres: Analytical Persistence in United States Women's History', *History Compass,* 5 (2007), p. 262.
[199] Grayzel, 'The Outward and Visible Signs', p. 163.
[200] Ouditt, *Fighting Forces,* p. 71.

distinction between the home front and front line in presenting the workers as far removed from the strife of war. However, in the propaganda pertaining to the Women's Land Army, the propagandist was simply able to uphold patriarchal imperatives in emphasising the existing, natural, sharp disjuncture between the rural seclusion and relative safety of the countryside and the strife of the front line.

Despite the fact that this made agricultural labour with the Women's Land Army the most consistent with traditional notions of femininity, there was still a distinct undercurrent of resistance to female agricultural workers. Although the depletion of labour was being acutely felt by farmers as early as the spring and summer of 1915, the desire to continue established notions of rural labour practices from which women were generally excluded were still evident upon the establishment of the Women's Land Army in January 1917. Amongst farmers concerns were frequently being raised regarding women's abilities to complete the required work, with many claiming that they would hinder agriculture, being 'as great pests on the land as weeds'.[201] This manifested in farmers being resistant to employing women, paying them a decent wage, or adjusting farming machinery to suit their needs.[202] Reservations were also expressed by women, with the common consensus that undertaking land work could be considered derogatory so persistent that one Viscountess Wolseley had asserted in 1916, that women would prefer to undertake any other work.[203] However, the issue that took primacy in these debates was the enduring belief that women invading the traditionally male enterprise of farming would be irretrievably damaging to their femininity.[204] Specifically, this concern related to the masculinised uniform of the organisation which was comprised of breeches, smocks and puttees, differing greatly from the blouses and fluted or 'hobble' skirts that had characterised women's fashion prior to the war. In comparison, this clothing 'masked physical

[201] Lord Ernle, *The Land and its Peoples: Chapters in Rural Life and its History* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1925), p. 174.
[202] Outditt, *Fighting Forces,* p. 51.
[203] Viscountess Frances Garnet Woleseley, *Women and the Land* (London: Chato and Windus, 1916), p. 183.
[204] Caroline Scott, *Holding the Home Front: The Women's Land Army in the First World War* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword History, 2017), p. 102.

difference and permitted greater physical liberty', and as such became a focal point in wider cultural production.[205]

The way in which this transgression of the gender boundary was explored differed significantly according to the publication. For example, within the satirical magazine *Punch,* members of the Women's Land Army were almost always presented in a wholly positive way, with their androgynous look becoming a popular butt.[206] This is exemplified in illustrations such as that of Kenneth Bird's 'The Farmer and the New Farm Labourer, that presents the metamorphosis of the land girl and the farmer across 4 scenes.[207] Other such examples include Arthur Ferrier's untitled cartoon that featured in the May 1918 publication, which depicts two soldiers observing two figures in the distance.[208] One of them is evidently a woman in that she is wearing a skirt, whilst the second is dressed in the land girl uniform and thus of indeterminate sex. The first officer asks the second who the 'knock-kneed chap' standing next to the second officer's sister is, to which he replies, 'my other sister'.[209] However, such humorous representations of the Land Army juxtaposed a number of more hostile depictions of Land Girls, in which the emphasis on issues of respectability and gender identity was much more distinct. For example, the question 'Should Women Wear Trousers in Wartime' dominated articles in a number of newspapers, considering the extent to which women could be regarded as respectable were they to wear breeches.[210] Such issues have also been recalled in both the written and oral testimonies of land girls, one of which being Hilda Rountree, whom was a land girl in Newnham, Cambridgeshire. Whilst she does recall the kindness of the majority of the 'local folk', she does discuss a particular day, where she was photographed with some of the other land girls whilst they sat on the farm track to have their lunch. The image that was taken was subsequently reproduced on large posters in Cambridge, asking the question 'Is this what higher

[205] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars,* p. 118.
[206] Campbell-Moffatt, 'Representations of Women in Punch', p. 44.
[207] Kenneth Bird, 'The Farmer and the New Farm Labourer', *Punch,* 25 September 1918.
[208] Arthur Ferrier, 'Untitled', *Punch,* 29 May, 1918.
[209] Campbell-Moffatt 'Representations of Women in Punch', p. 49.
[210] Scott, *Holding the Home Front,* p. 54.

education does to women?', referring to their wearing trousers.[211] Whilst each of these examples differ significantly in tone, they all betray anxieties that urban women leaving their presumably suburban homes to work on the land was indication that the gulf between the sexes was in danger of eroding.[212] Thus, it is clear that the official propagandist was tasked with addressing the labour crisis, but in a manner that placated the public in posturing the Women's Land Army as a reassertion of tradition rather than an undermining of it.

With regards to the primary issue of the land girls' uniforms, the propagandist efforts to uphold patriarchal imperatives is clear in that in two of the very limited number of posters available to the historian, the land girls' uniform were not entirely visible. For example, in the 'Food, Forage and Timber', and the 'National Service: Women's Land Army' posters, the full uniform is at least partially obscured by barn animals, with the land girls tending to a cow and horses respectively.[213] Not only did this exist to placate those who had taken issue with women wearing masculinised uniform, it also allowed the propagandist to keep female participation within the traditional confines of women's work, being that of tending to the animals or garden, acting largely as an extension of domesticity.[214] Such an assertion is also applicable to the Women's Land Army poster that urged women to volunteer for fruit picking.[215] Again, not only does the phrase 'Provide raspberry jam for the fighting forces' distort the reality of long and difficult shifts of fruit picking, presenting it as inherently domestic and 'homey' the women are also depicted wearing blouses and long skirts as

[211] Hilda Rowntree Written Testimony, quoted in Carol Twinch, *Women on the Land,* p. 44.
[212] Susan Grayzel 'The Outward and Visible Signs', p. 148.
[213] "Food Production, Forage and Timber", Poster (1918-04), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/41293 [Accessed 07.09.20]; "National Service: Women's Land Army", Poster (Date Unknown), Walter J West (Artist), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/41363 [Accessed 12.09.20]; Grayzel, 'Nostalgia, Gender and the Countryside', p. 159.
[214] Bonnie White, *The Women's Land Army in First World War Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 49.
[215] "4000 Women Wanted For Fruit Picking", Poster (1918), J.W Ltd (Printer), Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Temple University Libraries Digital Collection, https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p16002coll9/id/4035/ [Accessed 26.10.22]

opposed to breeches.[216] Such evidence of the land girl being conceived, as far as was possible, in such traditional Victorian terms was not only limited to the recruitment posters existing for the WLA. Rather, it pervaded every officially sanctioned depiction of the land girl, extending even to the seemingly trivial advertisements appearing in the *Landswoman* magazine. Specifically, one can comment on the advertisements for Vinolia face cream which were printed regularly, each of them emphasising that spite of the land girls' masculine garb and strenuous activity, feminine respectability was to take primacy.[217] For example, the Vinolia advert that appeared in the May 1918 edition of the *Landswoman* focused entirely on the fact that war work did not require women to sacrifice their femininity, even on the land.[218] Whilst it does acknowledge the practical reality of land work it reminds the viewer that whilst their skin may get sore from being exposed to the elements, 'Beauty on Duty has a Duty to Beauty', and thus women must endeavour to keep their complexion soft and clear.[219] In redirecting the focus from the land girls' uniform, either by obscuring it or placing greater emphasis on their continued conformity to the traditional feminine beauty standard, the propagandist was able to maintain established notions of femininity and gender roles, despite the move into physically demanding work.

