

Spring 2021

Women and World War One: Perspectives on Women's Role in WWI Literature

Rachel Michelle Brown
Central Washington University, rachel.brown2@cwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd>



Part of the [History of Gender Commons](#), [Literature in English](#), [British Isles Commons](#), [Military History Commons](#), [Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Women's History Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brown, Rachel Michelle, "Women and World War One: Perspectives on Women's Role in WWI Literature" (2021). *All Master's Theses*. 1504.
<https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd/1504>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@cwu.edu.

WOMEN AND WORLD WAR ONE: PERSPECTIVES
ON WOMEN'S ROLE IN WWI LITERATURE

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

English Literature

by

Rachel Michelle Brown

June 2021

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the thesis of

Rachel Michelle Brown

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Dr. Christopher Schedler, Committee Chair

Dr. Sarah Sillin

Dr. Michele O'Brien

Dean of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

WOMEN AND WORLD WAR ONE: PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S ROLE IN WWI LITERATURE

by

Rachel Michelle Brown

June 2021

This thesis analyzes the changing gender roles of British women who served as caretakers in World War One. Often overlooked for their contributions, the women who worked on the frontlines of the war defined the changing role of women during and after the war in several crucial ways: 1) the general expectations of women's gender role, 2) how women perceived and acted in motherhood, and 3) how women constructed and maintained heterosexual, homosocial, and platonic relationships. Using a gender theory approach, this thesis analyzes two semi-autobiographical fictional texts, Evadne Price's *Not So Quiet: Stepdaughters of War*, published in 1930, and Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone* published in 1929, as well as propaganda posters from the time, to highlight how caretaking women were defined, freed, and constrained by the gendered expectations of wartime. Women were crucial to the war effort, and by serving their country through war work, the gendered role of women was altered forever. This thesis also serves to bring to light a scholarly gap in the study of war literature written by women and focused on women characters. Women's gender roles during WWI is an under-researched area within literary studies, and this thesis serves to illuminate two important authors who represent women's experience and impact on the war.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee, Dr. Christopher Schedler, Dr. Sarah Sillin, and Dr. Michele O'Brien, for their hard work and patience. I would also like to send my many thanks to Michaela Barrett for reading several drafts of each chapter and for her wonderful feedback and suggestions.

I would also like to acknowledge the women who contributed to WWI, as it was their powerful and overlooked histories that led me to this topic:

Evadne Price
Mary Borden
Vera Britton
Edith Cavell
Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman, AKA Nellie Bly
Jessie Pope
Beatrice MacDonald
Helen McClelland
Joy Bright Hancock
Lela Leibrand
Kate Walker
Merle Egan Anderson
Grace Banker
Dorothy Canfield Fisher
Willa Cather
Edith Wharton
Helen Mackay
Hertha Ayrton
Dr. Elsie Maud Inglis
Frances Micklethwait
Phylis Mckie
Martha Whitely
Dr. Mary Geddes
Helen Gwynne-Vaughan
Dr. Isabel Emslie Hutton
Jesse Slater
Evelina Haverfield

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	The Literary Texts.....	2
	English Ambulanciers and Nurses.....	3
	Pre-War English Femininity and Class.....	8
	Marriage.....	10
	Motherhood.....	11
	The Vote.....	13
	Symbolism.....	15
	Pain is a Woman.....	15
	Militant Mothers.....	17
	Promiscuity and Purity.....	18
	Women as a Sacrifice.....	20
II	GENDERED EXPECTATIONS OF FEMALE CARETAKERS.....	24
	Interaction with the Male Public and Body.....	27
	Women’s Appearance.....	30
	The Madonna Nurse.....	43
	The Dehumanized Woman in War.....	53
III	MOTHERHOOD.....	59
	Militant Mothers.....	63
	The Evans-Mawningtons.....	67
	The Smiths.....	72
	Caretakers as Mothers.....	80
IV	RELATIONSHIPS.....	85
	Superior and Subordinate Relations.....	85
	Homosocial and Homosexual Relations.....	91
	Heterosexual Relations.....	100
V	CONCLUSION.....	111
	Post-War Gender Role Reversion.....	113
	Looking Forward.....	117
	Works Cited.....	120

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	<i>A female driver of the London Ambulance Service. Taken in December 1917, on the roof of the offices of the Department of Information, 8 Buckingham Gate, London</i>	34
2	<i>Every Fit Woman Can Release A Fit Man. Join The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps To-Day</i>	40
3	<i>A female general service member and a female nursing officer of the St John's Ambulance Brigade. Taken in December 1917, on the roof of the offices of the Department of Information, 8 Buckingham Gate, London</i>	42
4	<i>The Greatest Mother in the World</i>	44
5	<i>The Vatican Pietà or Pietà</i>	45
6	<i>Enlist</i>	61
7	<i>Britain is Fighting for the Freedom of Europe and to Defend your Mothers Wives and Sisters from the Horrors of War. Enlist Now</i>	62
8	<i>GO! Its Your Duty Lad Join To-Day</i>	63
9	<i>After the War: A VAD Ambulance Bringing in French Peasants Wounded by Shells Left on the Somme Battlefield.</i>	95

CHAPTER I

INTRODCUTION

During World War I, a need for women to join the war effort as professional caretakers transformed women's gender roles through the alteration of the pre-war accepted ideals of gender expectations, motherhood, and relationships. Women, as they had in previous wars, worked as nurses and nurse aides; however, for the first time women also assumed the new caretaking role of ambulance driver and were then exposed to the harsh reality of World War I's trench and chemical warfare. These women came back from the war with a changed perspective on their gender role, which set them at odds with the expectations society had of them upon their return to civilian life. Caretaking in the context of this essay will focus on two roles within the medical field, nursing and ambulance driving, referred to here as ambulanciers. Both of these roles were open to women and were considered volunteer positions outside of the military. While the women in these roles were not in the military, they were held to similar standards of behavior and were working in the same militarized structure as the soldiers on the frontlines.

Within World War I literature, there is a subset of semi-autobiographical fictionalized works that present events based on the real war-time experiences of the authors or their informants. This thesis will draw on gender studies and historical research to analyze two semi-autobiographical literary texts and their portrayal of the changing gender roles from pre-war to post-war for those who served as caretakers during World War I. I will examine the changing gender roles of British women through the overlooked war-time role of caretaking for the protagonist Smithy and other

characters from Evadne Price's novel *Not So Quiet... Stepdaughters of War* and short stories from Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone*, focusing on gender expectations, motherhood, and relationships.

The Literary Texts

Evadne Price, under the pseudonym Helen Zenna Smith,¹ published *Not So Quiet... Stepdaughters of War* in 1930, based on the diaries of a female ambulancier who served with the Voluntary Aid Detachment, or VAD. In her *Paris Review* article, "Re-Covered: Not So Quiet ... Stepdaughters of War," Lucy Scholes explains that "Price relied heavily on the diaries of a woman named Winifred Constance Young, an Englishwoman who had served as an ambulance driver behind the front line" (Scholes). This biographical information, as well as the novel being published under the pseudonym of the main character, Helen Zenna Smith, or Smithy as she is known in the text, served to highlight the novel's diary style and its marketing to the audience as autobiography. Price is considered to be a British-Australian writer and used a British woman's diary as her source material, so for the purpose of this thesis, I consider her work to be a representation of a British ambulancier.

Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone*, published in 1929, is a collection of short works based on Borden's own experience as a nurse and hospital manager on the front line. As Hazel Hutchison writes in her "Introduction" to the book, Borden herself "volunteered with the French Red Cross. She had no nursing experience, but she spoke a little French, and unlike many volunteers, she was willing to work on a ward for typhoid victims" (Hutchison xii). Borden then went on to become a fully trained nurse as well as

¹ For the purpose of this essay, quotations from *Not So Quiet* will be cited by the author's name, Price, and not the pseudonym of Smith.

to fund and run her own hospitals during the war, “so close to the front line that it was often in range of shell and artillery fire” (Hutchison xiii). Although Borden joined the war effort as an American, she became a devoted British citizen after the war, and her work reflects the experience of a British woman; for these reasons, I consider Borden’s work to be both British and American, in the same light that many scholars regard Henry James’ work as such. While Borden’s collection has unnamed narrators² and more traditional elements of fiction, it was written during and shortly after the war based on her personal experience as a nurse.

English Ambulanciers and Nurses

To fully understand the role that ambulanciers and nurses played during the war, we have to acknowledge the historical context of the time period, as well as the pre-war gender roles and the post-war expectations for women returning to their new civilian lives. In “Propaganda, Militarism, and the Home Front in Helen Zenna Smith’s *Not So Quiet... Stepdaughters of War*,” Celia Kingsbury explains that women were held to “a very specific set of criteria; upper-middle-class British ‘Femininity.’ They are to become proper wives and mothers—charming women who are funny, plucky, and largely ornamental. They are meant to conform to the standards of propriety that govern the use of language and sexual behavior, morality” (239). This femineity based upon morality was structured off of centuries of monarchy in Britain, in which the upper classes and nobility were seen as closer to God, and so the women in those roles were moral role models for the lower-class women; the upper-class women were beautiful wives and

² While all of Borden’s stories are based off of her own experiences, the classical fiction elements in the collection disallows for a traditional alignment between author and autobiographical text. This thesis will analyze the individual narrators as separate entities rather than force an uncertain autobiographical identification of the narrator.

mothers, and in their ornamentality they served as the definition of the women's gender role.

As nurses or ambulanciers, English women were held to the expectations of their gender, socio-economic class, and the military's standards of behavior while serving as volunteers. Several organizations mobilized women to the war effort: the working-class unit of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), the medical, non-military auxiliary of the British Armed Forces known as the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), and the multi-purpose, multi-role Women's Volunteer Reserve (WVR). Class played a large role in which organizations women volunteered through, as well as what positions they were allowed to take as a volunteer. Upper-class women were allowed to become ambulanciers and nurses aides, while lower- and middle-class women were often relegated to more menial roles, such as laundress and cook. Nursing was a pre-existing career and because of this was seen as a lower-class occupation by women from upper classes who did not work outside the home, so upper- and middle-class women were reluctant to go through nurse's training and instead often opted to become nurse's aides. This meant that regardless of age or experience, women's economic standing and the organization they volunteered for limited their options for work. This, in combination with their type of volunteer work and the area they served impacted the reputation that their service held with the civilian population and the level of respect applied to their service upon return to the home front.

While their service impacted their return to civilian life, it is important to understand the historical context that led to their shifting gender roles. One important aspect of women's war work was its interpretation by the public and by women as

temporary and of less value than men's war work. In Margaret Albrinck's "Borderline Women: Gender Confusion in Vera Brittain's and Evadne Price's War Narratives,"

Albrinck states that

even though women were moving into the public sphere, performing jobs previously performed by men and earning more money, their work was deemed less important than that of men; they were not to measure their progress by "the actual nature of the social activity" they were allowed to perform (since the similarity between men's prewar work and women's war work would suggest equality), but instead, they were to see "its relative value" in the new system—a system in which men's work in the trenches was more important than all types of women's work. (273)

Even when their country needed their work, it was not valued because of its completion by women; this made it easier to remove women from the workforce, as well as disregard their wartime breaks from their pre-war gender role when the men came home.

Another important historical event for the shifting of the gender roles during and after World War I was the suffragist movement. Patricia Fara's article "Women, Science and Suffrage in World War I" examines the start of the war and how women's war work was seen initially as inappropriate and was continually rejected until the need for their contributions could no longer be overlooked: "by the end of the war, around 60,000 women had served in the armed forces" (19). The push for women to volunteer in the war effort was seen as a suffragist-aligned movement, and many thought that at its best it was a way for women to prove their equality, while at its worst it was a cheap trick to force the government into giving women the vote. While the suffragist movement was a

driving force in the changing gender roles of the time, the purpose of this study is to examine how caretaking during the war altered gender roles; while the suffragist movement was extremely important, the women serving as caretakers in the war joined the effort for a plethora of reasons in addition to suffrage.

The majority of women ambulanciers were held to similar expectations as men ambulanciers in their work positions; besides their caretaking roles, women were expected to maintain themselves and their vehicles. Whereas men would drive, and in some cases maintain their vehicles and their vehicle's engines, women were responsible for their own mechanics, vehicle sanitation, driving, nursing, initial first-aid response, and basecamp responsibilities, which included cooking, cleaning, and maintaining the physical camp itself. Outside of the job expectations, the woman ambulancier was also expected to uphold her civilian pre-war gender role while volunteering. While men were treated fairly equally amongst themselves, despite differences in financial standing and educational background, women were still held to the expectations of behavior from their civilian class roles. As argued by Margaret Higonnet in "Another Record: A Different War," this is in part due to the "cliche that men 'see' combat, women don't. In the proprieties of war reporting in 1914-18, women were not supposed to see men's bodies, and men were sealed off and hallowed by death" (89). This cliché was prevalent in expectations of women; regardless of what they saw in their time as nurses and ambulanciers, they were still expected to act as if they were unchanged by the traumas of war.

Class standing impacted what volunteer organizations and positions a woman could work in, which also served to reinforce some aspects of pre-war gender norms;

more often than not, women served alongside other members of their same socio-economic class, and those women were all exposed as a group to their changing gender roles as the war progressed. Vita Fortunati explains in her article “Women’s Counter-Memories of the First War World: Two Emblematic Case-Studies Vera Brittain, Mary Borden” that with this class division in war work, “for the first time women belonging to the middle and upper classes entered hospitals to care for the wounded and came into contact with the male body at a public level. Society immediately realized the possible erotic-sexual risks women could encounter, and reacted by imposing strict regulations” (12). Upper- and middle-class women were expected to take on the traumatic positions in front-line work, while also “reinforcing the stereotype of woman as the ministering angel entrusted with taking care of a man’s body, with relieving his pain. Thus, what is emphasized is the maternal role” (Fortunati 12-13). Much like the stiff-upper lip expectation of men ambulanciers, women ambulanciers and nurses were expected to be the strong maternal caretakers of the wounded, hiding their own trauma in order to ‘save’ the men, while also staying within their social class roles. The upper-class women were expected to stay within their sphere and socialize only with women within their own class standing, while also taking huge leaps outside of that social expectation by becoming drivers and interacting with the male public and lower-class women. This is not to say that there was no socialization between the classes during wartime; as argued by Higonnet, “A surprising number of narratives and testimony by women from the period stress the presence of different kinds of women in the combat zone and deride the block distinctions that official propaganda made between a male zone of hazardous sacrifice and a female zone of domesticity and security” (Higonnet 88). The voices of all of these

women were present in the war, and regardless of their class, they were all expected to conform to their gender role.

Pre-War English Femininity and Class

In *Gender and Power in Britain 1640-1990*, Sarah Kingsley Kent outlines the pre-war gender role of British women, “Marriage and motherhood were the crowning achievements of a woman’s life, her ‘natural destiny’ and ‘best earthly happiness’” (Kent 246). This is the era of the “angel in the house,” and “the traditional, patriarchal marriage, characterized by inequality between spouses and the notion of the ‘natural’ subordination of the wife, remained the accepted norm” (246). This norm of subordination was well established in Britain but was challenged by the suffragist movement and later by the war itself. Kent details the feminized role of women in contrast to the hyper-masculine role of the English soldier:

The sexual imagery utilized to represent the war reflected developments in the prosecution and fortunes of the war and the extent to which the home front was involved. During the first phase, lasting from August 1914 into 1915, the war was often depicted as a remasculinization of English culture, perceived to have become degenerate, effeminate in the years before the war. This kind of representation relied upon a corresponding imagery of women as refeminized.
(276)

Women of the upper- and middle-classes were granted a loosening of sexual restraints and desires as long as it was based around khaki fever,³ but this freedom was encouraged

³ Khaki fever was a phenomenon in which the khaki uniform of a soldier became a representation of heterosexuality to the point in which women were encouraged to be attracted to any man in uniform because he was serving his country.

to boost the men's morale, rather than liberate women from social constructs. The pre-war gender role of women was carved out of the needs of men, and as men's needs changed during the war their expectation of women's behavior changed as well; women were granted freedoms because of men's needs, which led to the double-edged sword of women's wartime gender expectations. Women were pushed to find husbands and be sexually appealing, while simultaneously being a symbol of purity and maternity, and this conflict was only amplified during the war as women began to take on jobs associated with men. In "Constructions of 'Home,' 'Front,' and Women's Military Employment in First-World-War Britain: A Spatial Interpretation," Krisztina Robert states that the war front was defined as a man's place, and "'Home' was represented as a female Utopia, set in the idyllic rural past. Propaganda posters depicted the home front as villages of thatched cottages and medieval churches with picturesque gardens among rolling hills inhabited exclusively by women" (326). This ultra-feminized representation of women during the war established a societal expectation of behavior in the woman's gender role, in which women were to be focused on maternal instincts and caretaking. Women's gender roles at the start of the war were still heavily based on Victorian values that had carried into the 20th century. Important advances in the areas of sexuality, women's marriage and parental rights, and at the close of the war, the right to vote for certain women all served to alter the gender roles of the time.