Further to this, the propagandist also ensured that the lure of masculine attire remained ultimately restrained in its appeal by consistently contextualising the role of the land girls exclusively via support for the servicemen.[220] In doing so, in spite of the masculine garb, agricultural work was transformed into sublime patriotic service, to which there was a clear and natural conclusion at the wars end. Thus, the public was assured that 'there need be no fear that women in time to come

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[216] Grayzel, 'Nostalgia, Gender and the Countryside', p. 159.
[217] Outditt, *Fighting Forces,* p. 55.
[218] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 121.
[219] Advertisement for Premier Vinolia Soap, *The Landswoman,* May 1918. https://www.womenslandarmy.co.uk/archive-material/the-landswoman-magazine-ww1/the-landswoman-may-1918/ [Accessed 13.01.21]
[220] David Monger, 'Tangible Patriotism During the First World War: Individuals and the Nation in British Propaganda', *War and Society,* 37 (2018), p. 259.

might take the place of men in agricultural work'.[221] Rather, agricultural labour was presented simply as an opportunity for women to acknowledge and repay the men on the front line for their protection, for the duration.[222] In some examples of iconography, this was achieved in juxtaposing images of agricultural workers with those of the soldiers on the front line. For example, in the poster that urged women to volunteer for fruit picking, the Land Girl is depicted smiling, the picture of agricultural contentment. Her image is however, juxtaposed by one of servicemen eating and enjoying jars of jam, with the phrase 'It is urgent and vital that the fruit which is wanted for sailors and soldiers should be picked before it spoils'.[223] Firstly, the juxtaposition of the settings of home front and front line served as a visual reminder that the work of the Land Girls remained distinctly gendered and separate from their male counterparts. Secondly, and perhaps more subtly, the language of essential service being on behalf of the soldier ensured that the female agricultural worker was not awarded the status as a belligerent in her own right. Rather, the land girl existed solely in support of the fighting forces. In maintaining women's subservience to their male counterparts, the propagandist could preserve traditional understandings of gender, 'even within the seemingly masculine environs of agricultural work'.[224]

The use of the double helix, and the emphasis on gendered specialization was not limited to the depiction of the Land Girls. Rather, it became a primary feature of all propaganda that depicted intentional female participation in traditionally male roles. That included the representation of those employed in the manufacture of munitions, numbering over one million of the 7,311,000 of the women in paid employment by July 1918.[225] A significant number of these women were employed in response to the 1915 shell shortage, as in May 1915, the British munitions industry could only

[221] *Western Mail*, 8 August, 1917, p. 2.
[222] Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons,* p.
[223] "4000 Women Wanted For Fruit Picking", Poster (1918), J.W Ltd (Printer), Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Temple University Libraries Digital Collection, https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p16002coll9/id/4035/ [Accessed 26.10.22]
[224] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars,* p. 121.
[225] Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend,* p. 19; *Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry*, Cmd. 135, 1919, 80, cited in Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend,* p. 17.

sustain a monthly output of 700,000 shells. However, by the summer of 1916, the weekly shell consumption had reached 800,000, and the lack of sufficient explosives was contributing to the British army suffering devastating defeats, such as the Battle of Aubers Ridge on the 9th of May 1915, and the Battle of Festubert later that month.[226] However, despite the critical shortage of manpower, as with the Women's Land Army, there was a clear undercurrent of resistance to the employment of munitionettes, for a multitude of reasons.

Firstly, and similarly to the Women's Land Army, a great deal of this opposition was centred around the widely held perception that undertaking munitions work would undercut women's femininity, particularly as munitionettes were required to wear protective clothing which included trousers. Thus, as with the WLA, munitions work represented a distinct transgression of the gender boundary in permitting women access traditionally masculine dress, which was also subsequently satirised in magazines such as *Punch.* However, whilst these depictions could be carefully controlled within the rural seclusion of the Women's Land Army, the urban environment of the munitions factory did not offer the same degree of safety for conventional feminine identity, as there was no natural disjuncture between home and front line. Rather, women working in this environment were directly involved in the making and facilitating of war, acting as the first stage of a production line of death that ended at the front.[227] As there was a natural antagonism between women and war, the munitionettes role as the 'maker of the weapons of death' posed a significant challenge to the propagandist in the upholding of separate spheres of gender.[228] Further to this, the gulf between women and the uniformed solider was narrowed in that the inherently dangerous nature of the work meant that hundreds, if not thousands of women died working in munitions factories, due to issues such as TNT poisoning, accidents with machinery, and explosions. Thus, not only were these women transgressing the gender boundary with regards to their clothing, but they were also suffering and

[226] Hew Strachan, *The First World War: To Arms, Volume 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 1048.
[227] Woollacott, 'On Her Their Lives Depend', p. 2.
[228] Hall Caine, *Our Girls: Their Work For the War* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1916), p. 71.

dying along with the men on the front line, despite the fact that this was historically understood as an exclusively male prerogative.[229]

This alone made female participation in this industry significantly more difficult to justify than volunteering with organisations such as the Women's Land Army, which posed no great threat to women's safety. However, the issue that this posed to patriarchal imperatives was exacerbated by the fact that presenting their participation as inherently patriotic was more complex than it had been for the WLA. The patriotic call to duty, and connotations of noblesse oblige appealed more greatly to the middle and upper classes, and whilst the socio-economic profile of the WLA did expand slightly throughout the conflict, a great number of the volunteers were middle class women.[230] However, approximately just nine percent of women working in factories came from the upper and middle classes.[231] Whilst a number of these munitionettes did suggest that they enrolled for munitions work on the basis that they 'thought that they were helping the country', for many women it was the lure of the unprecedented, comparatively high wages. For women that had worked in factories prior to the war, munitions offered a three-fold increase in earnings.[232] For one munitionette, Lily Maud Truphet, this enabled her to earn between five and seven pounds a week, depending on how many boxes of bullets she made.[233] This allowed women, particularly young single women, an unprecedented degree of financial autonomy, which posed a distinct challenge to the existing social and cultural order. The anxieties that this created were subsequently evidenced in the incessantly critical, scandalised narratives that the press adopted surrounding the conduct of working-class munitionettes. Specifically, this often related to 'the thriftless manner in which some working-class women were squandering money', be that on their supposed overconsumption of alcohol or