While the women's gender role is the focus of this work, it is crucial to also briefly examine the men's gender role in order to understand that the women's role was directly constructed out of the needs of men. Before and through the beginning of the Great War, Darwin's principle of survival of the fittest was seen in the current human

condition, and therefore “war constituted a positive good, an arena in which men could be hardened and those who were unfit could be selected out and prevented from procreating, and thus passing on inferior or degenerate traits to subsequent generation” (Kent 237). The use of the word “hardened” here is telling; men were expected to be tough, emotionless and without softness: “they would have to accept that violence was a part of the natural order of things and be prepared to act violently themselves” (Kent 238). In a society that identifies the men’s gender role as needing violence to solidify masculinity, women were then also needed for the aftermath of that violence. Women were to be soft and to tend to the inevitable wounds of the other sex, both physical and psychological.

Marriage

Marriage was a complicated and a seemingly predetermined relationship for both genders. While there was an ideal marriage, “in which the relations between men and women were said to be inspired by love, purity, and altruism” (Kent 246), this was not always the case. It was difficult to have a marriage founded on love and altruism, when women had for centuries been considered their husband’s property; in fact, in many circumstances women were still expected to participate in child production and rearing for their husbands as the main basis of their relationship. As stated by Kent,

The traditional, patriarchal marriage, characterized by inequality between spouses and the notion of the ‘natural’ subordination of the wife, remains the accepted norm throughout the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Ignorance about sex, unreliable methods of contraception, and the ever present dangers of childbirth often meant that the intimate aspects of marriage for women could be quite unpleasant. (246)

Childbirth was still a high-risk undertaking for women leading up to the war, and for many women this risk was out of their own hands, as sex and resulting pregnancies were a part of the social, if not still strictly legal, coverture of marriage. This meant that marriage could often be the proverbial spot between a rock and hard place for women. They needed marriage to leave their familial home, as women were still vastly dependent on men for economic security. Marriage for many women meant secure social standing, access to property and a home, and financial support, as it was extremely hard for women to be independent property owners or to find socially-acceptable work.

It is important to note that marriage also provided women with a socially-acceptable space for sexual intercourse. For women at the time, sexual purity was still the main criteria for evaluation of their character; to be promiscuous would be to lose all prospects of marriage and its social and economic benefits. However, this standard was not held against men to the same extent, as men were encouraged to be aggressive in all aspects of life, including sexual appetite. In conjunction with these heterosexual norms of marriage, homosexual relationships were deemed nearly impossible⁴ for women, and possible but immoral for men.

Motherhood

Before the war began, there was a tremendous change in the expectation and role of motherhood; for centuries children were the property of their fathers, but in the early 20th century, women became fully responsible socially and legally for all aspects of their child's life. The role of mother was then seen as the ultimate calling for women, and this

⁴ While examples of homosexual men were known to the public at this time, such as Oscar Wilde, a woman's highest calling in life was to become a mother, and so a romantic relationship that could not produce children was seen as outside of the realm of desire for women.

was reinforced into a harmful gender stereotype by the legal changes that ended social practice of legal Coventry before the war. The Children Act of 1908 was established in an attempt to bolster the children and infant wellness movement of the time in Britain; there were now legal repercussions for acts that would be considered child endangerment (Kent 239). While the intentions may have been to protect children, it also served to punish lower-class or working mothers who could not afford to be unemployed or to hire childcare: “The raising of children now became a national obligation on the part of women rather than a moral or social duty, and if they did not perform this function adequately, the state would step in to insist that they do it better” (Kent 240).⁵ This Act served to reinforce the idea of the social role of woman as mother:

Middle class men and women have accepted for some time now that the nurturance of children by their mothers constituted a significant aspect of their role and identity as women. Working class and poor women have regarded themselves as responsible for seeing to the material survival of their family members. (Kent 240)

With women now culturally and legally responsible for the welfare and success of their families, the gender role of woman as mother was further canonized; to be a mother was to reach the ultimate goal of the women’s gender role. It was only three decades earlier that the 1873 Custody of Infants Act was passed, which allowed women to petition to have joint custody of their children, if the court saw fit to grant that custody. Prior to this,

⁵ The criteria for the state to remove children or imprison mothers for their behavior was based around the reality of middle- and upper-class mothers, and ultimately served to punish the lower class and mothers who worked. Lower class mothers were punished for things outside of their control, such as “poverty, overcrowding, unsanitary streets, water and sewage systems, pollution, epidemic and chronic disease” (Kent 240).

women had no right to their children, as marriage still rendered women property of their husbands, and their children were an extension of that ownership. The shift from women having a right to their own children to women being fully responsible for their wellbeing, under threat of punishment, affected how women approached their own gender role. Now that women could become single mothers, or choose to remain unmarried for many years, many wanted the ability to work and keep their own savings, purchase their own property, and have a say in their government. This search for legal independence led women to serve their country as volunteers as well as fighting for the right to vote.

The Vote

The women's right to vote was directly tied to the opinions of the British feminist party of the time, as well as the war. During wartime, the suffragists fought for the right to vote and cited the many women sacrificing their lives for the war; however, this was easily construed as women attempting to benefit off of both the war and the women serving their country. As the fight for the vote continued, things like short hair and blue stockings⁶ became symbols of feminist views and began to be referred to in a derogatory sense, as detailed in Harriet Guest's "Bluestocking Feminism." Suffragettes and Bluestocking women were once a valued feminist group, known for being "socially prominent but not because they are aristocratic, and not always because they are wealthy, but because of their learning, because they are women of letters" (Guest 60), but now those terms were used to downplay and dismiss women's rights, as alluded to in *Not So Quiet*. These visual cues and remarks aligned a woman's appearance with her beliefs and

⁶ Blue stocking women chose to wear blue rather than black stockings, often at marches and demonstrations. The choice of the lower-class blue stocking aligned them with the ideals of intelligence over appearance. Blue stocking was a derogatory term for feminists at the time. The term "suffragette" was also used in a derogatory manner but was reclaimed by some suffragist groups in Britain.

intelligence, which served to further the gender role stereotype of women as valued for their appearance and motherhood, but not for decision making or intelligence. As the war continued, women consistently worked the front lines as caretakers, time and again proving this stereotype to be false; they were earning the vote by simply working in a space that men could no longer overlook or argue against.

The post-war significance of the right to vote was its limitations for women; while many thousands of young women served their country, they were not eligible for military benefits or recognition, and many were still under the voting age of 30 upon their return to the home front. Even if they were over 30, women who had lost families or husbands might now fail to reach the property ownership limitation; if they did not inherit their family home and were scantily (if at all) compensated for their war work, they were unable to purchase property to meet this requirement. This led to a generational divide between the younger middle- and upper-class women, who left the Homefront to serve in the war, and their mothers who never saw the trauma of the Front; the women who served were far more likely to seek suffrage than the older women in their same socio-economic class. The stigma of the suffrage movement served to hold women back from advocating for their rights, out of fear of being seen as masculine, or in the extreme, as promiscuous. It is very important to note that those who served as caretakers saw the violence, greed, and governmental actions up close. The autonomy of the women's wartime caretaking role was built on the horrible destruction that seemed to never end, and the women who were cast in this role were forced into independence and had to shed their pre-war gender role expectations in order to survive. To then return home, where due to age or status they still had no say in the governing of their country, was a deeply frustrating reality.

Symbolism

Certain aspects of the women's gender roles were amplified during the war, and this was reflected in the use of women as symbols in order to continue the drive for war work, propaganda, and societal interactions. Women in the Great War took on new symbolic roles, and that symbolism changed depending on the propaganda's purpose and the viewpoint of the observer. Mothers were asked to sacrifice their sons to the war, and in doing so became a symbol of a new militant motherhood. As caretakers, women were told to model themselves to be self-sacrificial and maternal, and yet at the same time to provide themselves as future wives and sexual partners for soldiers, and in doing so they became symbols for both purity and promiscuity. Women were both the sexual reward for men and the virgin mother; ultimately, the good works that women performed for the suffering soldiers became intertwined with the hazards of the war. They were seen as both the good and the bad, the cause and result of the war, and the complex changes in gender roles whiplashed those who served with the new expectations of post-war civilian life. In this way, women were symbolized as the feminized Pain and Death of war, were seen as militant mothers, and held to expectations of promiscuity and purity, and ultimately, they were expected to sacrifice themselves for their country.

Pain is a Woman

As women became professional caretakers during the war, their role became intertwined with pain. This prevalent aspect of war became feminized, and the negative attributes assigned to women, such as neediness, longing, and sensuality, were also now used to describe pain; pain was just as attentive as the nurses in the hospital wards. In Mary Borden's "Moonlight," the nurse narrator follows the feminized symbols of Pain

and Death as she moves throughout her ward: “Pain is the stronger. She is the greater. She is insatiable, greedy, vilely amorous, lustful, obscene - she lusts for the broken bodies we have here. Wherever I go I find her possessing the men in their beds, lying in bed with them” (40). Just as a seductress may, Pain slides into the men’s beds, her slick touches are simple and heartbreaking, like a lover’s. Not only is Pain a woman, but she is also an immoral seductress:

Pain is attracted by these things. She is a harlot in the pay of war, and she amuses herself with the wreckage of men. She consorts with decay, is addicted to blood, cohabits with mutilations, and her delight is the refuse of suffering bodies. You can watch her plying her trade here any day. She is shameless. (Borden 45)

The war itself was masculine and spoken of in the traits of masculinity: honor, nobility, strength, righteousness, and democracy. All of these traits are seen as masculine and are countered with the consequences of war, which were described with the qualities seen in women of the time: weakness, pain, heartbreak, distress, depression, loneliness and lust. Pain as a woman was there to ruin the men: “When they dream of their women and little children, of their mothers and sweethearts; when they dream they are again clean, normal, real men, filled with a tender and lovely love for women, then she wakes them” (Borden “Moonlight” 45). Pain wrenches the men from their dreams and happiness; these wounded men could have wives and families in their futures or in their pasts, but in their present they only have Pain and the destruction of war. It is crucial to see that the villainization of Pain specifically through the lens of the female gender shows how the Victorian ideals of women were still in action at the start of the war, and how the corruption of women’s traits was seen as the ultimate downfall of men.

Militant Mothers

Motherhood became the most complex role of women during the war. While Victorian ideals of motherhood as a woman's ultimate role still prevailed before the war, resentment of mothers blossomed in war time. Women were asked to send their children off to serve in the war and to be proud of this sacrifice. Their soldier son's or nurse daughter's willingness to make a dangerous commitment on the front lines was seen as a direct result of their upbringing by their mothers. Their war work was evidence of their parents' success. On the other side of that lens, however, were the thousands of young people pushed into a war, risking death and disfigurement while living through the horrors of trench and chemical warfare, only to receive letters from their parents about their pride in their child's noble acts. Mustard gas did not seem noble to those who faced it. The trenches did not feel like a privileged way to serve one's country. As seen in the relationship between Smithy and her parents in Price's *Not So Quiet*, the resentment of one's mother was not an unusual occurrence:

perhaps somewhere your mother is thinking of you... Boasting of the life she has so nobly given... The life you thought was your own, but which is hers to squander as she thinks fit. 'My boy is not a slacker, thank God.' Cough away, little boy, cough away. What does it matter, providing your mother doesn't have to face the shame of her son's cowardice? (93)

The pressure to please family and commit to war work had many facets, but the resentment in her mother's misguided patriotic pride left Smithy with resentment: "Gaze on the heroes who have so nobly upheld your traditions, Mother and Mrs. Mawnington.

Take a good look at them.... The heroes you will sentimentalize over until peace is declared, and allowed to starve forever and ever, amen, afterwards” (Price 94). The competition between mothers over whose sacrifice is more patriotic leads to the death of all the children involved. This pride overlooks the wishes of their children and reinforces the idea of mothers as militant; their need for bragging rights pushes their children into conflict. Smithy frequently highlights that her mother enjoys living through Smithy’s own sacrifice as a way of emphasizing her motherly duty to offer up her children to the war, “I am wearing myself to a shadow, but they shall never say Mother didn’t do her bit, too; if they are in it, Mother shall be in it too” (Price 33). With this view of mothers by their children at war, the symbol of the militant mother solidified itself at the time.

Promiscuity and Purity

As professional caretakers, women who worked for the war effort were now in a maternal role, and in this way, they were held to the highest expectations of purity and virtue. Their government tasked them with facing the horror of war and not becoming emotional, to be surrounded by wounded men but only act as their sterile, unsexed caretaker. However, society also told women that they were supposed to be seeking out potential husbands and providing comfort to the soldiers outside of the standard nurse or ambulancier role. It was frowned upon to have sexual relations with the men they met, yet the men expected these women to be sexually available, while the civilian and governmental bodies expected them to be saintly and follow the Victorian ideals of purity. In Borden’s “Enfant de Malheur,” the narrator watches a nurse and priest battle to save the body and soul of a wounded man; however, it is the saintly description of the nurse which highlights the purity symbolism of caretaking:

She was an excellent nurse, very fastidious about the care of her patients. Her blue uniform was always stiffly starched, her cap and apron were immaculate; so was her smooth severe Madonna face, with its childlike candid eyes and thin quiet mouth. [...] She didn't, I believe, notice that he was beautiful. (49)

Borden highlights the ideal nurse as seen in the propaganda of the time: sexless but beautiful, childlike but womanly, uninterested in men but curious about her patients, gentle but tough enough to handle whatever horrors the war would send her: "She knew no men. She knew only her patients. And she fought for their lives grimly, quietly, with her thin gentle lips pressed tight together when the crisis came" (Borden "Enfant de Malheur" 49). This symbolism is also seen in *Not So Quiet*, where the women ambulance drivers point out the double standard between the men and women. Of her dead lover, Smithy's sister, Trix states: "I liked Jerry awfully, but he died - they don't think anything rotten of a girl who sleeps with them nowadays, just that she's a fool if she doesn't. Cast-iron virgins they called those who won't. There aren't many of them knocking about by all accounts" (Price 200). While men could pursue women for sexual partners, women would be removed from their work and sent home in disgrace for the same behavior. As Tosh, the most progressive character in the novel argues, "Personally, if I were choosing women to drive heavy ambulances their moral characters wouldn't worry me. It would be 'are you a first-class driver?' not 'are you a first-class virgin?'" (Price 126). This need to be sexually causal with the men to find a husband, while also needing to be morally sound virgins to satisfy their families and government, meant that women were symbolized as both, and in both they were viewed as not upholding the standard.

Women as a Sacrifice

The women who served as ambulanciers and nurses were a symbol of hope for men in uniform and those on the Homefront, but they were also a symbol of the war's destruction—where they were, war was. They were a sacrifice for their country while serving as nurses and ambulanciers, they were used as a reason soldiers were willing to sacrifice themselves, and they were supposed to sacrifice themselves as wives and mothers for the soldiers. As detailed by Albrinck, the only way for a woman to be a hero at this time was to sacrifice:

In order to receive state recognition, heroes and heroines must act according to gender scripts that match those deemed acceptable by the state: therefore a man becomes a hero by performing the male script (i.e., soldiering), which entails fighting, killing, and even dying for the ideals of his country; a woman becomes a heroine by performing the female script (i.e., mothering), which may require loosing children, nurturing the wounded, and being protected. (272)

Those three aspects: “loosing children, nurturing the wounded, and being protected” are the three ways in which women were to sacrifice and be sacrificed for their country in order to fulfill their gender role, as seen throughout Borden's collection *The Forbidden Zone*.

In Borden's “The Regiment,” the narrator watches as a regiment of old men pass through a town on their way to the front. A nurse in uniform appears to placate the town and shows herself to be an ominous omen of things to come: “She was a strange fantastic thing, like a white peacock. The town said to itself: ‘This curious creature had gone astray. It has the appearance of being expensive. It must have escaped from its owner who, no doubt, prizes it highly’” (Borden “The Regiment” 29). The woman's very

presence is reminiscent of a trap, or a pawn in the war; she is both the bait used to remind the men what they are fighting for, and the omen of the forthcoming battles. Her presence reinforces the General's speech, "'You must die for France as your sons died. You left your home for war. You will never go home again'" (Borden "The Regiment" 29). The nurse in this story is a consolation prize for their death, as much as she is a sign of their impending suffering. Her own mission seems to align with her sacrificial use by her country:

She opened the door of the motor and put out her white foot and stepped down, and her delicate body dressed in the white uniform of a hospital was exposed to the view of the officers and the regiment. Her head was bound close with a white kerchief. A red cross burned on her forehead. She was a beautiful animal dressed as a nun branded with a red cross. Her shadowy eyes said to the regiment: "I came to the war to nurse you and comfort you." (Borden "The Regiment" 28)

The nurse is clothed in white as a symbol of her purity as she is led to the slaughter of battle to serve these men. The red cross on her forehead is a part of her uniform, but the cross symbol serves as a reminder of the martyrdom of Christ and his sacrifice to save humanity. She comes to them to "nurse you and comfort you," but they have not been injured yet. This nurse is a sign that these men will be in need of caretaking, but also that they are the reason that such a saintly, pure woman is being sacrificed to the greater good, or so the war wants them to believe. While women joined the war effort as caretakers to ease suffering, their presence also served to highlight the suffering. Their crisp white outfits exposed the blood of the wounded; they became a self-sacrificing symbol of both compassion and anguish.