[229] Bowen, 'W.A.A.C.S', p. 1.
[230] Scott, *Holding The Home Front,* p. 105.
[231] Robb, *British Culture,* p. 45.
[232] Elsa Thomas (Interviewee/Speaker), IWM (Production Company), Marion Miliband (Recorder), produced 1975-07-15, Reel 6, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80000672 [Accessed 18.11.20]; Humbert Wolfe, *Labour Supply and Regulation,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 295.
[233] Lily Maud Truphet (Interviewee/Speaker), IWM (Production Company), Margaret A Brooks (Recorder), Produced 1975-03-04, Reel 3, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80000689 [Accessed 15.12.20]

purchasing of clothes.[234] Specifically, working-class women were accused of purchasing luxuries such as fur hats and coats, an issue that garnered so much public attention that the official propagandist began to produce posters to remind these women that to dress extravagantly in war time was unpatriotic, rather encouraging them to invest their money in war bonds.[235] This evidences that munitions workers were transgressing both class and gender divides. Thus, the propagandist was faced with a significant challenge in negating these narratives, and effectively balancing the critical need for women's labour and the emphasis on the ways in which the experienced of the munitionette would still be overlaid with their status' as a woman in a patriarchal society.[236]

In many ways, this was largely achieved in the same ways as it had been in the propaganda pertaining to the Women's Land Army. Firstly, with regards to the uniforms of the munitionettes, the propagandist sought to preserve traditional notions of femininity in omitting the depiction of women wearing trousers. Not only was the access to masculine garb integral to the ways in which some women were perceived as becoming more like men, it was perceived as related to sexual impropriety.[237] Thus, the propagandist carefully controlled this transgression of the gender boundary in consistently presenting munitionettes wearing long overalls, and often depicting them as a three-quarter length figure so as to not include their trousers.[238] In doing so, the romantic, optimistic narrative that munitionettes were representative of a new type of 'modern woman' was somewhat restrained. Rather, iconography appeared to suggest that these women were invited to contribute to the e war effort, but only if maintaining their femininity. The emphasis on this is also further

[234] "How Wages Are Wasted", *Sheffield Weekly Independent,* 22 January 1916, p. 3.
[235] Watson, 'Khaki Girls', p. 46; "To Dress Extravagantly in a Time of War", Poster (1916), Roberts and Leete Ltd, London (Printer), National War Savings Committee (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/29735 [Accessed 13.09.22]
[236] Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend,* p. 89.
[237] Woollacott, 'Dressed to Kill', p. 199.
[238] See "These Women Are Doing Their Bit", Poster (1918), Septimus Scott (Artist, Printer Unknown, London City Council (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/24058 [Accessed 03.09.20]; "More Aeroplanes Are Needed", Poster (1918-05), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/25923 [Accessed 15.09.20]; "On Her Their Lives Depend", Poster (1916), Clarke & Sherwell Ltd, London (Printer) Ministry of Munitions (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/27761 [Accessed 06.09.20]

elucidated in examining the number of depictions of munitionettes that present them as traditionally attractive, despite their move into such demanding labour. For example, in the 'More Aeroplanes Are Needed' poster, the munitionette pictured has delicate features, with curly hair spilling out from underneath her cap, and appears to be wearing lipstick.[239] Such images assure the viewer that munitions work was not synonymous with the destruction of traditional femininity, but rather acted as a new environment in which it could flourish, evidence of the boundaries of separate spheres of gender being redrawn, rather than erased, during the conflict. This revision is also explicitly shown in this poster through the subtle comparison between the munitionettes workplaces with the 'real' danger zones that men were fighting in. Despite the fact that her work is concerned with lethal manufactures, the munitionette is depicted under blue skies, with the supportive nature of her role implied by her placement at an air base 'out of harm's way'. Overhead, men are flying out to fight for their country.[240] Consistently reaffirming the relative safety of the home front and manufacturing a clear distinction between the home front and front line effectively ensured that no matter what their sacrifice, these women would continually be socially constructed as permanently subservient.[241]

In developing this distinction, the propagandist also consistently emphasised that women had a supporting role in the conflict, existing only to serve the men that served the nation rather than as belligerents in their own right. Exemplar of this is perhaps the most well-known British munitions poster, which is entitled 'On Her their Lives Depend',[242] and urged women to 'enrol at once' in munitions production.[242] The posted depicts a munitionette in the forefront of a scene in which a British gunner can be seen priming the fuse of a shell for a field gun[243]. Whilst the importance of the munitions worker is acknowledged, the juxtaposition of the home front and front line served to

[239] "More Aeroplanes Are Needed", Poster (1918-05), Printer Unknown, Publisher/Sponsor Unknown, Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/25923 [Accessed 15.09.20]
[240] Hupfer, 'A Pluralistic Approach', p. 323.
[241] Ouditt, *Fighting Forces,* p. 76.
[242] "On Her Their Lives Depend", Poster (1916), Clarke & Sherwell Ltd, London (Printer) Ministry of Munitions (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/27761 [Accessed 06.09.20]
[243] 'On Her Their Lives Depend', Object Description, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/27761 [Accessed 06.09.20]

reiterate men's role as the central figures of war. This was a common theme in the iconography pertaining to munitions work and is evidenced also in posters such as Scott's 'These Women Are Doing Their Bit'.[244] The poster depicts a munitionette putting on her protective overalls, her arm upheld in a salute, whilst a solider walks out of the door behind her, also saluting. Whilst at first, the formal balance of the two salutes appears to represent an equation between the munitionette and the uniformed solider, the placement of the two figures ensures that their spheres remain separate.[245] As such, it is clear that the propagandist upheld patriarchal imperatives, but that the context of separate spheres changed. Thus, iconography simply represented a shift from private to public patriarchy.[246]

This is also evidenced in the iconography pertaining to the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps or WAAC, which was perhaps on the surface, the most difficult role to align with the ideology of separate spheres of gender. The WAAC was established in December 1916, in response to the mounting death toll in the trenches, with the idea that women could be employed to do non-combatant tasks both at home and in France, replacing men and releasing them for frontline duty. Women were employed as dilutees, to work within five broad categories of employment, which were as follows: domestic, cookery, mechanical, clerical and tending to war graves.[247] The very participation of women in such roles in the public sphere challenged traditional conceptions of gender, but this was furthered in that these women were permitted to serve in France. As a result, the distinction between combatant and non-combatant was somewhat undermined, making it difficult to uphold the notion that soldiers

[244] "These Women Are Doing Their Bit", Poster (1918), Septimus Scott (Artist, Printer Unknown, London City Council (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/24058 [Accessed 03.09.20]
[245] Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend,* Third Unmarked Page after p. 112; Hupfer, 'A Pluralistic Approach', p. 323.
[246] Sylvia Walby, 'From Private to Public Patriarchy: The Periodisation of British History', *Women's Studies International Forum,* 13 (1990)
[247] Lucy Noakes, 'Women's Military Service', p. 4.

were fighting for the protection and safety of women and children at home.[248] Whilst this was a significant issue to the upholding of patriarchal imperatives, the issue that took primacy throughout the conflict was the fact that women volunteering with the WAAC were predominately working-class, and were permitted to wear military style khaki uniforms, which 'struck a wrong and jarring note' amongst the general public for a number of reasons.[249]

For a great number of people, women donning the symbolic colour of death and sacrifice was insulting, as it equated their service in performing menial tasks to that of the 'men who have fallen on the blood-stained fields of Flanders or in the trenches at Gallipoli, seemingly devaluing their sacrifice and threatening the existing linkage between masculinity and soldering.[250] However, for the most part, concerns surrounding women wearing military style uniforms were largely centred around the damage that it may cause to their delicate feminine identity, and the effects that this would subsequently have on their ability to fulfil their supposed natural roles as wives and mothers. Contributing to this was the synonymity of khaki with licentiousness, which had given rise to a number of hostile depictions of female auxiliaries in wider cultural production, showing them to be transgressing the strictly defined parameters between female war work and female morality[251]. Specifically, it was suggested that many women were only volunteering with the WAACS in order to gain access to the male solider[252]. Despite the fact that this assertion had very little foundation, as women in the WAAC's had moved from the private to the public sphere, and 'public women' was a term that had long been associated with prostitution, subsequent rumours of venereal disease and

[248] Jenny Gould, 'Women's Military Services in First World War Britain', in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds. by Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, and Margaret Collins Weitz (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 117.
[249] Letter to the Editor from Violet Markham, *The Morning Post,* July 22 1915, Cited in Gould, 'Women's Military Services', p. 120
[250] Violet Markham's Letter to *The Morning Post,* July 22 1915; Noakes, 'Women's Military Service', p. 3.
[251] Rayner, 'The Carer', p. 528.
[252] Noakes, 'A Disgrace to the Country', p.

unwanted pregnancies were rampant.[253] As such, many men did not view members of the WAAC as being appropriate to marry at the conclusion of the war, an issue that was further compounded by the innumerable articles that commented on the appearance of the WAACS. Whilst Land Girls and munitionettes had replaced the common hairstyles of the Edwardian period such as that of the pompadour with agreeable styles such as the bob or pin curls, WAACS were reported several times to have 'short, cropped hair'.[254] Such physical features were said to be accompanied with a and 'mannish stride and assurance', thus giving impetus to concerns that the organisation was employing masculine lesbians as well as promiscuous heterosexuals.[255] As such, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that women in the WAAC came to resemble to many, the destruction of traditional values and the harbinger of society's decline and inevitable collapse.[256] Thus, to an even greater extent than for the Women's Land Army and munitionettes, the propagandist faced a significant challenge in presenting the role as consistent with traditional understandings of gender whilst addressing the manpower shortage. Yet, it is clear that this was achieved in closely controlling the depictions of the WAACS, consistently reiterating their supporting role in the conflict and accentuating their femininity.

As with the Women's Land Army and munitionettes, the propaganda pertaining to the WAAC maintained women's subservience to the male counterparts in emphasising that despite their masculine attire, their role was not to work alongside the uniformed solider, but rather for the uniformed solider. The supportive nature of the WAACS was already insinuated through the use of 'auxiliary' but was most explicit in posters such as that of the 'Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps' poster, as the female auxiliaries are referred to as 'The girl behind the man behind the gun', ensuring that the female auxiliary remained in a supportive role to the male combatant, both linguistically and

[253] Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Judith R. Walkowitz*, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[254] Charles Dawburn, *Evening News,* September 13 1916, p.
[255] *The Globe,* September 19 1917, p. ; Noakes, 'A Disgrace to the Country', p.
[256] Bowen, W.A.A.C.S', p. 1.

ideologically.[257] Further to this, despite the clear transgression of the female auxiliary into the public sphere, traditional notions of femininity and its association with vulnerability and weakness continues to be subtly upheld in that the female recruit is given the diminutive label 'girl'. In comparison, the solider is referred to as a 'man', and the contrast between the two serves to support the notion that despite her new role, she is still in need of protection.[258]

The notion that women were protecting the homeland whilst being protected by the fighting forces was further emphasised in that the propagandist also emphasised the relative safety of agricultural labour, suggesting that it was 'well insulated from the harsh realities of the war'.[259] It is now evident that the WAACS on the Western Front shared some of the same dangers as their male counterparts, exemplified by the nine women that died due to a bomb falling into a protection trench in Abbeville on the 29th-30th May 1918. However, in iconography, women are presented as far removed from such destruction and violence. In referring back to the QMAAC poster, the woman is depicted at the forefront of a sketch of a military camp, exuding cheerfulness, whilst other women stand together in the background. Similarly, in another such poster produced for the QMACC, several women are pictured in a line, all smiling, with the poster reading 'We're Looking for you to Join Our Circle'.[260] Both of these posters not only present the work as inherently safe for women, but they also conform to pre-war gender ideology in presenting a strong sense of female community.[261]

Whilst this alone could not negate entirely the narratives being perpetuated in wider cultural production, the emphasis on female vulnerability existed as just one of a number of ways in which

[257] "Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps", Poster (1908-06), Printer Unknown, Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31371 [Accessed 12.08.22]; Angela Smith, 'The Girl Behind the Man Behind the Gun': Women as Carers in Recruitment Posters of the First World War', *Journal of War and Culture Studies,* 1 (2008), p. 237.
[258] Smith, 'The Girl Behind the Man', p. 237.
[259]Ouditt, *Fighting Forces,* p. 47; Elizabeth Crosthwait, 'The Girl Behind the Man Behind the Gun': The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, 1914–18', in *Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work,* eds. by Leonore Davidoff and and Belinda Westover (London: Red Globe Press, 1986), p. 175.
[260] "Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps", Poster (Date Unknown), Printer Unknown, Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31381 [Accessed 12.08.22]
[261] Smith, 'The Girl Behind the Man', p. 235.

the propagandist was able to restrain the temporary unsettling of gendered stereotypes, in simply revising the boundaries of separate spheres. One further example of this is the way in which iconography clearly emphasised that the roles that women would undertake in the organisation would remain inherently domestic. As such, the propagandist postured the WAAC as a move from private to public patriarchy, muting any potential perception that the WAAC presented a chance for adventure and for women to break free of gendered constraints. This is evidenced in iconography including that of the 'Women Urgently Wanted for the WAAC' poster, which depicts a female auxiliary in uniform, but is largely comprised of a body of text detailing the nature of the work.[262] The majority of the text is in black, and lists 'clerks, waitresses, drivers and mechanics' as some of the potential work that women may undertake. However, in contrast, a handful of words appear in red, naturally standing out against the body of the text. These words include 'cooks' and 'domestic workers', placing emphasis on the roles that fit most neatly within the confines of pre-war conceptions of gender. The transgression of the gender boundary with regards to those occupations appearing in black text is also carefully controlled, in that the poster reminds women that their access to such occupations was only 'to take the place of men' for the duration. Such an assertion was reiterated in other posters, including that of the poster bearing the slogan 'Every Fit Woman Can Release a Fit Man'.[263]

Such posters are also interesting in that they evidence the ways in which the propagandist addressed the primary issue of concerns surrounding female auxiliaries' femininity. In examining 'Every Fit Woman Can Release a Fit Man', the WAACS are pictured smiling, traditionally attractive, and wearing lipstick, a clear indication that the work that they were doing was agreeable, pleasant,