The symbology of the nurse in “The Regiment” also exposes how women were used to inspire men to go to war. In *Gender and Power in Britain 1640-1990*, Kent discusses the impact that the atrocities Germans committed against the Belgians, including the rape and mutilation of women and children, had on Britain:

while the imagery of sexual violation of women served as a means of recruitment and justification for the war, it may well have acted, if only unconsciously, to reinforce the promises of sexual punishment, reward, and release for enlisting that bombarded the British public. Philip Gibbs, a war correspondent, maintained that some soldiers were sent to the front “by the taunts of a girl,” Sir George Young recounts that his chauffeur was threatened by his “lady love” with rejection if he did not enlist, despite the fact that this young man’s parents had forbade him to. “What will your best girl say if you’re not in khaki?” (275)

The need to protect women as well as the need to prove oneself a “man” by going to war was reinforced by the gender role for men during the war; this need also served to carve out the women’s role as sacrificial. If men needed to sacrifice themselves to save women, women needed to be saved; women must be in danger in order for men to be prompted to war.

Women were also asked to sacrifice themselves for their families, and this sacrifice was focused on their mothers, their country and their families’ reputations, as well as their ability to find a husband. During the war they were to sacrifice themselves, as Trix did for her mother, “I gave my youngest girl to England, my little Trix, who’s medals I always wear on official occasions. But, in the midst of my grief, I can still smile and thank God she died in the service of her country - a country that will never forget”

(Price 228). Post-war, women were expected to continue serving their country through marriage to veterans, many of whom suffered from physical disabilities or shellshock. In *Not So Quiet*, Roy expects Smithy to abandon their engagement after his injuries, as he understands her own trauma and feelings. At the news of his injury, his mother and hers excitedly agree that this is an even more noble way to serve her man: “Darling, when an inestimable privilege you have, marrying one of England’s disabled Heroes, devoting your life to his service!” (Price 229). Outside of physical trauma, the men who came home were psychologically scarred by the war. Women were expected to relinquish their own happiness to continue supporting them as well, as illustrated in Borden’s “The Beach,” when the woman character attempts to come to terms with her relationship with a disabled veteran: “She looked at him. ‘I love him,’ she said to herself. ‘I love him,’ she repeated. ‘But can I go on loving him?’ She whispered, ‘Can I? I must.’ She said, ‘I must love him, now more than ever, but where is he?’” (Borden 37). The idea that women must love their psychologically and physically traumatized partners more because of their war service, to the point of overlooking psychological and physical abuse, was deeply instilled in the post-war gender expectation of women. Fulfilling this expectation was the final sacrifice they were expected to make; their future and their happiness was to come second to whatever the male veterans in their life needed. Though these women endured trauma and many served on the front lines, their service was expected to continue, without pause, for the rest of their lives.

CHAPTER II

GENDERED EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN CARETAKERS

At the start of World War One, the socio-economic class of a woman was still the determining factor in what she could do with her life, in the ways of marriage, social relationships, motherhood, and employment. While the suffragists were fighting for the vote for women during this time, equality between the genders was still nonexistent. Women were strongly discouraged and turned away from work at the start of the war; it was not until the volunteer associations advocated for them that women were welcomed into war work, as seen in Krisztina Robert's "Constructions of 'Home,' 'Front,' and Women's Military Employment in First-World-War Britain: A Spatial Interpretation": "Relying on absolute discourses that fighting was the only job for men in wartime, whereas women's role was supporting their men and doing domestic tasks, the volunteers argued that by performing auxiliary duties for the soldiers, they would assist the men and release more of them for the fighting" (334). While most men began to join the fighting, women were still working at home and supporting the war through observational patriotism, showing their patriotic support through things such as limiting meals to spread food rations and donating to war support groups. When the war continued to develop and grow in both locational dispersal of the battlefields and the number of men fighting, Britain realized that it needed more soldiers and more caretakers; women were at first accepted slowly into the workforce, before becoming targets of military enlistment with the hope of "using the parades of uniformed women to shame the men into enlisting" (Robert 337) and "focusing on clientele whose welfare was traditionally women's concern" (Robert 334) in order to free men from auxiliary work so that they could be

fighting at the various fronts. With this need for women, the propaganda in Britain changed over time, from images of women sending their sons to war to more direct images of women participating in the war effort, illustrating how this war directly impacted the gender roles of women at the time. The societal norms of wartime were directly reinforced by the mothers of England. When propaganda infiltrated the home, it was often targeted at mothers so that they could disseminate their patriotism and beliefs about the war to their children. As seen in the propaganda, the real mothers of England were encouraging their sons to fight for their country and their daughters to take care of England's sons.

The gender roles of young, middle- and upper-class women were established by their mothers; mothers both taught and served as an example of their gender role by being in the home and married with children. At a time when having a husband meant having food in one's mouth and a roof over one's head, women raised their daughters with the understanding that they must strictly adhere to their gender role in order to gain security through marriage. The gender role expectations were explicit about appearance, such as hair and clothing style, as well as behavior, such as language used and actions performed, all of which was dictated by mothers to their daughters in order to establish what was acceptable and expected in their own social circle and class standing. These strict gender roles were enforced regardless of class; however, women of upper classes were considered morally good because they were associated with the British monarchy's prescribed godliness; in this way, women of the lower classes were expected to step outside of the gender role because they were already considered morally lacking. Women in lower classes were considered immoral for stepping outside of their gender role by

working outside of the home or socializing with men regardless of how necessary those actions may have been.

This is one reason as to why upper- and middle-class women were selected for caretaking positions in the war, especially overseas within the VAD, because girls of this class status were raised to do as they were told. These women were accustomed to conforming to the expectations of their family to succeed in society, so they were accepted into service with the belief that they would then easily conform to the expectations of the militarized setting of war. These women initially did not ask questions, nor did they fight back against their gender norms. To fully understand how the caretaking role directly changed women's gender roles during and after the war, we must look at the established gender roles of the homes that these women were raised in. I will specifically analyze how the women were expected to look, act, and most importantly what was expected of them by the civilian population during the war and upon their return home. This is also one of the main differences between the two caretaking roles in focus here, nursing and ambulance driving; nursing was an occupation for women before the war, which required specialized training, and it was often the work of lower-class women. In "VADs and Khaki Girls: The Ultimate Reward for War Service," Celia Kingsbury writes,

in Great Britain, the Voluntary Aid Detachment offered a way for upper middle-class women to serve without going through formal nurse's training.... VADs not driving ambulances were basically nurse's aides, who often did not have the respect of the Red Cross nurses and nuns who staffed war hospitals, and accordingly were assigned the most menial tasks, such as scullery work. (116)

This is the role that Smithy's sister Trix fulfills as a VAD cook's aide, a position Smithy also holds when she joins WAAC at the end of Price's novel. The narrators in Borden's stories, however, can be presumed to have completed formal nurse's training, as well as having origins in the middle and lower socio-economic classes.

Interaction with the Male Public and Body

One primary aspect of the change in the gender roles from pre-war to wartime for caretaking women was the expectation of how these women were to act among men. At home, upper-class women did not publicly interact with men on a wide scale, and if they did interact with men who were strangers to them, they did it in the family setting and not individually or one-on-one. Women from lower classes socialize with men only as necessary in their work outside of the home; any unnecessary socialization with strange men was considered immoral and would lead to social, economic, or legal consequences. As a whole, women were coming from a society in which they might know a neighbor boy or a cousin well, but they did not have any familiarity with the male public on a large scale; now they were responsible for transporting strange men and directly interacting with them all hours of day and night, in an unfamiliar, trauma-induced intimate environment. Not only were women now interacting with the male public, but they were also now interacting with the male body on a large scale. The anatomy of men was on full display, and while this display was often grotesque in its gangrene, injuries and death, this introduction to the male body on such a large, intimate scale was desensitizing. Women who had perhaps never seen a man naked, unless they were married before the war, were now seeing many men in various stages of undress. This nakedness was not sexual, but rather those naked male forms were bloodied and broken and, in many cases,

mentally unsound. Smithy mentions throughout *Not So Quiet* several interactions with men who scream and panic in the back of her ambulance, as well as her fear and ignorance of what to do: “I have looked before and I dare not look again. What good can I do? The man who spewed blood will be lying there dead” (Price 100). Smithy is attempting to block out the screams and the fight that has broken out among the men in the back of her ambulance; she imagines one of the patients as a madman breaking free and strangling her and wishes she had Tosh’s courage to stop the car and check on the situation unfolding with her passengers. Women’s safety is challenged by the war in obvious ways, such as air raids and the risk of catching influenza or pneumonia, but their safety is also challenged by the male soldiers themselves and the impact that the men’s actions can have on women’s physical bodies, as well as their reputations.

Women could not work alongside the men, and they could not individually interact with men directly for fear of being called improper or sexually immoral. We see this in the interactions Trix mentions she has had with the men she has met while serving in the war, and her struggle between being seen as a “cast-iron virgin” (Price 200) or an immoral, disgraceful daughter; this was the balance beam on which these women lived. Some women were said to have caught the “khaki fever,” a phrase used to shame women who were pursuing a sexual or matrimonial relationship, or they were called a “Seeing Francer” (Price 133), a term used in *Not So Quiet* to describe women who sought war work in order to boost their reputation, and whose unrealistic ideas of their service leads to quick discharge for lack of competency in their duties. Bertina Farmer, one of the ambulanciers in *Not So Quiet* who is referred to as “Bloody Fool” or the B.F., is a perfect example of this type of woman.

Commandant finds the B.F. to be a failure, and at her going away party, the girls all take turns toasting and roasting her. After a fight breaks out, Commandant interrogates Smithy about the party, stating “You were assisting at a farewell celebration for a failure who was leaving—Farmer” (Price 122). While the failure to do her duty is the reason she is being sent back to England, that is not what the other women are teasing her about. Tosh toasts, “the wench is forced back to England. In face of this, does France deserve her reputation? I say ‘No.’ Does France merit the pornographic snigger the very mention her name earns from those who have never crossed the Channel?” (Price 108); Tosh is implying that the B.F. has slept her way through the men of France, and that upon her return across the Channel she will continue “doing her bit” by sleeping through the men on the Homefront. Her khaki fever is evident to the girls, and her discharge solidifies her as an unsuccessful “Seeing Francer” (Price 133).

While the B.F. is an example of women fulfilling their gender role outside of the expected norms, the change to their gender role that these women experience begins with their introduction to the male public on a massive scale. We see the complex reaction in the shifting gender role through Smithy’s narration of her and Tosh’s visit to the German POW camp. While at the camp, the women are locked in a cage for their own safety while a men’s choir performs several songs. The officer in charge lets them know that they are the first women to have ever visited the camp, and this becomes apparent when the many male prisoners begin to stare and talk about the women in German. Smithy is the object of the male gaze at an intensity that she has never encountered before, and when in the cage she states, “Once I dreamt I was traveling in an Underground carriage minus a stitch of clothing; I felt exactly now as I did then. Naked and exceedingly

ashamed” (Price 142). Her feelings of shame and exposure likely come from her middle-class upbringing, in which women were to be in a separate private sphere from men; to be stared at in a public setting and surrounded by strange men is a break from that gendered expectation. Tosh is able to translate what the German POWs are saying about them; however, she takes the opportunity to make light of their situation, saying, “Unanimously they decided that Englishwomen were not physically attractive. They were very nice about it, Tosh translated” (Price 143). This attempt to make Smithy feel more comfortable exposes the threat of the men; Smithy does not feel safe here, and likely neither does Tosh. Smithy thinks that, “It is something of an ordeal to sit in a cage and be stared at by hundreds of men who haven't seen a woman in months. The iron bars seem less iron-like as the seconds pass. It is not the safest feeling in the world” (Price 144). Throughout the war British newspapers contained stories of German soldiers raping and pillaging their way through battlefields; for these British women to be surrounded by them now is to put themselves in danger, despite the bars. These two girls grew up following the rules of their gender roles, and this socialization still cuts deeply against their war-time gender role; with this comes fear for their safety and reputation.

Women's Appearance

While much of the women's gender role was constructed out of social norms and reinforced through propaganda during the war, the styling of women's hair was a social norm established and enforced by other women, primarily by mothers within the home. We can track Smithy's changing gender role as the war progresses through the treatment of her hair styling. At the very start of *Not So Quiet*, the unofficial leader of the girls, Tosh, chops her long locks off after they become infected by lice, and Smithy watches

and comments on this change, “Tosh’s hair is half off, giving her a curiously lop-sided effect. I wish I had her courage, but a mental vision of Mother restrains me. Poor Mother, she would die of horror if I came home on leave with my hair cut short like a man’s” (Price 15). Throughout the novel, Smith slowly emulates Tosh and Tosh’s beliefs, but at this time her alignment is still with her mother on the Homefront. Her concern over her mother’s objection to her returning home with “with my hair cut short like a man’s” illustrates the complex gendered expectations here. Despite the constant itching of lousy hair and hassle of long locks while completing her work, Smithy values the opinion of her mother, who has no concept of the frontlines, more than she values her own reality on the front. She continues, “She wouldn’t understand the filth and beastliness after my cheery letters home. Only dreadful blue-stockings females cut their hair. Besides, Mother has always been so proud of my hair” (Price 15). Smithy admits that she has not given her mother a realistic view of her life as an ambulancier, and because of this her mother would not see the benefit of short hair, associating it with the demonized feminist movement. By cutting her hair, Smithy would have stepped too far from her civilian gender role expectations and disobeyed her mother’s more traditional wishes.

As the novel progresses, Smithy’s dedication to civilian gender expectations becomes a thing of the past. During a particularly harrowing night run, the soldiers in the back of Smithy’s ambulance begin to cause a commotion when a shell-shocked “madman” begins screaming at the other passengers. To cope with this, Smithy retreats to the memories of her past, when her long hair was a crowning part of her gender role fulfillment:

Was it a scream?... My hair up for the first time... oh, God, a scream this time... my hair up in little rolls at the back... another scream- the madman has started. I was afraid of him. He'll start them all screaming.... Thirty-one little rolls like fat little sausages. A professional hairdresser came in and did them. (Price 98-99)

Her retreat into this memory is an attempt at escaping the war around her; she is not only remembering a time when she had her hair professionally done, she is returning to a gender role in which she successfully met expectations without threat to her or others' lives in the process. She goes in and out of this memory as she struggles to find Hospital Eight, and in this struggle, she again thinks of Tosh. Earlier, she is surprised and entertained by Tosh's subversion of their gender role by cutting her hair; now, she wishes she was more like her, "But Tosh is brave. I couldn't do it. I must go on..." (Price 100). Smithy is slowly adapting to the change in her gender role that their war service requires, and that change is illustrated in part by her changes in alignment from her mother's wishes to Tosh's example.

After the small act of rebellion by attending the outing at the prisoner-of-war camp with Tosh, Smithy finally cuts her hair:

I cannot bear the filth and worry any longer. What Mother will say I do not dare contemplate, but as I will probably never get leave it seems futile to worry. I get the Bug's scissors and begin to snip. As I snip I think of Baynton. I feel sorry we are unlikely to meet again. Into the newspaper goes my hair. Would Baynton like me with short hair? (Price 147)

This focus on Captain Baynton, with whom she later shares a kiss, illustrates the new focus on her wartime gender expectation of adapting to the conditions in order to survive,

while still searching for a sexual and romantic partner, and serving to please the men via her appearance and actions. This is further proven when Smithy does have sexual relations when she is sent back to the Homefront after the deaths of Tosh and the Bug. Robin, the newly enlisted soldier she encounters, finds Smithy's short hair attractive, and he tells her that it "is the sort of hair a fellow would like to rumple his fingers through if he dared... He clasps his hands together in mock penance" (Price 171). Robin's attraction to her separation from the civilian gendered expectation of long hair emphasizes the change that Smithy has gone through while serving as an ambulancier. She is no longer a civilian, in ideals or appearance. This is compounded with the last mention of her hair, when she is courted by and later engaged to Roy, "Roy, suddenly grown-up, smoothing up and down the back of my head, caressing my ears, calling my hair 'kid's hair'" (Price 190). Roy's approval of her hair and herself is a success, as she has found a soldier to partner with by adapting to the changes in her gender role during the war.

While hair transformation is a visible marker of the changing gender role for women during the war, the donning of a uniform was another way in which the shifting gender role for caretakers was visible. The uniforms for both nurses and ambulanciers were seen in the propaganda and used as a tool to guide the women into behaviors and actions that suited the country at war.

Figure 1 shows the typical uniform of a woman ambulancier regardless of agency or location of service. While the functional aspects of the ambulancier uniform pictured are necessary for the work, such as the shortened hemlines, tall boots, elbow-length gloves, and driving cap and goggles, the masculine appearance of women in such uniforms should not be overlooked. While the uniforms of nurses and general war

working women served to reinforce the “virgin mother” gender role of women, the ambulancier uniform gave the women who wore it a chance to break from their gender expectations. The tall boots and shortened coat of an ambulancier allowed them to move more freely when driving or fixing their engines, as well as maneuvering the men into the back or walking in hazardous conditions when necessary; it also served

Figure 1. “A female driver of the London Ambulance Service. Taken in December 1917, on the roof of the offices of the Department of Information, 8 Buckingham Gate, London”. © Imperial War Museums (Photograph Archive Collection).

to show off the women's legs and her figure. In this way, the general style of the uniform was more revealing than that of the traditional women's attire, while also giving the women a more masculine appearance, as it was similar in its utilitarian use as the men's uniform. The various ambulance corps sought upper- and middle-class women for work as drivers, as these women were trained from a young age to follow the rules of their gender roles and not to question authority figures; they were not a risk to the soldiers as they were unlikely to become sexually active with the men that surrounded them. These women were trained to fall in line, but once they were out of the civilized, socio-economic bubble of the Homefront, they began to resist their gendered expectations. This resistance first went into effect visually with their uniforms, which allowed them to step outside of a feminized appearance, while also donning a uniform that the civilians considered to be an emblem of pride and respect. The uniforms embodied the emphasis that was placed on a woman's appearance and her womanly features, while also evoking masculinity through its mobility and utility.

This is obvious in *Not So Quiet* as the women continually address the stylish appearance of their uniforms, while also addressing the ridiculous focus on their appearance. While at the Front, the ambulanciers are expected to adhere to strict style guides for their appearance, as enforced by their leader, "Commandant insists that we are carefully and neatly dressed for 7.30 roll-call... White shirts, ties, smoothly-dressed hair, brushed uncrumpled uniforms... even though we may have been driving till 5 a.m." (Price 47-48). It seems nearly impossible to attend a daily roll call in an uncrumpled uniform with smoothed hair when they have only just returned from a full night's work, in which they come into contact with mud, snow, blood, gangrene and other such substances.

While this seems exceedingly difficult, it is also ridiculous because of the negative impact it has on the women, who are missing out on sleep and sustenance because of it. This upholding of appearance shows how the gender role of women caretakers was centered around the services they provided for men, one of which is having a nice appearance to look at. It seems unlikely that the men would be expected to have smoothed hair when out on a march or in a trench; however, their job was not based on appearance, as it was for women. Appearance plays no role in the actual driving of an ambulance, but it is certainly one of the main expectations of the women.

Some of the women, such as the B.F., are in France to find a husband, and in this circumstance, their gender expectation is also displayed through their uniforms. She states, “It seems such a waste of a well-cut uniform to be in a place where the men are too wounded or too harassed to regard women other than cogs in the great machinery, and the women are too worn out to care whether they do or not” (Price 25). In the war-time propaganda, the smiling women in stylish uniforms sets the expectation that women will enjoy war service, and look good doing it, which will in turn aid their search in finding a husband. The reality is that these women are covered in the mud and blood of dying men, who do not have the capacity to search for a wife while they are fighting to stay alive. This reality has no bearing on the idea of women needing a “well-cut” uniform to please and attract men. This importance placed on the appearance of the uniform within the bounds of the women’s gender role has a different effect on the Homefront.

On the Homefront, the women’s uniform is seen as a token of their service, and it is also a way of bolstering their reputation by having served the men and country. When visiting Smithy’s home, Roy sees a photo of her in her “well-cut” uniform that he finds

attractive. From this image, he writes a letter that eventually leads to their engagement, as he pays her a compliment and asks for his own copy of the photo, as indicated when Smithy reads his letter: “Admired the photograph of me in uniform in Mother’s sitting-room [...] I look jolly smart in uniform. Suits me rather. ... Don’t forget that spare photograph” (Price 79). The civilians on the Homefront and soldiers across the war were exposed to the same propaganda and expectations for how women should look and act in war service, especially for the women in caretaking roles.

While civilians on the Homefront shared expectations of the women's gender role with the soldiers on the front, the women themselves soon found how their uniforms did not uphold the advertised behaviors and experiences seen in the propaganda. Trix points this out in a letter to her sister: “Why the dickens they dress you up in a pretty cap and make you think you're going to smooth a patient’s fevered brow beats me hollow” (Price 84). The false advertising of the uniform and what it symbolized for their role in war was easily proven to be incorrect. One key item in the wardrobe of an ambulancier was the overcoat, a trench-style coat that provided warmth and in many cases was water or weatherproof to aid in their work, as they were often exposed to the elements when driving. This overcoat was identifiable, meaning that civilians would understand the importance of the woman based on her overcoat and uniform; in this way, it was a symbol of the work as well as a representation of the sacrifice and pride the women had in their work. When Smithy redeployed as a WAAC cook’s aide

at the end of the novel, her friend Blimey is injured when they are bombed while taking shelter in a trench; Blimey’s final words are the repetition of “Now see wot’s ‘appened to me new Burberry, all covered in blood” (Price 237). In her shock, she can

only focus on the damage done to her new trench coat, as its appearance functions as a symbol of her work and value as a WAAC girl.

In *Not So Quiet*, Smithy's overcoat also serves as a symbol of her inability to return to the women's civilian gender expectations. At the start of the novel, Smithy wears her uniform as part of her job, just like the other girls; however, this changes when Tosh's ambulance is bombed: "Tosh lies in my arms dead, soaking my overcoat with blood. Dead" (Price 160). Tosh, who serves as a role model and best friend to Smithy throughout all the trauma and misery of the war, is another khaki girl casualty, and her blood on Smithy's coat acts as a physical reminder of the hopeless futility that Smithy feels about the war. With Tosh's blood on her coat, Smithy cannot move past her death; it is a constant reminder of the friend she lost, who will now be joining the ghostly procession of the dead that follows Smithy in her dreams at night. When Commandant decides to send her home, Smithy prepares herself for departure, "I divide my kit between Etta Potato and Chutney, leaving only my uniform to travel in. My overcoat is deeply stained where Tosh's head rested... But I must wear it, for I have no other clothes" (Price 167). The choice to return home with the visceral reminder of the war's brutal cost is not simply a result of not having any other clothing options; Smithy is making a choice to return to her militant family in her coat of "honour" with the big red stain that shows she is not perfect, her uniform is not beautiful, and that this war has a cost too high to pay. Smithy saw the sacrifice her two closest companions made for this futile chemist's war and is set on never returning.

Smithy states that she burns her uniform upon her return to England, a point of contention between mother and daughter. When she refuses to parade around in her

bloody coat and reveals that she has in fact burned her uniform, her mother yells at her because she “won't even wear my badge of honour - my *uniform*” (Price 181). Again we see the uniform in the eyes of the civilian population as a way of boosting one's reputation; Smithy states, “Other girls on leave go out with their mothers in uniform and are proud to see their mothers are proud of them.... I won't allow my mother to be proud of me” (Price 181). This quote works in two ways; first, this statement is a mockery of what her mother has said to her, and in this mockery, Smithy is highlighting the ignorance those on the Homefront have about the reality of war. Secondly, the use of “I” allows this quote to function as a truthful, intentional thought from Smithy; she will not allow her mother to be proud of the war work she has done, as she sees the war as a useless, futile machine that only functions to foster death.

This WAAC enlistment poster in Figure 2 reads, “Every Fit Woman Can Release a Fit Man. Join the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps To-Day” below an image of several WAAC workers. In the foreground of the poster, a single woman in full uniform stands waving at the viewer in front of a British flag. In the background, a group of identical women fall in line behind the lead woman. The uniform the women are wearing consists

of a brimmed hat with a WAAC emblem, a full-length trench coat and white sash, and wrist-length gloves. The women also appear to be wearing lipstick and smiling with enthusiasm, which signifies that the work and the women doing it were agreeable and pleasant. The flag is on display but appears to be planted in the ground and not directly held by any of the women, which signifies their war work is less valued by

Figure 2. “Every Fit Woman Can Release A Fit Man Join The Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps To-Day” © Imperial War Museums (Poster Collection)

their country; they were needed for the nation’s war effort, but not valued enough to plant the

national flag themselves. As mentioned in the introduction to this study, a woman's socio-economic class played a hand in what organizations she could enlist into, as well as what type of work she could volunteer for. The WAAC women were from the middle and lower classes and often served in menial work, such as laundress, cook, and maid. There was a need for hundreds of women to fill these roles, and the line of women in the background of this poster serves to highlight the expectation of these women; they were to behave in an identical, quiet, agreeable manner. The coat and gloves pictured, as well as the red painted lips of the women in the foreground, appeals to the women who were in search of a husband, or a boost to their social status and reputation. The outfit seems attractive, and the smile implies agreeable conditions and work through WAAC. This type of propaganda was extremely common, and in *Not So Quiet* Smithy states, "My sister W.A.A.C's are certainly not backward in blowing their own trumpets. The newspapers, the recruiting officers, and the Army out here have told them they are noble creatures, and they resent not being patted on the back all the time" (Price 220). The women who worked in this war were told that their service aligned them with the gender role of the precious, saintly, honorable woman, and in doing so they expected to be treated as such. However, the reality of war work was often unagreeable and, in some cases, downright hideous. The uniforms of the ambulanciers were masculine in both their style and utility, and this utility was still present, but with a more traditionally feminine appearance, in the general war worker or WAAC uniform. The lower the status of the role, such as maid or laundress, the more feminine the attire. The higher the socio-economic class of the woman or the status of her role, the more masculine, and often more functional, the uniform. Furthermore, the idea of the uniform as a "badge of honor"

and proof of respectable service to the civilians on the Homefront became increasingly important for their reputation as the war progressed. To come home on leave and show off one's uniform served as a sort of bragging right, and in turn helped inspire others to enlist to increase their own social standing.

Nurses, however, still garnered respect using their traditional uniform with its sterile, sexless, religious-like appearance. The photo in Figure 3 encapsulates the uniforms that women wore at war. The nurse is dressed in a traditional long gown of all

one color, in this case white, with a head covering resembling a nun's habit, as well as a high collar, full length nurse's apron. The war worker, who could be in any labor field, such as munitions, laundry, cook, or maid, is in a full-length trench coat, high collar and tie, and presumed to be in full length skirt as well. Her hat is more standard of the service type, with its short brim and insignia. The use of a tie as well as

Figure 3. "A female general service member and a female nursing officer of the St John's Ambulance Brigade. Taken in December 1917, on the roof of the offices of the Department of Information, 8 Buckingham Gate, London". © Imperial War Museums (Photograph Archive Collection).

the more masculine trench-style coat serves to highlight both the traditionally masculine duties of the work, as well as the

sexlessness of this role when fulfilled by a woman. There is very little femininity on display; this uniform covers from head to toe, and the hat serves to hide her hair; she could have tight rolls of hair pinned under her hat, or short hair, a masculine “blue-stocking” feminist style haircut, hidden under the brim. The nurse’s dress uniform aligns with the saintly expectation of the role, and the more defined appearance of the war worker serves to illustrate the more masculine, sexually unappealing status of her work. The uniforms of these two women show the unsexed, unromantic expectation for women in two completely different ways, one through saintly appearance and the other through a more masculine appearance.

The Madonna Nurse

The Madonna Nurse became a symbol for women caretakers in the war. “The Greatest Mother in the World”¹ propaganda poster used throughout the war is a perfect example of this, as seen in Figure 4. The title of “The Greatest Mother in the World” is a propaganda phrase that was used to convince the target audience of unwed, childless women to prove their virtue and matronly instincts by serving the higher purpose of caretaking in war. The duality that was expected of these women was clear; they are expected to both be pure, virginal figures who took care of the soldiers without any sexual interaction, while simultaneously being expected to find a husband that they could bring back when the war finally ended. To be both the Virgin Mother, or as Trix calls them in *Not So Quiet*, a “cast iron virgin” (Price 200), while simultaneously obtaining marriage and the romantic interest of men, was a dangerous tightrope to walk. Following

¹ This propaganda poster was created for the Red Cross and was printed in the United States, Australia and England. This poster targeted younger, lower and middle classes women, preferably unwed and childless, who would be willing to train as nurses and enlist.

closely to one of these expectations or the other would lead to the development of a reputation that could severely impact their service and their life once they went home.

Figure 4. Alonzo Earl Foringer's "The Greatest Mother in the World" © Imperial War Museums (Poster Archive Collection).

This propaganda poster holds a striking resemblance to Michelangelo's *Pietà* sculpture, as seen in Figure 5.² Michelangelo's statue and the "The Greatest Mother in the World" image have several striking similarities; both have the focal point of a woman in flowing robes cradling a fully grown man, although the propaganda poster has placed a nurse where Michelangelo carved the Virgin Mary. In both pieces, the woman's foot edges out from under her robes, and the faces of both women are framed by a head covering. The placement of Jesus in his mother's lap is reminiscent of a cradled baby, similar to the swaddled soldier in "The Greatest Mother in the World."

Figure 5. Michelangelo's *The Vatican Pietà* or *Pietà*.

² *The Vatican Pietà* was created between 1498-1500 and is housed at St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Italy. In Fordham Art History's article on the piece, they state, "The theme of the Pietà, "pity" or "piety" in Latin, depicts a moment immediately after the crucifixion, similar to The Lamentation or The Deposition. However, this Pietà is unique in its focus on the Virgin Mary holding her dead son" (Fordham Art History).

While the similarities are immediately noticeable, the differences between the two pieces serve to show the dramatic emphasis of the propaganda. The key difference is the position of the woman's face; Michelangelo's Mary is looking down upon Jesus, but in the poster the nurse is looking directly at the viewer. This form of interaction between the poster and the viewer is an attempt at enlistment. There is no escape from the nurse's gaze, and she is looking at those women who are not in service to their country and pressuring them to overcome their cowardice. We often see throughout *Not So Quiet* the fear of the women being called cowards by their civilian mothers; this poster is preying on that same fear. These women must enlist to prove they are both virtuous and courageous. Another key difference here is the positioning of the soldier in relation to the positioning of Jesus. The soldier in this propaganda poster is severely maimed, with visible bandages over his hands and his head, an allusion to the injuries Jesus would have had from the nails of the cross and the crown of thorns at his crucifixion; this is a more extreme depiction than Michelangelo's *Pietà*, where there are only slight nail markings indicating the crucifixion. The correlation of injuries between these two maimed men sends a clear message: these soldiers were emulating Jesus's own sacrifice for the greater good. However, in this poster the soldier can be construed as still alive, whereas in Michelangelo's statue Mary is holding the body of her dead son post-crucifixion. The image of the living soldier, posed as Jesus's body was in the Michelangelo statue, is an attempt at conveying hope to the civilian population. Dead soldiers in print are bad publicity when you're trying to enlist men to fight in the war; depicting the soldier in a state of recovery with visible bandages around his head, this poster implies that the sons that England sent off to war will be successfully saved by the daughters who were sent to

take care of them. In showing the soldier like this, the poster not only represents the Virgin Mary-like expectations of the caretaking women, but also the self-sacrificing role of the soldiers who fought.

These dramatic alterations from the *Pietà* work serve to highlight the importance of this form of propaganda; these caretaking women were expected to be as virtuous as the Madonna, and in doing so act as mothers on the battlefield. These women were different from the militant mothers of the Homefront; they were now the caretakers for the wounded, and this was more than just professional caretaking; their hearts were meant to bleed for the wounded; they provided any and all comfort that they could, while simultaneously maintaining the mental strength and stamina to work all hours of the night, under bombing raids and threat of death while the men around them begin to lose their minds and their lives.

The Madonna Nurse depicted in the above propaganda poster comes to life in Borden's short story "Enfant de Malheur," in which a nurse's pure nature helps save the body and soul of an immoral soldier. The narrator watches the Madonna figure Pim interact with the "Enfant de Malheur," or Child of Misfortune, and chronicles the battle that Pim and the priest Guerin fight to save his body and soul. It is Pim's purity that inspires the "apache"³ soldier to begin confessing his sins in hope of forgiveness from God before death. The Enfant de Malheur is known to be immoral as he is a Parisian criminal who served in the Bataillons d'Afrique⁴ amongst his fellow "assassins, thieves, pimps and traffickers of drugs – with sleek elastic limbs, smooth polished skin and

³ Apache refers to the culture of violent Parisian criminals.