[262] "Women Urgently Wanted for the WAAC", Poster (Date Unknown), Printer Unknown, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31373 [Accessed 12.08.22]
[263] 'WAAC – Every Fit Woman Can Release a Fit Man', Poster (Date Unknown), H and C Graham Ltd, Camberwell, London SE (Printer), Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28298 [Accessed 12.08.22]

and most of all did not undercut their femininity.[264] Such sentiments were also echoed in a handful of depictions of auxiliaries in wider cultural production, including that of a cartoon published in *The Bystander* in 1918 entitled 'The New Gallant'.[265] The cartoon depicts a woman in uniform giving up her seat on the bus to a traditionally attractive, overtly feminine woman. Whilst the transgression of the gender boundary is clear in that the auxiliary is wearing military style uniform, the artist presents the woman as effectively negotiating a path between the masculinity afforded to her by the exigencies of the period, and traditional notions of femininity, in depicting her with a small waist, long legs and smart gloves. Her womanly figure and manners allow the female auxiliary to maintain a feminine presence in spite of her role, thus not presenting a threat to the social order.[266]

Such examples of iconography are clear evidence as to the way in which the gender boundary was simply revised as far as was necessary to conform to the exigencies of the period, with the extent of this necessity largely dictated by the role's proximity to the strife of war. However, even within the roles most difficult to align with traditional pre-war conceptions of gender, the propagandist effectively controlled the temporary unsettling of gendered stereotypes in consistently depicting women as subordinate to their male counterparts, traditionally attractive and in spite of their masculine garb and occupation, continuing to embody a vulnerable femininity.[267] Thus, it is evident that 'if women wanted to help to win the war, they were welcome to do so, but within the boundaries of conservative definitions of femininity and on the condition that any apparently radical change was merely temporary'.[268]

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[264]'WAAC – Every Fit Woman Can Release a Fit Man', Poster (Date Unknown), H and C Graham Ltd, Camberwell, London SE (Printer), Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (Publisher/Sponsor), Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28298 [Accessed 12.08.22]; Brown, 'Women and World War One', p. 40.
[265] 'The New Gallant', *The Bystander,* 1918.
[266] Noakes, 'A Disgrace to the Country', p.
[267] Smith, 'The Girl Behind the Man', p. 239.
[268] Ouditt, *Fighting Forces,* p. 87.

Conclusion:

The value of analysing female representation within First World War iconography to contribute to the wider debates surrounding the persistence of gender relationships and structures during the conflict is abundantly clear. In identifying and analysing each of the four tropes of female representation throughout the conflict, the evolution of the female role throughout the war has been effectively conveyed. It is clear that at the start of the conflict, women's roles were able to remain thoroughly traditional, with female representation largely centred on depicting women as undertaking the gender appropriate duty of exhorting men to go to war, and as victims of sexual violence at the hands of the German army. This allowed for the development of a protective rhetoric reliant on the deeply internalised, patriarchal values of the male protector and vulnerable female victim. In other contexts, women were depicted as allegories, which, despite embodying some masculine characteristics, were recognisable as distinct from civilian women and thus posed no significant threat to the social order. However, as the conflict progressed, particularly following the introduction of conscription in January 1916, it is evidenced that there was a clear change in female representation. Women were asked to contribute to the war effort as active participants, in both the quintessentially feminine pursuit of nursing, and more traditionally male roles, including that of undertaking agricultural labour, auxiliary roles in the British army, and working in the production of lethal manufactures in the munitions factories. As such, these women were depicted as actively transgressing the gender boundary that deemed belligerency a male enterprise, accessing occupations that they would have otherwise remained excluded from.

This evolution of the female role has been commented on by a number of historians and has often been referred to by proponents of the watershed interpretation in order to bolster narratives of dramatic social change. However, in examining various examples of propaganda posters during the period, it has been evidenced that that whilst the extent to which the gender boundary appeared porous differed according to the trope of female representation, the notion of separate spheres of gender was never rendered irrelevant. Rather, the boundaries of separate spheres were redrawn in

order to conform to the exigencies of the period and address the wartime state's issue of balancing its need for women's labour and the perceived necessity of preserving existing gender roles.[269] In consistently evidencing the ways in which men's roles had developed during this period, compounded by the deliberate attempts to present women's wartime contributions as attractive and desirable, the gender hierarchy was effectively maintained, with the only change being the context of conflict. Such analysis evidenced that femininity and traditional conceptions of gender were a central tenet of propaganda throughout the conflict, with women's experiences being consistently overlaid with their status as women in a patriarchal society. As such, the thesis clearly supports the notion that femininity exists as a historical construct, something that is adaptable according to the exigencies of the period.

This thesis has contributed to the wider discussions surrounding countering the watershed argument, in evidencing that women's roles were relatively unchanged wherever possible. However, it has provided a further contribution to knowledge in evidencing the value of visual culture in affirming such arguments. Whilst previous scholars had tended to present analysis that appeared to be an exercise in measurement, this has evidenced the importance of examining cultural understandings of gender identity.

Whilst it is evidenced that the analysis of official propaganda posters has allowed for strong conclusions regarding the consistencies of gender structures in First World War Britian to be drawn, this research was, in a number of ways inhibited by the imposition of a 30,000-word limit. Analysis could be furthered in a number of ways, the first of which being to explore various other forms of visual culture. The term visual culture is so broad, and encompasses a great number of mediums, including that of magazines, radio and broadcasting, photographs, film and art, all of which were at numerous points, relevant to the narratives surrounding female representation. Such research would be entirely possible in that so much of the primary source material for these cultural forms has been

[269] Noakes, 'Women's Military Service', p. 5.

digitised, including that of several magazines, including *Punch, The Landswoman* and *The Girl's Own Paper.*[270] Further to this, the Imperial War Museum holds a vast collection of source material, including thousands of examples of reels of radio broadcasts from the period, thus making a more extensive analysis of visual culture entirely possible.[271]

Additionally, this thesis has used the examples of the propaganda pertaining to munitions, the WLA and the WAAC, to evidence that the upholding of patriarchal imperatives and traditional conceptions of femininity was most complex in the depictions of women that were most comparable with the male experience of war. However, this narrative could be strengthened in extending analysis to reflect various other wartime occupations, including that of the Women's Royal Airforce and the Women's Royal Naval Service. As the narratives surrounding gender structures and relationships remain pertinent to contemporary society, such research would be of value.

[270] Gale Primary Soucres, 'Punch Historical Archive, 1841–1992', https://go-gale-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/ps/start.do?p=PNCH&u=mmucal5 [Accessed 11.08.22]; Women's Land Army and Timber Corps, The Landswoman Magazine (WW1), https://www.womenslandarmy.co.uk/archive-material/the-landswoman-magazine-ww1/ [Accessed 14.06.22]; The Lutterworth Press, The Girl's Own Paper Index, https://www.lutterworth.com/gop/ [Accessed 02.03.23]

[271] Imperial War Museum, Sound Archive, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/sound [Accessed 21.10.21]

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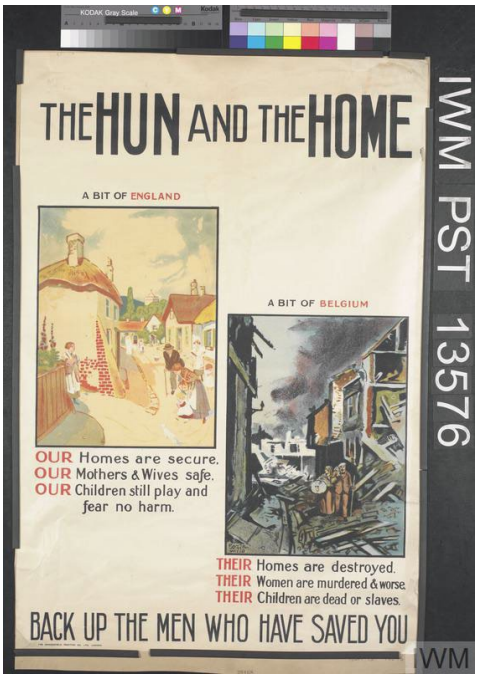

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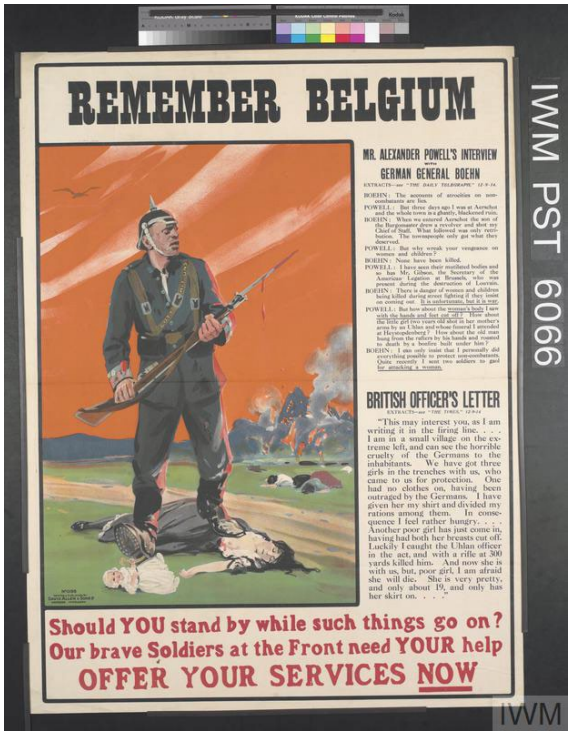

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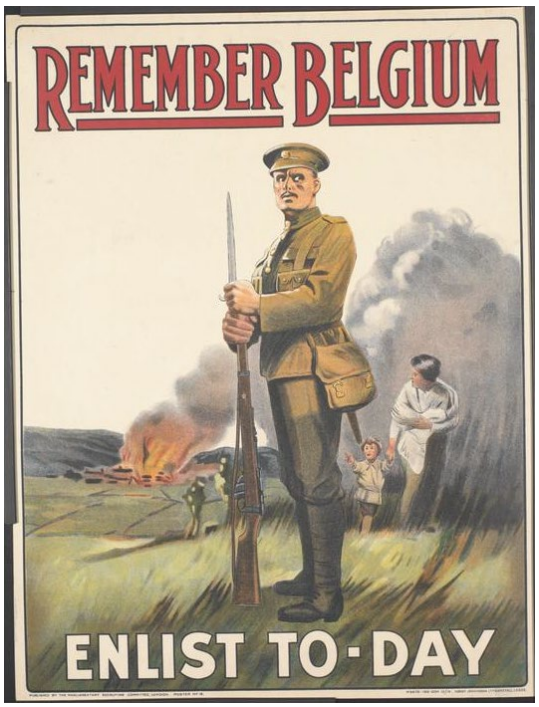

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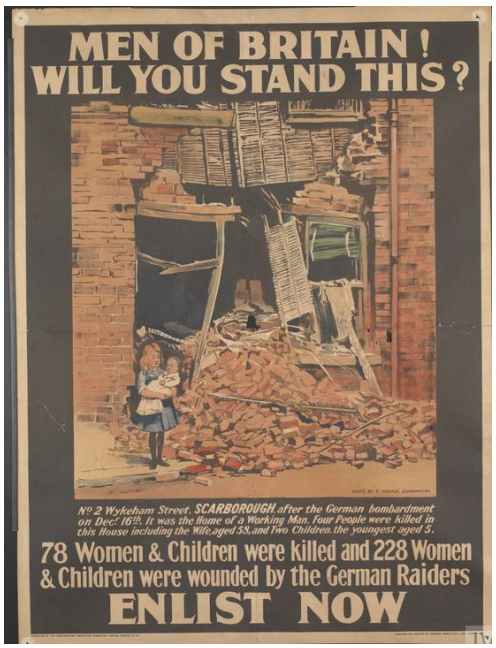

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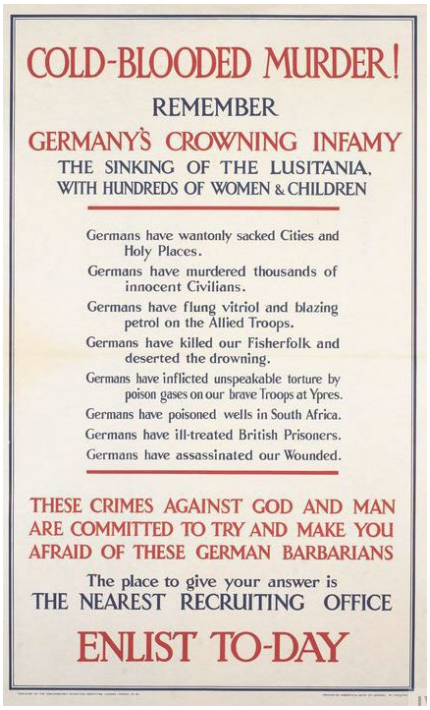

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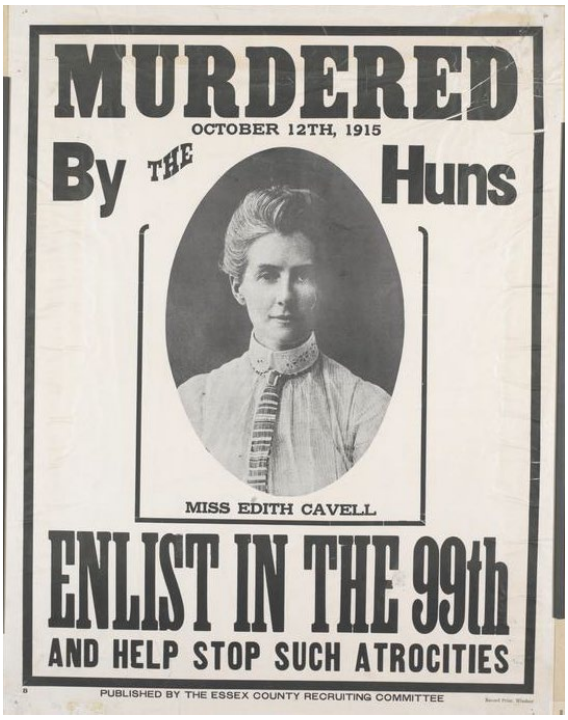