⁴ Bataillons d'Afrique were French fighting forces in North Africa made up Parisian criminals. These criminals served as a type of suicide squad, for though they had little to no training, they fought intensely, as they were promised their freedom if they survived the war and fought well.

beautiful bones” (Borden “Enfant” 47). This man is not a brave noble soldier, but rather a dangerous, intriguing predator, and he is consistently described with animal terms: “they were beautiful, beautiful as young leopards, and they brought with them into the hospital the strange morbid glamour of crime. But the *Enfant de Malheur* was the most beautiful of them all. He had the face of an angel” (Borden “Enfant” 47-48). The juxtaposition between the beauty of this predator’s body and the seeming innocence of his angelic face gives an almost demonic implication to his presence that fills the narrator with intrigue. This intrigue is laced with sinfulness, “this young prince of darkness. He had race, distinction, an exquisite elegance, and, even in his battered state, the savage grace of a panther. Not even his wounds could disfigure him” (Borden “Enfant” 47). He is in the hospital with deadly wounds, but his darkness and beauty serve to enthrall the narrator and set Guerin on edge. Pim, however, in her perfect, saintly manner, does not notice the danger or the dark pull of the wounded man.

Pim is the daughter of an Archdeacon and a nurse trained in Edinburgh,⁵ and these qualifications present her as a morally-sound woman and exceptionally-skilled caretaker. Pim is introduced as having a “smooth severe Madonna face, with its childlike candid eyes and thin quiet mouth” (Borden “Enfant” 49); immediately this character is aligned with the Holy Mother and seen in the same saintly light as the nurse in the propaganda poster. Part of being a Madonna Nurse is being a perfect caretaker while remaining strictly professional; this means that she must fulfil the nurse role with the unflinching strength of a nun or mother, instead of a wife or lover. In this way, Pim is

⁵ The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Scotland is one of the oldest surgical schools in the world. Edinburgh became a global center for medical and surgical school, and nurses trained in Edinburgh trained with masters in their field; due to this, nurses from Edinburgh were considered to be the best in the world.

seen as this perfectly impersonal caretaker: “She knew no men. She knew only her patients. And she fought for their lives grimly, quietly, with her thin gentle lips pressed tight together when the crisis came” (Borden “Enfant” 49). As mentioned above, the introduction of women caretakers to the male public body was an enormous difference between pre-war and wartime life, and Pim’s utter lack of altered behavior implies that she is unimpacted by this due to her rigorous training and upstanding morals. Her thin, quiet lips are tight and lacking in volume and any sexualized implications; thin lips are a trait more commonly ascribed to elderly women, not young, marriageable women. To put it plainly, Pim “simply went on handling his dangerous body with the perfectly assured impersonal gentleness of an excellent surgical nurse – washing him, dressing his wounds, giving him injections” (Borden “Enfant” 49-50). While the narrator and other nurses in the camp are interested and repelled by the *Enfant de Malheur*, Pim is unable to see both his danger and his beauty, as to do so would be to see him as a human, sexual man. As he begins to realize his impending mortality, the *Enfant de Malheur* begins to grow unsettled, “muttering and snarling under his breath with exasperation at the insufferable presence of this Madonna-like woman with the cold, white, calm face. Guerin understood how uncomfortable the *Enfant de Malheur* would be in the presence of the beautiful Mother of God, and he watched him wriggle to avoid Pim’s cool maiden eyes” (Borden “Enfant” 51). Pim’s description progresses from Madonna-like to being called the “Mother of God” outright; the farther the *Enfant* descends into chaos and obscenity, the more holy Pim becomes.

The medical ward in this story is run by Pim and Guerin. Guerin is sympathetic with Pim, and “was an orderly with the rank of Corporal, and he shared with Pim the

responsibilities of the ward. He was a priest, mobilized for the war; but we forgot this the greater part of the time, because he was so efficient as a nurse and looks so little like a priest” (Borden “Enfant” 50). Guerin is a fitting companion to this Madonna-like nurse, as he is also a militarized, deployed priest who cares deeply for the men. Both of these individuals are deeply acquainted with God, and both are serving as caretakers, as if they are captains of the same team:

They scarcely spoke to each other, but they worked together as if they had been born for this, and this alone - this silent, quick, watchful, unceasing battle with death; the struggle to save men’s lives, by doing small things accurately at the right moment - without fuss, without noise, without sign of fatigue or hurry, or nervousness or despair. (Borden “Enfant” 50-51)

Guerin appears as unalterable as Pim by the hazards of this war, and he does not interfere with her job regardless of his concerns over the dangerous Enfant, “he didn't interfere with Pim, but he watched. He didn't warn her or try to stop her, or keep her away from the lovely Greek god whom he knew to be one of the damned and a fiend out of Hell; but when she leaned over the beautiful fierce chiseled face he was always on the watch” (Borden “Enfant” 51). Guerin sees the potential for Pim’s presence to save this man by encouraging his discomfort with his own sinfulness; he knows the Enfant to be a “one of the damned,” but his discomfort implies that he perhaps feels guilt and is open to redemption; knowing this is ultimately a holy act, he leaves Pim undisturbed in her holy work, until she risks sacrificing her own soul.

Pim’s Madonna presence eventually begins to save the Enfant’s soul. As the Enfant begins to cry out his fear of death, he confesses to Pim, “said the child of

misfortune into Pim's clean white ear, 'that I have never deliberately killed a woman in my life'" (Borden "Enfant" 52); in the contrast between the virginal white ear of the listener and murderous admission of the "young prince of darkness," the change in his nature begins to come to light. His wounds are severe, as is his pain, and his knowledge of his impending death only serves to heighten his suffering until, "he could not bear her near him, could not bear the sight of her near his bed or the touch of her hands" (Borden "Enfant" 54). Her very presence unsettles him, and his condition worsens to the point where Pim's saintly, professional nature cracks. Only when she is willing to end his pain by any means, including killing him by overdose, is she allowed by the narrator to be a human once more, "'Come along Pim. You can't kill your patient. Come along now at once. You're doing no good here'" (Borden "Enfant" 54). In her fight to save his body and soul, Pim's ability to stay within her prescribed professional Madonna role is lost; she withstood the screaming, sobbing, cursing and "blasphemous bravado" (Borden "Enfant" 53) without breaking, but his losing battle with death and fear of descending to Hell are too much for the Madonna. Pim is too pure to be allowed to be broken, and so Guerin releases her of duty, and in his professional role of priest takes up the battle for the man's soul. While Guerin is a man, he is also a nurse, an important detail because it is as a priest and a nurse that he is able to save the Enfant's soul before he dies.

The enthralling charisma of this immoral man and the fight to save his soul shows Pim as the greatest expectation of women in war: to serve as a Madonna and to sacrifice themselves to save the men in the fight. Pim is absent from the conclusion of the story; we watch the narrator interact with the ward, and we see Guerin's fight to save the soul of the soldier through the narrator's observation. The narrator is a nurse, and she is

enthralled by the beautiful damned *Enfant's* battle, "I knew I must not miss the last act of the drama that was playing itself out so quietly on that ugly narrow bed. I knew that I would never again in this world see anything so mysterious" (Borden "*Enfant*" 60); the narrator's conclusion of the story allows the reader to see the change to the women's gender role; while Pim is the ideal woman from the propaganda, the narrator is a woman whose gender expectations have changed enough to allow her to acknowledge sexuality, humanity and mortality.

While Pim is easily seen as having been made in the mold of "Greatest Mother in the World" propaganda, the narrator of "*Enfant de Malheur*" serves as a representation of how women adapted to this gendered expectation, in refusal of this "Greatest Mother" role. While Pim emulates the Madonna's virgin mother role, the narrating nurse of the story does not. The post-war Lost Generation was made up of women like this narrator, and like Smithy, who became disenchanted with their governments and their religions, as well as their gender role expectations because of the way that the war was started, fought and ended. While the narrator does her duties in the ward, she has a suspicion of Guerin and his use of faith in healing, "Who was Guerin? A good orderly, a conscientious little man who believed in old legends. Very well, very well. Put it that the power of an aged belief was being put to the test in that ugly hut" (Borden "*Enfant*" 57). Along with her distrust in religion, the narrator is stepping outside of her saintly gender expectation by sexualizing the body of the *Enfant*, "These boys who lay like Greek gods in their beds recalled fantastically all the romantic tales that have never been written by liars about the underworld" (Borden "*Enfant*" 48). Her ability to see both the anatomical body as well as the sexual body of the wounded soldiers shows how she has changed from the pre-war

gender role of women. At the close of the story, the narrator asks Guerin, “It was like a miracle; but what does it mean?” (Borden “Enfant” 61); her use of “like a miracle” indicates that she does not actually think it was miracle, implying that she no longer believes in miracles. In this disbelief, the narrator has distanced herself from religion and the idea of God having any presence here in the war. This narrator is no longer taking a man’s word—even a priest’s—as simply the truth; she has seen enough through the war to step outside of her pre-war role as follower and into her new role as her own independent authority.

The Dehumanized Woman in War

A woman who rejects the stiff saintly expectation of caretaking is also present in Borden’s “Moonlight” short story. In her description of a night on the ward, the narrator shows how the use of language changed for these women; the change in gender role expectations during wartime showed itself not only in apathy towards the government and religion, but also in the way women spoke about the world around them, in both their word choice and in their subject matter. Before the war, women were expected to serve as audience and entertainment for men; they were not exposed to things like male nudity, strangers, or violence. During the war all of these things became common place; suffering replaced entertainment, and the need to speak up replaced the need to listen. Women could and did begin to talk about things, such as sex, violence, abortions, and bodily functions; they began to question the systems around them that at one time had been unquestionable. The need to communicate about topics that had once been “unladylike” eclipsed the need to stay in their pre-war gender role, and this allowed the women the freedom to begin using language in ways that suited them rather than

restrained them. We see this throughout *Not So Quiet*, with Tosh's sexual innuendos and humor and Smithy's prevalence for curse words; but this new freedom of language also allowed women to question how society saw them, and for the first time on a large scale, women were able to discuss their own dehumanization.

Borden's "Moonlight" follows an unnamed nurse through her midnight shift in the hospital ward. The narrator further exposes the general disillusionment and pessimism with the prescribed women's gender role as alluded to by the narrator in "Enfant de Malheur"; this nurse has fallen in line with her role, not in a saintly effort, but rather in a hopeless, depressive, continuation of action because of her seemingly never-ending circumstance. While Pim is sexless in her holiness, the narrator of "Moonlight" is sexless in her complete loss of womanhood to cope with the unending trauma. To survive, she has adapted to become machine-like, and states, "War, the Alpha and the Omega, world without end - I don't mind it. I'm used to it. I fit into it. it provides me with everything that I need, an occupation, a shelter, companions, a jug and a basin" (Borden "Moonlight" 40). By fitting "into it," she has been pared down to basic human needs, and there is no room left for anything that could have signaled her to be a sexual or romantic woman. She is so used to the cycle of the wounded soldiers that the new crop harvest in the town rattles her into insomnia, "I could sleep with the familiar damp smell of blood on my apron, but the terrible scent of the new-mown hay disturbs me" (Borden "Moonlight" 42). This sensation of freshness is so out of character for her surroundings that she cannot rationalize it with the other sights and smells of her day. The language she is using is not vulgar, but it is graphic in a way that creates familiarity between herself and the gore of war; the reference to "Alpha and Omega," as well as the use of "familiar

damp smell of blood,” in juxtaposition with “terrible scent of the new-mown hay” shows how far she has transformed from the gender role of civilian life. While it is difficult to identify the class standing or previous experience of this unnamed narrator, it was highly unlikely that any woman before the war would have familiarity with this level of violence to the point of internal acceptance. This lack of humanity in her language continues with her description of the hospital’s various wards,

The moon is just above the abdominal ward. Next to it is the hut given up to gas gangrene, and next to that are the Heads. The Knees are on the other side, and the Elbows and the fractured Thighs. A nurse comes along carrying a lantern. Her white figure moves silently across the ground. Her lantern glows red in the moonlight. She goes into the gangrene hut that smells of swamp gas. She won't mind. She is used to it, just as I am. (Borden “Moonlight” 43)

The narrator in “Enfant de Malheur” was able to see the beauty and sexual features of the men in her ward, and she was contrasted with Pim, who saw the men as sexless souls to be saved. This narrator is beyond either of those world views, in that she can only see the men as parts and wounds, not as humans. Her inability to see whole people reinforces her own dehumanization.

The extreme nature of her dissociation from the whole men in front of her and her categorization of men as injuries again shows how the language used by this caretaker is evidence of her changed gender role. While the expectations of the “Greatest Mother” would require this nurse knowing and loving all the men with her full, pure heart, the reality is that this woman has lost her ability to see the humanity of the men to help them survive. Her internalized use of language serves to distance the personal aspects of the

wounded from herself. She watches the other nurse and understands that she will not mind the gangrene tent because the narrator herself is so numb to the horror and odor.

She uses the visual of the other nurse to speak about herself:

She is no longer a woman. She is dead already, just as I am - really dead, past resurrection. Her heart is dead. She killed it. She couldn't bear to feel it jumping in her side when Life, the sick animal, choked and rattled in her arms. Her ears are deaf; she deafened them. She could not bear to hear Life crying and mewling.

She is blind so that she cannot see the torn parts of the men she must handle.

Blind, deaf, dead - she is strong, efficient, fit to consort with gods and demons - a machine inhabited by the ghost of a woman - soulless, past redeeming, just as I am – just as I will be. (Borden “Moonlight” 43)

In her world, Life is now personified more than the physical men around her; the comings and goings of Life has a stronger presence and sense of being than the men do. The other nurse “is dead already, just as I am”; with Life as an entity, these women cannot possess it, they cannot have the capacity to contain life when it is so clearly out of their control.

The expectation of her gender role is to keep the men alive and happy, to make them feel seen and loved as if by a mother or sister. These nurses cannot do this, and by seeing themselves as dead, they are able to escape the pressure of their gender role; they are not living women and therefore cannot be held to those societal standards. The narrator states that they are “past resurrection,” and this is ultimately true. These women will never be the same, just as Trix, Tosh and Smithy can never return to the normal civilian life. Their old, pre-war selves are dead, and they are unable to resurrect them.

As the nurses cannot fall in line with their expected gender role, they are disfigured like the men in war. The nurse refers to herself as “Blind, deaf, dead,” but these disfigurements allow her to fulfill her caretaking role, and so she states that “she is strong, efficient, fit to consort with gods and demons - a machine inhabited by the ghost of a woman - soulless, past redeeming” (Borden “Moonlight” 43). As a machine, she is not a woman, and she states, “There are no men here, so why should I be a woman? There are heads and knees and mangled testicles” (Borden “Moonlight” 43). She is a soulless, blind, deaf and dead woman, and she does not need to perform to her gender role expectations because the men in their current states are not living up to their gender role either. The men are only parts, not whole, and although some of those parts are testicles, they are no longer men in the same way that she is no longer a woman. Her anatomical approach reinforces the sexlessness of her role, while also showing the language she uses to separate herself from the saintly expectation society holds for her. In their need, the men still address her as “sister,” but this does not change her soulless state, “There are these things, but no men; so how could I be a woman here and not die of it? Sometimes, suddenly, all in an instant, a man looks up at me from the shambles, a man’s eyes signal or a voice calls, ‘Sister! Sister!’” (Borden “Moonlight” 44); her ability to subvert her gender role serves herself and her nurses, but does not extend to the men’s view of them; like women, the men are subjected to the same propaganda and expectations of the gender role women are supposed to fulfill. The cries of “‘Sister! Sister!’” reinforces the nun-like, familial role of the nurse while the woman’s internal question of “how could I be a woman here and not die of it?” exposes her own turn away

from her gender role. This is strikingly similar to the last paragraph of *Not So Quiet* and the final description of Smithy:

Her soul died under a radiant silver moon in the spring of 1918 on the side of a blood-spattered trench. Around her lay the mangled dead and the dying. Her body was untouched, her heart beat calmly, the blood coursed as ever through her veins. But looking deep into those emotionless eyes one wondered if they had suffered much before the soul had left them. Her face held an expression of resignation, as though she had ceased to hope that the end might come. (Price 239)

The death of the soul while the body and the mind continue on is a common experience for both of the caretaking positions (nurse and ambulancier) examined in this thesis and serves to connect the narrator from “Moonlight” to Smithy, as both women experience the same feelings of futility and endlessness of their service in war. Both women saw unspeakable traumas and had to continue “doing their bit” until the war ended, or they died, whichever freed them first.

CHAPTER III

MOTHERHOOD

Motherhood was a driving force for military and volunteer recruitment in the Great War. Mothers were presented as the reason men needed to defend their motherland, as illustrated in Susan Grayzel's "Women at Home in a World at War": "all women were presumably united by sending men to fight, much as all men were united in their willingness to take up arms on behalf of their nation. It would hardly surprise us to learn that appeals to women or records of their lives during wartime and across enemy lines similarly emphasized their significance as mothers or supporters of men striving for 'justice'" (Grayzel). Even Queen Mary, wife of King George III, allowed her son to have a role in the conflict, although it was limited. With the Queen as an example for mothers everywhere, along with the propaganda drive to defend the motherland and the women who inhabited it, this war was a call to mothers of different class, social, religious and economic positions within Britain to unite in their patriotism by sending their sons to war.