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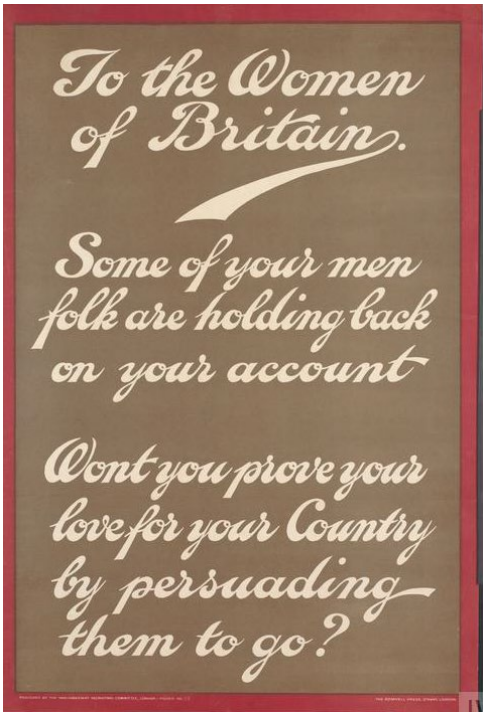

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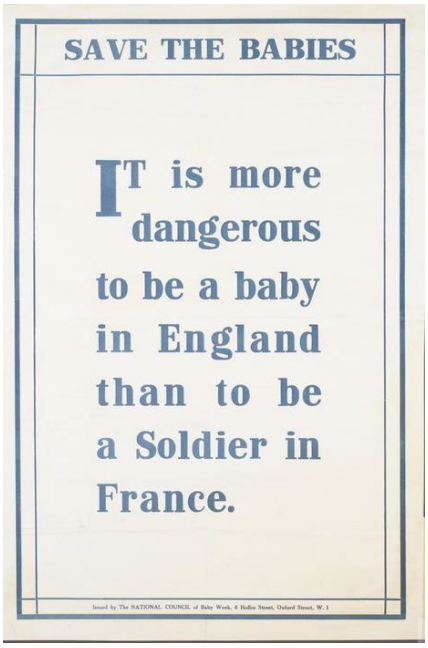

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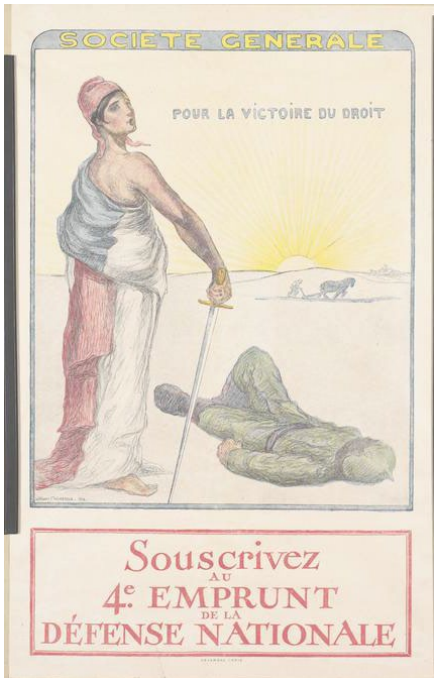

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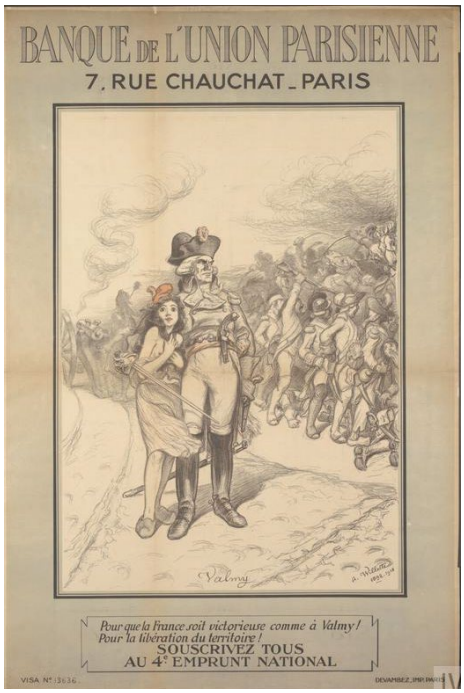

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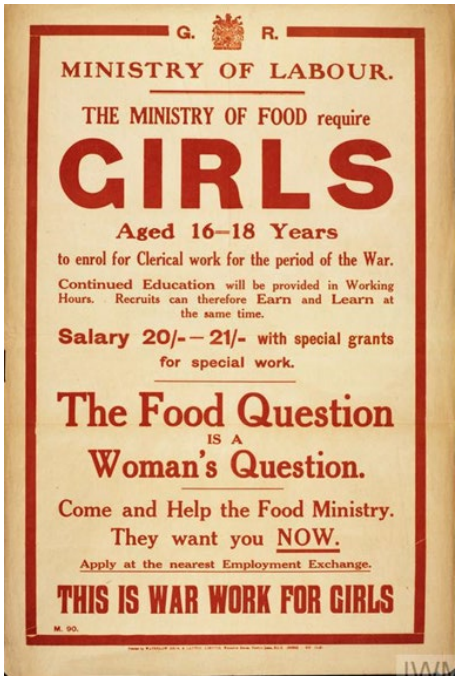

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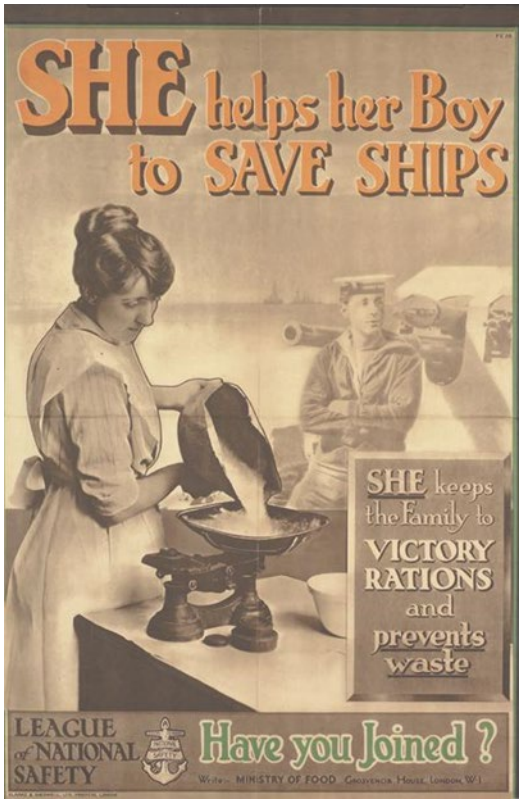

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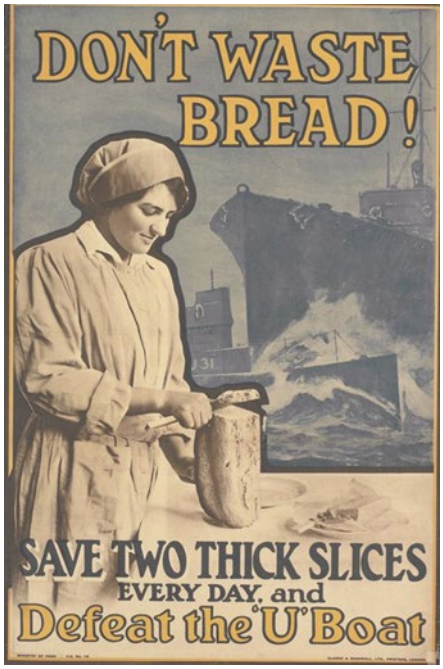