With all the varied and conflicting expectations of women at the start of the war, the most unanimous expectation across the continent was that if you had children, it was your job as a mother to send them into war service as soon as they were able, and you were to be proud of their service. As with other aspects of the war, this pride was layered; there was pride in the child working on the Homefront, a greater level of pride in those who were caretakers, such as nurses and ambulanciers, and the utmost pride in soldiers; any injury in overseas combat served as egotistical bonus points for maternal pride. This was not just a social trend, but rather a politically reinforced agenda; propaganda

encouraged mothers to show their patriotism by raising their families and sending those who could serve into the conflict.

Early in the war, the RMS Lusitania left New York and entered British waters, where the ship with “1,960 total souls on board including passengers, crew, and three stowaways who were discovered after setting sail” (Hyde 36) sank within 18 minutes of a critical attack by a German U-boat: “The death toll was about 1,200. There were about 160 Americans on board, of whom more than 120 died” (Hyde 36). The massive loss of civilian life, both British and American, propelled America to enter the war, as well as influenced British civilians to enlist. The sinking of the Lusitania and the women and children onboard became a staple image of propaganda.

Figure 6 shows the drowning of a mother and child, with the simple caption “Enlist,” in reference to the sinking of the Lusitania. This poster can be associated with the Art Nouveau and Modern Art styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with its focus on symbolism; this poster is styled so that the viewer must focus on the woman and child. The symbolism of the mother is clear; the white garment enrobing her represents purity and innocence, her bare feet further emphasize her as an innocent victim, as it allows the viewer to speculate that her garment was a nightgown and that she and her child have drowned in their sleep. The cradling of the child also calls attention to the Virgin Mary and Christ-like symbolism, as this woman and her child were martyrs that

led to Britain's surge into the war. The cradling of a baby is a common sight in Christian iconography and is present here to elevate the martyr status of the victims of the

Lusitania. This poster sends the message that innocent mothers and their children are dying at the hands of the enemy, and it is up to other mothers to send their children out to defend the country.

While this poster differs from the typical cartoon-style propaganda and seems to be more high-art inspired, the result is the same; mothers and motherhood became a driving force for enlistment and a reason to continue the fight.

Figure 6. Fred Spear's "Enlist" propaganda poster, © Imperial War Museums (Poster Collection).

As seen in Figure 7, men were expected to fight for their mothers, wives and sisters. It is safe to say that

mothers were the first and most valuable item on this list. This is not a surprise for a country that was still a monarchy and whose consort queen was British by nationality as well as marriage and loved by her people. As stated in the archive description, this poster "underwent three separate print runs between January 1915 and March 1915" (Parliamentary Publishing Committee). The effectiveness was obvious in its clarity. Unlike the previous image, this poster offers a clear-cut reason to enlist—to defend mothers, wives and sisters. The women in Britain were valued for their reproductive

properties—your mother produced you, your wife will produce your heirs, and your sister will produce your nephews; these women are the reason to fight, as they will carry on your line. In a society that reinforced traditional gender roles through wartime propaganda, it is important to note that this was effective on men; however, it also had an effect on women. While the target audience of these posters were the young men of the country, they were seen by the women of Britain as well. In the poster, the “Freedom of Europe” is not as emphasized as “Mothers Wives and Sisters,” reinforcing the value of women in the recruitment of men. Grayzel states that mothers “were also celebrated for their quiet heroism in keeping the home intact whilst their men were absent. For all of women’s extensive and varied war work, most public celebrations of their contributions underlined that such labour was part of ‘doing their bit for the duration’” (Grayzel). The emphasis on women’s contribution to the war as mothers was reinforced by propaganda and the gender roles of

Figure 7. Parliamentary Publishing Committee. © Imperial War Museums (Poster Collection).

the time.

Mothers were pushed to send their children to war, and

in this way the status of a family member’s service in the war served as reinforcement of a mother’s good work in raising her children. To be a good patriot mother, one should ration food and buy war bonds, educate one’s children on the evils of the Germans, and of course, one must absolutely send one’s sons of fighting age and daughters of working

age into war work. In Figure 8, it can be inferred that the woman is the man's mother, and she is encouraging him to enlist. In this particular image, his attire is clean, and his tie-pin and pocket-watch imply that he is from the middle or upper class, a segment of British society that was targeted for their influence over the rest of the population. The woman in this poster also highlights the mother as a part of the war effort; her tight hairstyle is similar to a helmet, and her long, black gown emphasizes restraint and conservation in the war effort, as she is not wasting fashionable materials or unnecessary

embellishments; even the buttons on her dress are arranged similar to those on a uniform.

The use of "duty" here applies to both mother and son, as it is the moral and societal obligation for the mother to enlist her son and serve as an example for other mothers to encourage their sons to join up.

Figure 8. propaganda poster, © Imperial War Museums (Poster Collection).

Militant Mothers

There were many types of mothers in the Great War: mothers who enlisted overseas as caretakers, such as Mary Borden; mothers who worked in munitions factories, or other Homefront jobs; mothers who spread rations thin amongst their children to support the war effort; pacifist mothers; single mothers; pregnant mothers of war babies; however, the most glorified and praised mother type was the militant mother.

The militant mother was aligned with the upper classes, as she was wealthy enough to avoid war work first hand, and so her contribution to the war and her source of pride was her children. A militant mother must have the following characteristics: be a civilian, meaning they at no point enlist in the war effort directly or leave the Homefront; fully support the war effort through volunteer work that serves to encourage enlistment, via helping men and women enlist or by serving those who return as a thanks for their enlistment; have children old enough to serve and encourage them, even to the point of near force, into the war; build their reputation off of their child's service, as well as their own enlistment efforts or recruitment numbers; and believe in the propaganda of the time, be that posters, articles, films or other media; and due to her class standing, she was seen as socially and economically excluded from the laborious parts of war work. While militant mothers were often depicted in propaganda (see Figure 8), the mothers of wartime were also thoroughly detailed in *Not So Quiet* by several characters: Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Evans-Mawnington, Jessie, Trix, and Smithy herself. It is Smithy's hope that "Women will be the ones to stop war, you'll see. If they can't do anything else, they can refuse to bring children into the world to be maimed and murdered when they grow big enough" (Price 55), a hope that is not upheld by her mother or sister.

While these primary characters all have mothers or motherhood as details within their storylines, the other ambulanciers also bring up mothers and motherhood as a way of speaking on morals and militarism. During the B.F.'s going away party, the girls are making speeches mostly centered around the B.F.'s blind patriotism and infatuation with her reputation, as well as her desire to find a husband. The best compliment Smithy can give her, in the form of a party toast is, "may you always be able to tell Mother

everything you do, B.F. Chin-Chin” (Price 108). The use of the capitalization in Mother here implies the role of motherhood, rather than specially the B.F.’s own mother; most of these women had militant mothers back home with near identical beliefs and attitudes about the war. Since her reputation as looking for a man could be scandalous and is certainly not something that could be repeated to one’s mother, this toast cuts both ways. It is both sincere in its acknowledgement of the militant mother in on the Homefront as a symbol for the reinforcement of gender roles and their prescribed morals, as well as a cunning, tongue-in-cheek remark on her flirtatious behavior. Smithy’s toast comes after Tosh’s longer speech, which put the B.F. in her place: "So she returns to London, where, judging by a rumor that a certain hotel is proposing to erect a memorial tablet to the brave Englishwomen who have fallen there during these early days of the War, one feels she will do her bit not once, but many times. Of such stuff are the women of England made. The pioneer spirit that populates our colonies” (Price 107). To “do her bit” here refers to both serving her country and sexually serving the men who served the country, and this double meaning is extended with “pioneer” and “populates” as well. This hypothetical erection of a tablet to the “brave” Englishwomen is a sexual innuendo, but it also calls to mind Smithy’s mother’s antics at home; the militant mothers of the Homefront would surely be behind such a project, even if their beliefs led to the immoral actions of their daughters who served. Smithy’s mother is fully involved in the recruitment efforts of the Homefront and is so immersed in the idea of patriotism as personal pride that she has entered into a recruitment competition with a neighbor in order to determine which woman has “sacrificed” more for their country. Poking fun at the B.F. is akin to the arguments Smithy carries out in her head with her mother; both women are militant-

mindful and unrealistic, and both represent the stereotypes of war-time propaganda.

Earlier, the insult to “erect a tablet” is introduced in connection with the B.F., and another ambulancier named Edwards calls out the B.F.’s ignorant patriotic views: “You’re the type that loses a son in the War and erects a tablet in the village church ... ‘A mother’s proud memory.’ Proud? Because her son has been murdered after murdering some other mother’s sons?” (Price 55). The loss of a child to war being a point of pride is spoken of by Smithy, Roy and Trix in the novel, and it is used to point out the hypocrisy of women like the B.F. and the militant mothers at home. The B.F. is the type who will never “refuse to bring children into the world to be maimed and murdered when they grow big enough,” and she is acting in opposition to Smithy’s beliefs; Smithy is in opposition to the militant mother’s use of war as personal pride, “A war to end war, my mother writes. Never. In twenty years it will repeat itself. And twenty years after that. Again and again, as long as we breed women like my Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington” (Price 90).

This complex relationship between mothers encouraging their children to enlist, and those who served being encouraged to do so by their mothers, is very evident in two different sets of character dynamics in *Not So Quiet*; Roy and his mother Mrs. Evans-Mawnington and Smithy and her mother both serve as examples of this relationship. The conflicts between Mrs. Evans-Mawnington and Mrs. Smith also highlights the view of militant mothers that children are bragging rights for their personal honor in wartime. A militant mother’s sacrifice was her children, and daughters were less valued than sons, as soldiers could become heroes and women could only become volunteers. The giving of a son to the war effort was seen as a larger, more valuable sacrifice, as he would become a soldier and this risk carried the chance of losing the family name with his death; this

socialite weighing of sacrifice led to the competition between the two neighboring ladies in *Not So Quiet*, as Mrs. Smith tries to out value her two daughters and one young son's sacrifice with the widow Mrs. Evans-Mawnington's sacrifice of her only son.

The Evans-Mawningtons

Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is first introduced as the antagonist to Smithy's mother in their competition for bragging rights: "Mrs. Evans-Mawnington and Mother like the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle; maddeningly equal to one another" (Price 32). She is stated to have one son, as Mrs. Smith does, and she is head of an equal number of war recruitment committees; however, she has no daughter to give to the war effort, and so she is left "scowling, furious-mouthed, jealous" (Price 33). In this very first introduction to her character, she is portrayed as heartless; her use of her son's service for personal pride puts her in competition with Smithy's mother, and Smithy's contempt for both women's actions is quite evident. Dwelling on the pressure that this competition places on Smithy, her narration begins to spiral out as she imagines herself not a heroine but a coward in her wartime service: "one of England's heroines... a failure, a failure... a coward, weak suburban coward..." (Price 34). The pressure to join up by one's mother is unhealthy; the pride and egotistical flaunting of a child's dangerous service begins to breed resentment. By entering this competition with Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is convincing more than just her own son to enlist.

The next mention of Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is in a letter Smithy receives from her mother in which it is revealed that Mrs. Smith has seventeen more recruits than her

rival, but Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is taking all the attention because she is “boasting that Roy Evans-Mawnington is coming home on his last leave before going out to the trenches” (Price 78), which Mrs. Smith notes as unfortunate, as her son will not be the first one in battle. Smithy is in a position of perfect understanding for Roy; he has the same type of overbearing militant mother, and Smithy has seen what the trenches do to the men who fill them. Unlike her mother, she is not rushing to wish that experience on anyone. As Smithy’s ambulancier career progresses, so does her resentment of the mothers that sent their children to experience the horrors of war: “Shut your ears, Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington, lest their groans and heart-rending cries linger as long in your memory as in the memory of the daughter you sent out to help the war” (Price 91). The contact that these mothers have with the children is through written letters; while the mothers write from the comfort of their homes, the children are reading the letters in their freezing, vermin-infested beds. The letters written by mothers seem so out of place and trivial when read in their children’s settings. Smithy thinks of the dying soldier in her ambulance, “What does it matter? Providing your mother doesn’t have to face the shame of her son’s cowardice?” (Price 93). The relationship of Roy to his mother Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is the same: a balance between wanting to survive and being responsible for someone else’s pride.

This mother-son relationship is then pushed to include Smithy, as the same expectations Mrs. Evans-Mawnington has for her son, she now has for her future daughter-in-law, and Smithy’s bitterness for her mother is extended to her future mother-in-law. In giving her imaginary tour of the war to her mother and future mother-in-law, she introduces the soldiers: “He might be anyone at all, so why not your Roy? One

shapeless lump of raw liver is like another shapeless lump of raw liver” (Price 95). Smithy also revels the militant mother’s embrace of the new technologies of war: “I remember your letter.... ‘I hear we’ve started to use liquid fire, too. That will teach those Germans. I hope we use lots and lots of it.’ Yes, you wrote that” (Price 95). This is the drastic difference between what a civilian mother is encouraged to advocate, such as chemical warfare, and what a wartime caretaker actually sees. While the mother hopes that her son will come home soon, and that the chemicals will bring the victory sooner, the caretaker sees all of England’s sons and the torment they endure from the inhumane wishes of their mothers:

You were delighted to think some German mother’s son was going to have skin stripped from his poor face by liquid fire... Just as some equally patriotic German mother rejoiced when she first heard the sons of Englishwomen were to be burnt and tortured by the very newest war gadget out of the laboratory. (Price 95-96)

Smithy’s bitterness is justified and reinforced by every dying son and daughter sent to war by their patriotic, ignorant mothers. Before Smithy’s engagement to Roy, Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is the fuel to her own mother’s fire; the competition between the two women drives up enlistment numbers and creates an environment of reckless pro-war sentiments. Upon Smithy’s admission to her mother that she resigned from the ambulance convoy, she describes the scene:

She glares at me, resentful, unbelieving. It is a blow to her pride. For a whole minute she glares, then gathers up her papers slowly. ‘What will Mrs. Evans-Mawnington say?’ she bursts forth at last. ‘What will she say to my daughter taking a cushy job in England?’ How well up in war-slang is mother! (Price 182)

Mrs. Smith's natural reaction to her daughter's end of service is not to ask if something happened, or if she is alright, but rather to demean her daughter about the opinions of neighbors and her own hurt pride.

To Smithy, Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is at first a contributing cause of her mother's increasingly militant ideas; this changes when Roy and Smithy announce their engagement, and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington becomes Smithy's second militant mother. Mrs. Evans-Mawnington's relationship with her own son is also a factor in her relationship with Smithy and her competition with Mrs. Smith. Roy appears to be the perfect soldier son; when Smithy gets to know him, she sees he is a twin to her own anti-militant ideals. While their relationship is detailed later in this thesis, it is important to note that his honesty with Smithy is not shared with his mother. When being reprimanded for her lack of enthusiasm upon her return home, Smithy's mother uses Roy as an example of preferred behavior: "When Roy Evans-Mawnington came home with a fractured arm he went everywhere with his mother in uniform to please her" (Price 181). This is the militant mother's expectation; for every child serving, a mother is to stay busy reaping the benefits of pride and ego from their child's service. Roy expresses this behavior and his resentment of it on his first date with Smithy: "Mother dying for me to get decorations, V.C.'s¹ and things; sometimes I fancy she'd rather have them than me. The V.C.? When my stomach turns over with fright every time I hear a shot fired" (Price 189). The reality of her son's service is lost on her; Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is more interested in the medals her son could receive than the dangerous enemy combat that the Victoria Cross requires. When Roy is greatly injured, this conversation is repeated in

¹ Victoria Cross, the highest medal of honor in the British medal rankings, awarded for valor in enemy combat (War Office).

Smithy's mind, and she responds to her Unit Administrator with a simple, "His mother will be pleased about the M.C.,² ma'am" (Price 225). Mrs. Evans-Mawnington confirms this in her letter to Smithy, in which she refers to the loss of her son's vision and leg as a "splendid achievement":

"My poor brave son. But they gave him an M.C. As soon as he is strong enough he goes to Buckingham Palace for investiture—a great honour—and the king will personally thank him for his bravery. You and I will go—his mother and his wife, for I hope by then you will be his wife; the doctor says he needs an incentive to get well, and that should do it. He is, of course, a trifle depressed, but that will wear off once he is out of hospital and has been decorated." (Price 229-230)

The focus on the M.C. and the minimizing of her son's pain in this letter both display Mrs. Evans-Mawnington relationship with her son, as well as setting a precedent of behavior that she expects of her future daughter-in-law. The loss of his vision and leg, along with all of the traumatic events Roy witnessed in the trenches, will not be discussed by the women and are discredited under the claim that Roy is only a "trifle depressed," which Mrs. Evans-Mawnington assumes will clear up when he receives his M.C. This small piece of metal will not cure his injuries or long-lasting psychological wounds, but the medal and its accompanying status is the only discussion these women will have about Roy. The letter continues:

"It is a terrible tragedy, but I refuse to weep for my son. I gave him to his country, my only son, he was all I had to give—a widow's mite—but I would give him again if the call arose. I am proud of his blindness and disability. The sight of him

²Military Cross, or M.C., was a second-tier medal created during the Great War, eligible to the ranks of Captain and below, for exemplary service against the enemy on land (War Office).

will be an object lesson to the men who have allowed others to fight their battles for them. If the sight of his blindness shames one of the cowards then he has not suffered vainly.” (Price 230)

The purpose of this letter is to inform her son’s intended wife of his very serious injury and resulting lifelong disabilities; however, there is no sympathy for her son or her future daughter-in-law in her writing. Mrs. Evans-Mawnington instead reinforces her earlier sentiments with a refusal to weep over her son; his suffering serves to both bring her pride and to shame the sons of other women who did not enlist. She closes the letter by stating what a blessing it is to be “mothering a hero” (Price 231); Mrs. Evans-Mawnington is fulfilling her ultimate duty of sacrificing her son so that his service may bolster her pride. This militant mothering is also deeply embedded in Mrs. Smith’s behavior, which is even more calloused in its portrayal by Smithy, and the interactions between mother and daughter.

The Smiths

Smithy’s relationship with her militant mother is a defining relationship in this text. Her mother’s expectations have a great impact on Smithy, even though her mother’s ignorant Homefront expectations are completely outside of Smithy’s reality. Despite the changes in circumstance that Smithy endures throughout the novel, her mother remains unchanged, something that bothers Smithy: “I honestly believe Mother writes one letter, makes several copies and inserts the date when each Tuesday comes around. Every letter is an exact replica of the last” (Price 148). Mrs. Smith is referred to by Smithy as “Mother,” and the term is nearly always capitalized as a title would be, such as Queen or Lord. Even though this novel is being told as if it is the diary and inner thoughts of

Smithy, she still internally refers to her mom as “Mother.” This Mother authority role is one that sets the rules: how to think, how to behave, how to look, and ultimately how to serve one’s Mother by serving the country. This example serves to clue the reader early on about how Smithy must stay within her gender role. We see these conflicting ideals of gender roles between Smithy and her Mother in the correspondence they have throughout the novel:

My last letter home opens before me, photograph clear, sent in response to innumerable complaints concerning the brevity of my crossed-out field postcards: “it is such fun out here, and of course I’m loving every minute of it; it’s so splendid to be really in it...” The only kind of letter home they expect, the only kind they want, the only kind they will have. (Price 30)

While the “they” in this refers to both of her parents, it also serves as a comment on all parents, and especially all of the militant mothers whose children are at war. We see this with Roy and Trix’s letters as well, but the expectation on the children needing to lie about their experience in order to feed the militant views of their civilian parents shows the importance of the effect that propaganda had on their gender roles. Were she a soldier, Smithy might be able to speak on the horror of war, but she is not; she is simply a woman, a caretaker for both the army and the worries of her parents back home. The expectation of her mother and father, “the only kind they want, the only kind they will have” (Price 31), is compounded upon by common phrasing of the time, which referred to the women who served in war work as the daughters of England, “England is proud of her brave daughters. Almost as proud as Father and Mother” (Price 31). The use of “England’s daughters” aligns with the idea of the Queen giving her own children and a

society where women were fully in charge of raising children. Women could work, women could be single, and women could be feminist at this time. But women could not vote, women were expected to be married, to produce offspring, and to only socialize with other women. The idea of “separate spheres” was just now starting to crumble, but still it lingered on.

The subtitle of Price’s novel is *Stepdaughters of War*. The women were given as stepdaughters to the War when their mothers married themselves to the idea of militarism, or when their fathers married the feminized ideals of war. Smithy’s militant mother was married to the politicized, glamorized idea of the War and blinded by the unrealistic propaganda and viewpoints of civilians who had never seen the horrors of the trenches, or chemical warfare, or gangrene, or the way that blood would freeze in the winter in the back of the ambulances. The idea of Mother and Father having more pride in their daughter’s sacrifice than England does highlights this point. While England may be proud of Smithy coming forward and serving as a caretaker, her parents will always take more pride in her in an entirely different, more personal sense. England may be proud that its citizens are standing up for what it perceives to be right, for its international and colonial interests, and all the other reasons for which it went to war. But the pride that Mother and Father take in their daughter’s service is not the pride of doing what’s right, but rather the pride of being able to say, “because I made a daughter and I made that daughter go to war, I am the true patriot making a true sacrifice.” To these militant mothers, their sacrifices of their children were points of pride; as long as the children went along with their parents’ wishes and stayed within their gender roles while serving.

Oh, Christ! Oh, Christ! ... I'm only 21 and nobody cares because I've been pitchforked into hell, nobody cares because I'm going mad, mad; nobody cares because I'm afraid I've got no guts, I'm white livered.... "We must all do our bit." ... They've made me a heroine, one of England's splendid women, and I'm shaking with freight, I can't hold the wheel ... One of England's splendid heroines ... How easy to drive the bus clean over the hill into the valley below ... An accident.... "She died for King and Country." ... Mother deep in mourning, head of another committee, enrolling recruits at top speed ... One daughter dead on active service equals how many daughters alive Somewhere in France? (Price 33-34)

Smithy feels she has been pitchforked into hell, which is mostly accurate. Her joining of the War was not really her idea, as her mother pitchforked her into this war, and now she's beginning to feel like a coward because she cannot live up to the expectations of a woman who's never been to the warfront. This trauma and astounding lack of freedom leads to suicidal thoughts, not for the last time in the novel.

The next correspondence between the women is a letter Smithy receives in which it is revealed that her brother will soon go to the trenches, and that her mother "doesn't fancy the idea, but, of course, she is proud to think her son wants to do his duty to his country, to fight for the Dear Old Flag" (Price 77). This news is unfortunate because the neighbor boy Roy will be in the trenches before him. The focus here is not truly on her brother, but rather her mother's own militant pride over her son's sacrifice. Smithy has been driving injured men from the trenches and understands the hellscape that her brother will be entering into, but this insight is overlooked by her mother. The pride in her

children always circles back to her own vanity, as Smithy narrates herself through her imagined mother's mind: "Darling, I don't know how proud mother is of me and Trix and Bertie. My three heroes, she calls us, and it does annoy Mrs. Evans-Mawnington, who has only Roy to give to the country" (Price 78). The bragging rights of her "three heroes" hold the most consideration in her mother's thoughts of her children's sacrifice and her support of the war. It is after this letter that Smithy imagines her mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington following her while she is on duty. Smithy imagines the two women absorbing the trauma of her daily life: the driving in the dangerous dark, the screaming, weeping soldiers, the endless parade of wounded and dying; the disastrous effects of mustard gas and chemical warfare. This set up of the "three heroes" and Smithy's dissolution from reality shows the tension between the two women. Mrs. Smith, in her maternal role, is also responsible for keeping her daughter within her traditional gender role. The disconnect between what the militant mother thinks is happening to her daughter and what her daughter is actually experiencing highlights how outdated and destructive this gender role expectation is. Mrs. Smith expects her daughter to be the same civilized, pleasant, malleable daughter she sent to war upon her return home, but hopefully with the addition of a husband. The trauma that Smithy has endured throughout her service as an ambulancier has changed her, and she knows that this information, as well as the reality of the war, would fall on the deaf ears of her mother. Her suspicion is confirmed when she returns home from duty after Tosh's death, and her militant mother behaves accordingly.

Smithy has seen the traumas of the war firsthand in a way that her mother cannot understand: "The war has drained me dry of feeling. Something has gone from me that

will never return. I do not want to go home” (Price 169). Not only has she seen the chemical and trench warfare inflicted on the men who serve, but her best friend died while driving the ambulance in front of her. This event is the direct cause of Smithy’s return to England, “Commandant is willing that I should go. A rest—sick leave she calls it—but she avoids my cold glance carefully when speaking the words. She understands. I have finished with the war for good” (Price 167). Her mental health has deteriorated after Tosh’s and The Bug’s deaths. While multiple characters comment on Smithy’s health and nerves, this does not stop her mother from asking her for favors:

She has come to say something and lacks the courage. “A really *monster* meeting, darling,” she repeats; “and Mother wants her girl to do something special—Mother wants her girl to wear her uniform and make a little speech at the recruiting meeting.” I sit up, hard-eyed, the blood draining from my face. “No!” Why not? ... It is three weeks since I came home and surely I am not going to moon about any longer ... people are thinking it’s funny... perfectly absurd the way I refuse to go anywhere; it isn’t as though I was a *wounded soldier*. (Price 180-181)

This conversation is more of a demand than conversation, and the focus is entirely on the pride and appearance of Mrs. Smith. By referring to herself as “Mother” and calling Helen “her girl” and requesting Smithy’s help through the use of third-person, Mrs. Smith is trying to skirt away from giving Smithy any actual say in decisions; Smithy is not being directly asked in the hopes that she will be unable to say no. This distance allows the focus to remain on Mrs. Smith, and not on Smithy’s condition or thoughts on the matter. The emphasis on “wounded soldier” shows Mrs. Smith’s naivete of both the

war and her daughter's personal experience. She does brag about her daughter befriending Toshington but chooses to ignore the fact that Smithy watched her die and any depression that results from that event. Smithy was on the front; she saw the wounds, the death; she lived in the lousy, cold, frontline conditions, but Mrs. Smith does not ask or want to know about this; she just worries that "people are thinking it funny." This is reinforced by her comment, "After all, when a girl's mother is working at top pressure, the least her daughter can do is to encourage her and help ... why I won't even wear my badge of honour—*my uniform*" (Price 181). Smithy hated her uniform and everything that it stood for; yet Mrs. Smith wants her daughter to wear it around town to advance her pride and belittle others. Mrs. Smith concludes, "Why should I object to saying a few words at a recruiting meeting to show an example to the male and female slackers who are hanging back and refusing to obey king and Country?" (Price 181). Wearing her uniform is less about getting people to enlist based on her experience or pride, than it is a way to belittle people and use that as motivation for enlistment. Those who hang back, the "slackers," are cowards who are to be made an example of through the use of Mrs. Smith's own daughter, who unbeknownst to her is now a "slacker" herself.

This request ultimately results in Smithy telling her mother that she will not return to the war in any capacity, including "cushy" Homefront work, and is aligning herself with pacifism. This is not well received, "She glares at me, resentful, unbelieving. It is a bitter blow to her pride. For a whole minute she glares, then gathers up her papers slowly. 'What will Mrs. Evans-Mawnington say?' she bursts forth at last" (Price 182). Again, she does not ask why Smithy has such extreme, concrete views of the war; instead, she focuses on what other people will think of her because of her daughter's choice to not

return to France. Smithy calls her cries of cowardice and patriotism “The clap-trap of the recruiting platform” (Price 184) and ignores them. With this Smithy is outright denying the confines of her gender role: as a citizen, she is now expected to be either a wife, a war worker, or a caregiver. Her status as an unwed single woman and her refusal to return to war service in France or to obtain a job in war work in England is a large step out of her prescribed gender role. This, on top of her family’s wealth and elevated class standing, means that not only is she unfeminine, she is also borderline immoral, unpatriotic, and at a minimum, a disappointing and disrespectful child. Mrs. Smith says as much after Smithy attempts to explain what she went through as an ambulancier, “She pulls herself away. ‘At least they have died doing their duty,’ she says. She goes out weeping” (Price 185). This is a direct echo back to Smithy’s earlier quote, “One daughter dead on active service equals how many daughters alive Somewhere in France?” (Price 34). The number of children and their respective military status and location of deployment impact the social standing of their militant mothers on the Homefront; in this way, Smithy would have been more valued by her mother if she had died with Tosh in France, rather than living in England as a pacifist.

The other mother-like figure in Smithy’s life is her wealthy Aunt Helen, who wrote Smithy into her will once she enlisted; however, she does not take the news of Smithy’s newfound pacifism well, “The human sacrifice has gone on strike, and Aunt is unaccustomed to human sacrifices going on strike” (Price 186), and promptly removes her inheritance. For a single, unwed woman, an inheritance was one of the very few ways a woman could stay unmarried and not become destitute. Smithy’s removal from Aunt Helen’s will is a removal from a chance at a comfortable life and is one of the harshest

things a family member could do to a woman at this time. Due to Trix's need for an abortion, Smithy asks Aunt Helen for the hundred pounds needed for the procedure under the claim that she is reenlisting and needs the large sum for her uniform; "All eagerness now is Aunt Helen, almost running in case the prey may escape even now" (Price 209). The view of herself as both a "human sacrifice" and "prey" for her family exhibits how deep their militant views run, as well as how strongly they treat their daughter as a pawn in their social competitions for pride and patriotic display. Smithy states that on her redeployment, "No one in my family sees me off this time" (Price 213), confirming what she already knows to be true: she is to be boasted over and bragged about, but not supported, listened to, or understood.

Caretakers as Mothers

The militant mothers of the caretakers are not the sole portrayal of motherhood; the caretakers themselves also share thoughts on motherhood during the war. The caretakers would eventually return to England with a different understanding of motherhood and a different perception in their role as mothers after the war. The act of becoming a mother during the war is shown in two characters in *Not So Quiet*, Jessie, an employee of the Smith family, as well as their youngest daughter Trix. The juxtaposition between these two women is a clear indication of how class altered one's gender role. Jessie, the Smith's new maid, is mentioned a few times throughout the text. Jessie is first mentioned briefly in a letter Smithy receives from her mother, "The new maid Jessie has just gone home to have a 'war baby' at the expense of the War Baby League. One must help the war babies, mustn't one?" (Price 148). Mrs. Smith's focus is not on the pregnancy or her maid, but rather that this gives her a new way to support the war. This is

reinforced by Smithy's comment about their previous houseworker, "I think of poor little Tanny, who was turned out to fend for herself three years ago in a similar situation. There wasn't a war on then" (Price 148). Smithy is reflecting on her mother's hypocritical treatment of her lower-class staff and on how the militant mindset allows for the act of pregnancy out of wedlock to become acceptable; Jessie is able to keep her baby with the support of mothers like Mrs. Smith. We know that Jessie keeps and raises her baby, as it is mentioned later that Smithy does not want to listen to her mother's talk of "the war-baby of Jessie, the new maid" (Price 169). While Jessie has the support of her employer, this cannot be said for the younger Smith daughter, Trix.

A crucial act in this novel is the reenlistment of Smithy, an action she must take to protect and support her sister when Trix reveals her pregnancy. Trix alludes to her relations with men in her letters to Smithy, starting with the first detailed letter Smithy writes about receiving, in which Trix writes that she is in charge of meal distribution in her V.A.D camp, and she admits, "I do a bit of flirting between plates" (Price 82). This is followed up later with a more somber letter, and secretly Smithy receives a call from her sister when she is sent home on her "indefinite" sick leave. Smithy's emotional state when this call is received is important; she had recently watched her best friend, Tosh, die from a bomb to her ambulance after their dear friend The Bug loses her sanity, and eventually her life. Outside of Trix, Tosh and The Bug, the only other women of importance in her life are her mother, aunt and the Commandant, all of which have a militant mindset and believe that Smithy needs to serve her country. Trix is the last woman in her life who could understand her and her experience, and Trix desperately needs help, as she writes to Smithy:

“I prayed for a torpedo, and when it didn't come I nearly chucked myself over the side. If you hadn't been at this end I would have gone overboard and finished it—you at this end saved me. ‘Don't be an ass, Cis'll save you. Don't be an ass, Cis'll save you,’—I told myself that over and over again. If you turn me down I'll chuck myself into the Thames; it's quite the conventional thing to do, isn't it? ...’ She laughs.” (Price 197)

Smithy has been surrounded by death in her role as a caretaker and has lost her support system of her fellow drivers Tosh and The Bug through their untimely deaths. Trix is all she has left, and her fate is in Smithy's hands as she believes that Smithy will have the money she needs for an abortion. While the admission of suicidal thoughts could be read as manipulation, I do not believe that is what is at work here; rather than manipulation, I think that Trix is simply up against an impossible situation within her gender role as a caretaker. She cannot be a single mother in her civilian life unless she was a widow mother of a war baby. As stated by Kingsbury, the support of a war baby and the implication of premarital sex “is not available to upper-middle-class women who are expected to know better, while at the same time making themselves available to officers who are going up the line, most likely to their deaths. Proper women are pure and don't become pregnant” (Kingsbury “Propaganda” 245); upper-middle class women were sent to war by their mothers who told them to come home with a prospective husband, an idea that was reinforced by the propaganda and government that told them to serve soldiers at all costs; regardless of the subtle sexual encouragement, their sexual relations with men was still grounds for dismissal and was to be kept under wraps. This bubble was burst when a woman was directly caught in the act, or began showing signs of having

participated. For Trix, a servant's war baby her mother could support, a bastard grandchild she could not; Smithy knows this and comments on her mother's opinion when she enlisted as a domestic worker for W.A.A.C., "And I've even heard some of them are immoral—babies and that kind of thing" (Price 211). She cannot be a "cast iron virgin" (Price 200) around the men she is taking care of or be in a sexually-open relationship around her peers and superiors. This, on top of the presumed trauma of being a W.A.A.C girl in France during the war led her to realize she has no option besides abortion, and that risking her life to have a secret operation was her only way to survive her circumstance. Smithy has had her own sexual encounters out of wedlock before her engagement, and hopefully asks the status of Trix's relationship with the baby's father; Trix responds, "'Marry me?' She cries defiantly. 'I don't know who it is; it might be any of three...'" (Price 198). Three is an astounding answer in its quantity, surprise, and in its solidification of the idea that their mother and the civilian society would never support this baby, as they might support Jessie's war baby. After Smithy agrees, "We cling together for a moment, desperately, as two terrified passengers on a sinking ship might cling—then part. She throws herself face downwards on the red velvet couch. Poor little sister. Poor little sister I would willingly die for. 'Oh, Cis, get it for me, save me....'" (Price 201). Smithy is "willing to die" for Trix and knows that she must reenlist in order to obtain money from their aunt. While the mothers of the caretakers in this text were militant, the act of a caretaker becoming a mother is shown through Trix as a risky, unacceptable shift in gender role expectations. To go from virgin, morally-upright caretaker to single, unwed mother is too big a swing to be accepted by the mothers of their generation.