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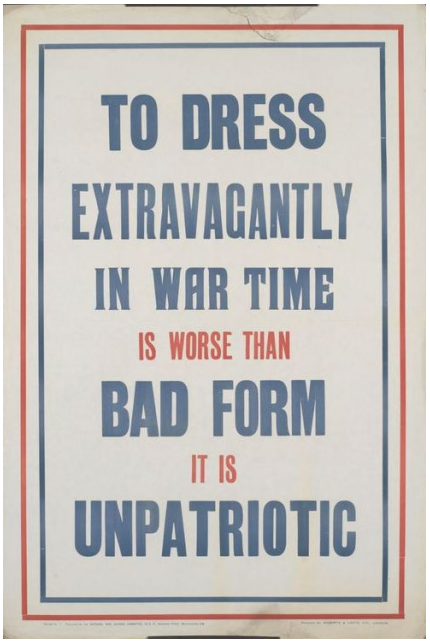

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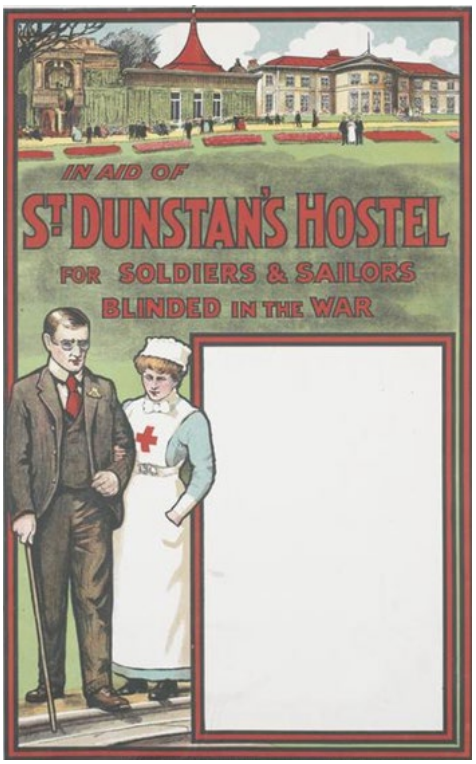

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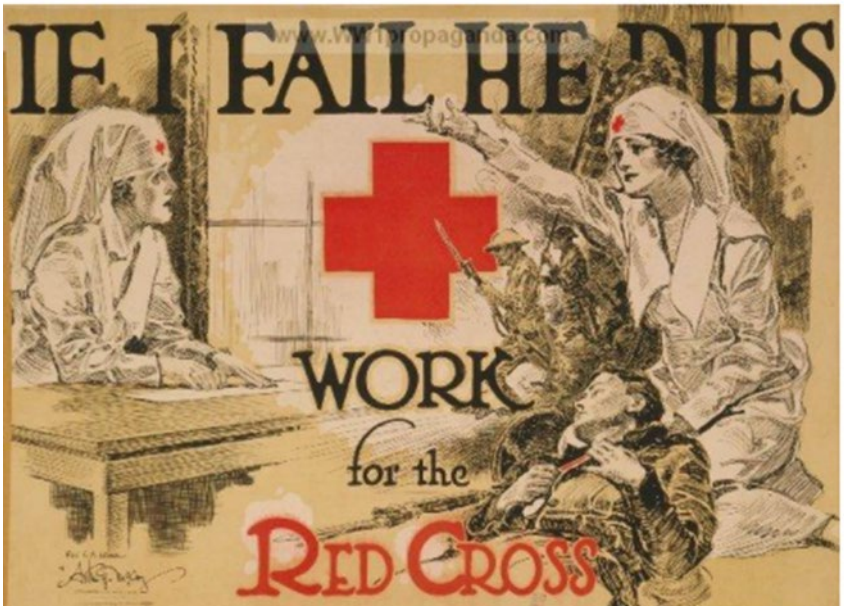

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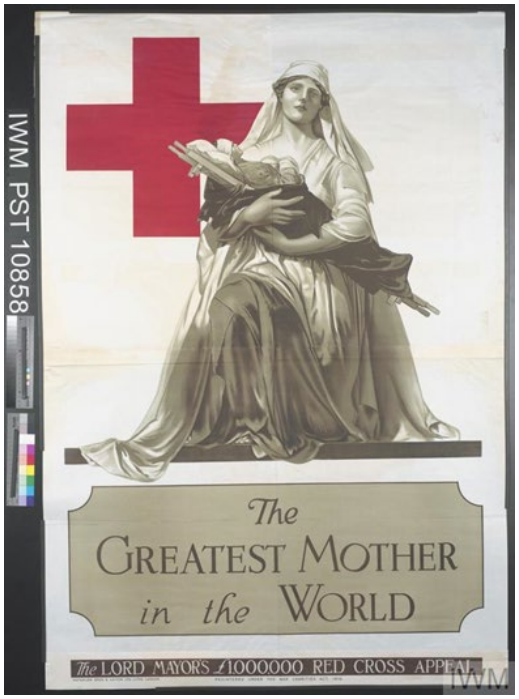

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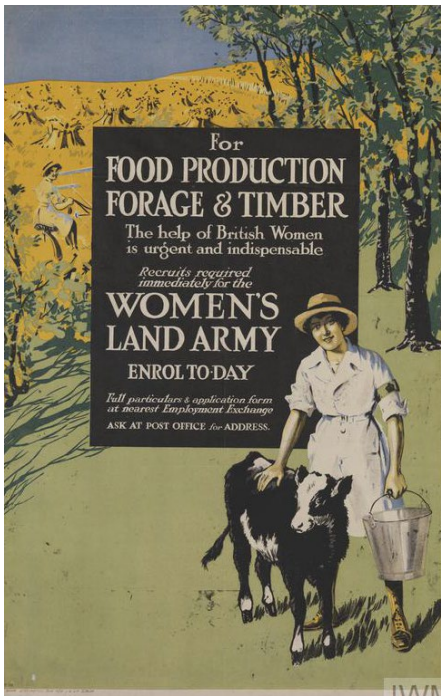

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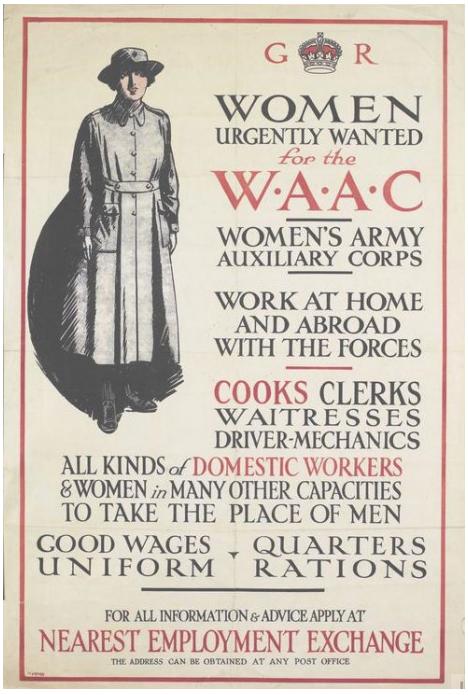

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