Smithy had only been returned to France for two months when her sister died in an air-raid. Perhaps had Trix kept her pregnancy she would have never died in an air-raid; however, this is by no means a guarantee. With the loss of Trix, and ultimately the loss of Roy, Smithy loses both her sister and her own chance at motherhood. Motherhood is a negative thing for Trix, and a negative relationship in Smithy's life, but that did not stop her from originally wanting her own children; as the war progresses, Smithy's ideals surrounding marriage and motherhood for herself change. Smithy's friendships with Tosh and The Bug, as well as her engagement to Roy, all serve as examples to how relationships during the war altered the women's gender role.

CHAPTER IV

RELATIONSHIPS

While motherhood formed the primary gender role expectations for women before the war, the change in women's gender role can be seen through the relationships they formed in wartime. The relationships between superior and subordinate, fellow caretakers, and sexual or romantic partners all served to alter the expectations of behavior placed on women. When women left home for war service, they left their role as subordinates under their mothers; however, once they reached the front there was a new superior officer, and as seen with the character of Commandant in *Not So Quiet*, many women who served as superiors were as relentlessly militant as the mothers back home. This superior-subordinate relationship served to align the ambulanciers together, and in some circumstances was one aspect that led to the creation of a homosocial bond between the women. Outside of their work dynamic and their friendships, these women were also pressured to find husbands and pursue relationships. Relationships between caretakers and soldiers were prevalent during and after the war, and this romantic impact on the woman's gender role served to set women into a lifelong caretaking role upon return to civilian life.

Superior and Subordinate Relations

The role of the woman superior was filled in the home by mothers, and this leadership role was often filled by older women during the war. In *Not So Quiet*, the Commandant is in charge of the women ambulanciers and therefore sets the expectation of their behavior, as well as defining their gender role on the warfront. Commandant was in charge of enforcing the various regulations placed upon the women, such as their

uniform, schedule, and the boundaries of interaction between the women, as well as between the men and women. As the war progressed and the gender role of the women changed, this leadership position became seemingly more and more irrelevant as it constricted the women to behaviors that no longer suited their current surroundings; this led the subordinates to view the role of supervisor as having been filled by an egotistical, illogical woman.

The character of Commandant in *Not So Quiet* is described as a harsh, mean woman by the ambulanciers she supervises. Commandant emulates a masculine leadership style likely due to the complete lack of women in leadership at the time. With only male leaders in British society, such as the King, the heads of the military, and male surgeons as the leaders of medicine, the Commandant only has harsh masculine leadership models, which led to her villainization by the women. Tosh leads the other women into calling their superior all sorts of derogatory names, “‘Mrs. Bitch’ as Tosh has christened Commandant, is punishment mad” (Price 18). Tosh’s coining of “Mrs. Bitch” is what serves to solidify the Commandant as an uptight righteous pain in the side for the girls, “Tosh says Mrs. Bitch must give God the inferiority complex twice daily. He took seven days to make the world, according to Genesis. Mrs. Bitch could have done it in half the time” (Price 39). The presence of Mrs. Bitch allows for the stereotype of all women leaders in this wartime occupation to be seen in her actions; Smithy questions this appointment of older militant women as leaders, “Why is it that women in authority almost invariably fall victims to megalomania?” (Price 61). The authority Commandant was given by the government and VAD association is taken to an extreme through her actions, which serve to then define her as a megalomaniac. This “Bitch” role comes with

several qualifiers, such as the aggressive use of a police whistle, her disregard for the physical and mental health of her ambulanciers, as seen in her treatment of The Bug, and her lack of humanity, as seen when Smithy chronicles the Commandant's introduction to the new drivers in a dramatic format (Price 70-72). Smithy writes this imagined interaction in the form of a play to show its performative nature, "I know exactly what is going on. I know the scene and the dialogue word for word" (Price 70). This is not the first nor last time that this scenario will play out, with a new driver adopting the prescribed role as "The Fool" (Price 70), nor is it unique in its harshness. In this case, Commandant, who is a woman caretaker and ambulancier in her own right, becomes a symbol of otherness to her subordinates due to her role as leader. As the woman in charge, Commandant functions as an outsider and seems to the women to be unable to understand their position and the absurdity of her commands. In the mock play that Smithy writes the drivers are again assuming a gendered performance of "foolish" little women, as the Commandant plays the overly aggressive masculine role of leader:

The Fool: We came out to work, and we wouldn't shirk if we had the chance. It isn't a question of slacking. It's a question of competence. I don't feel competent to take an ambulance out in a snowstorm in the dark for the first time on these rough roads in a strange place I don't know. I don't think it's fair to the wounded men.

Commandant (*playing her trump card*): Oh! Perhaps you better go back to England then.

The Fool (*hastily*): Oh, no. Please! Its only because I haven't any idea what it means driving an ambulance of wounded in the dark....

Commandant (*sweetly*): Then you'll be able to tell us what it's like at midnight to-night (Price 71-72).

Classically, the role of a fool or jester was to point out the ridiculousness of the King, while also easing tension. The casting of a new driver as "The Fool" here echoes back to this dramatic role; the new driver is able to show the reader how disconnected from reality and overly focused on unsafe ideals the Commandant is, while also giving Smithy a break from the Commandant's targeting, if only for one brief evening.

Smithy goes on to compare the Commandant to a machine, "Like all efficient machines, she has no humanity [...] They say she is a married woman with daughters of her own, ... I cannot believe it. No women who has suffered the pangs of childbirth would have so little understanding of the pain in other women's daughters" (Price 49). The Commandant leads through a masculine authoritarian style, and the coining of her nickname as well as the disbelief at her own motherhood and marriage shows how the women have completely removed her from the women's gender role, and by doing so, see her as another cog in the masculine war machine. By choosing to look at her without sympathy or empathy, the women have stripped her of humanity and can only see her as machine-like due to her authority and actions. This is not to say that The Commandant's actions are justified; however, she is responsible for the lives and safety of hundreds of people, as well as the reputation of the women who completed war work; if their reputation had been tarnished by behavioral or aesthetic imperfections, they could all have had to return to the Homefront in social ruin. While the Commandant is seen as performing a masculine role within the text, her strict enforcement of pre-war gender roles fails to keep the girls safe or happy and also enforces a standard of behavior that

allows the women to continue working without fear of civilian repercussions. Even Commandant's later decision to send Skinny home for "disobeying orders" serves to hide the more disgraceful suspicion of homosexuality. This point is lost on Smithy and the women, who cope with the harshness of her command by hating her, as Smithy imagines killing her, "One of these days I will murder her slowly and reverently and very painfully. I will take lots of time over it - unless I meet her coming up the hill with dim lights, denoting an empty ambulance, in which case I will crash her bus head-on and take the risk of my own getting into the valley afterwards" (Price 39). Fantasy is a common coping mechanism for these girls; they fantasize about having a proper bath, falling in love, going home when the war ends, and in order to deal with the police whistle constantly waking them and alerting them to a new round or trauma, Smithy imagines killing Commandant.

While the opinion of the women on Commandant's caretaking is very telling, her treatment of the women also shows how this strict enforcement of their gender role was put into action. The first example of her pro-punishment style is introduced in her treatment of Smithy:

She recently distinguished herself by sending me out with a dustpan and small brush into the snow-covered path where the ambulances stand to sweep up the bits of paper, cigarette-ends, and rubbish that were lying in the snow. I had committed the awful offense of warming my hands near the canteen fire, because they were too frozen to clean my engine, and Commandant caught me. (Price 19)

The human act of warming one hands in winter is met with the ridiculous punishment of sweeping litter in the snow. Smithy was not slacking off, but rather trying to cope with

the conditions of her work, and when caught, she was forced back into the elements for even more exposure. While this sets the tone for the character of Commandant, it is the treatment of The Bug that truly villainizes her to the ambulanciers and the reader. After the headquarters hears complaints of how the women are being treated, Commandant holds a small meeting in which she asks for the women's thoughts on the complaints. She is clearly not asking in earnest, but rather to reassert her dominance by refuting and embarrassing whoever speaks out. This is when The Bug, who is slowly beginning to show signs of shellshock, speaks out; The Bug asks for a break in punishment duties and for the early roll call to be relaxed so that the divers who have worked through the night and into the morning can get some rest. The Bug is then met with excessive vengeful punishment, as Smithy describes:

So began the persecution of The Bug. She has averaged three hours sleep a day for the last three weeks and her body is not strong enough to stand the strain. [...] She scrubs and cleans and does Commandant's ambulance every day in addition to her own routine work, running unnecessary errands as well. (Price 134)

This excessive punishment is overkill in light of The Bug's comment and begins to rapidly destroy her mental health. When an air raid begins, The Bug breaks from reality and cannot stop screaming, and when the "all-clear" is announced, "Commandant swoops down on The Bug. Never had she witnessed such a disgraceful exhibition of cowardice on the part of an Englishwoman. The Bug stared at her, dazed, then quietly fainted dead away" (Price 138). These women are not in the trenches, but the Commandant treats them as if their service is worth their lives; ambulanciers were necessary and brave but should not be driven to madness or death for their work. The Bug is put back into duty, and even

given extra emergency duty. The role of these women was a sacrificial one for the country, and The Bug is certainly a sacrifice. She is found dead, smashed into a hillside on their route after she flees the camp, directly due to her exhaustion and shellshock.

Commandant has an extremely rigid pre-war view of the gender role these women are to fill; just like the militant mother on the Homefront, the Commandant expects the girls to sacrifice themselves for their country, while also staying perfectly polished and polite. Unlike the mothers at home, Commandant has the power to hold them to her expectation during the war, and her abuse of power and dominance over the women leads to the death of several, as well as the inhuman treatment of all. These women are volunteers, not soldiers; they were treated with the same expectations of the men in the trenches regardless.

Homosocial and Homosexual Relations

The superior-subordinate relationship is one venue for leadership in war, and friendship is another. The women who worked together in war had a homosocial¹ bond that helped them survive the trauma of their work. Within the homosocial group of the ambulanciers in *Not So Quiet*, Toshington is a woman whose pre-war status determines her natural leadership. It is also Tosh's strict stance against homosexuality that leads to the shunning and eventual discharge of Skinny, their fellow ambulancier.

Toshington, often shortened to Tosh, was the niece of an Earl and was raised in the upper socio-economic class. Being of elevated status before the war, she becomes the natural leader of the ambulanciers; she can speak and act out, as well as defy orders that

¹ Homosocial relationships are defined as a non-romantic deep love between two persons of the same gender. While this term is often reserved for male friendships, homosocial bonds were also formed between women.

the girls from lower classes would be sent home for. Tosh is larger than life to Smithy and shows herself to be a combination of the pre-war gendered expectations of women, as well as the more masculine and liberated post-war expectations. Tosh's physical features are described as a mix of the pre-war femininity and post-war freedom: "She has the hips of a matron—intensified by the four pairs of thick combinations she always wears for warmth, a mind like a sewer, (her own definition), the courage of a giant, the vocabulary of a Smithfield butcher, and the round, wind-reddened face of a dairymaid" (Price 11). Tosh embodies the contradictions in the women's gender role; she is matronly, with an innocent round face, but also has the tough aggressive nature required to be an ambulancier; Smithy consistently notes her beauty throughout the novel, while also describing her as having masculine features and attitude. She is both a volunteer for and outspoken critic against the war; upon first meeting Smithy, she discusses their similarly naive patriotic families in order to calm Smithy down, "And the admiring family at home who are basking in your reflected glory? 'My girl's doing her bit-driving an ambulance very near the line.' She laughed again. 'Will they let you off, Smithy? Not likely'" (Price 12-13). By understanding the pressure of the families back home, Tosh is able to remind Smithy of why they are both in this mess; they must impress and improve their reputations for their families and potential matrimonial matches.

Tosh is not afraid to step outside of her pre-war gender role, which prompts the other women to do the same. At the start of *Not So Quiet*, Tosh cuts her hair short, a move that the other women comment on, "'You look like a Shakespearean page, or a Rosalind,' continues Skinny... 'Something fascinatingly boyish,' says Skinny. Tosh swings around, 'Boyish my bottom,' she snaps" (Price 22); later in the novel, Smithy

follows suit in cutting her hair. Tosh also uses blasphemous or foul language, such as using sexual phrases with the other girls, ““Out of it, *mes petites harlots*’, says Tosh. We scrambled from our flea-bags” (Price 35), and often curses, something that Smithy slowly adopts as well. Tosh even creates a vulgar war alphabet; “B for Bastard - obsolete term meaning war-baby.... I for Illegitimate - (see B) V for Virgin - a term of reproach (ask any second loot)” (Price 160), which encapsulates both her ability to speak against the war and her understanding of the changes to her gender role through her address of “unladylike” things as sex and children out of wedlock. Tosh also demonstrates how she is stepping outside of her gender role when she humorously translates the German comments for Smithy when they attend a POW camp’s concert: “Most of them would have condescended to sleep with us, however, in lieu of anything more exciting, Tosh translated” (Price 143). By addressing the men’s sexual desire of Tosh and Smithy, Tosh is stepping outside of the women’s gender role by exposing Smithy to the behavior of speaking sexually about men who are physically present. Tosh is able to step outside of her gender role because of her elevated standing; she is above Commandant in social rank and is therefore unlikely to be sent home; this is also why her opinion holds such sway with the girls and Commandant.

Tosh’s defiance of her gender role along with her genuine care of the women and their wellbeing showed her to be a natural leader that fostered a homosocial bond. The Bug, Smithy and Tosh are three women bound in a homosocial friendship that goes beyond the simple friendship shared by the ambulanciers because the three women resist their gender role expectations. They came from different backgrounds; Tosh came from upper class nobility; Smithy came from a middle-class family trying to break into the

upper class; The Bug's pre-war life is a mystery to the entire camp; and yet these women are united by their resistance of their gender role through their rejection of Homefront militant ideals and Commandant's expectations for their behavior. These three women are understanding of each other's social cues and subversive jokes, such as their comments about the women excluded from their homosocial group (B.F., Skinny and Commandant), as well as their concern for each other. Just as the "brotherhood" bonds of battle for soldiers create homosocial relationships, the ambulancier women were bound in social expectations and trauma and find their own homosocial "sisters." Tosh proves her homosocial sisterhood through her arguments with Commandant over the treatment of the shellshocked Bug, as well as her leading the search when The Bug goes missing, "As we circle the convoy on Tosh's ambulance Commandant's comes out. 'What does this mean, Toshington?' 'Go to hell,' says Tosh" (Price 149). Tosh openly defies the orders of Commandant by riding around in her ambulance looking for The Bug, as well as cursing at her superior officer. Smithy shows her sisterhood through looking for The Bug, as well as holding Tosh in her arms when she dies, "Tosh lying there helpless, big brave Tosh with her head hanging childishly on one side... Tosh hit by a splinter of bomb dropped by a man who didn't know her, who had no grudge...." (Price 159). It is Tosh's and The Bug's surprising and senseless deaths that rattle Smithy enough for her to be sent home, out of service.

When male wartime homosocial relationships are analyzed, the main emphasis is placed on the traumatizing environment in which these bonds are formed. When we talk about soldiers and the bond of brotherhood, we talk about the loss of life, traumatic injuries, and the horrors of war that they see as having bonded them together. The idea of

homosocial relationships are overlooked in female friendships because they are not seen as having the same level of trauma. As seen in Figure 9, women buried women; women buried their friends; women watched hundreds of gravely maimed men and women alike suffer and die. Figure 9 is a watercolor painting of two VAD women loading a deceased civilian into a waiting ambulance after the Battle of Somme, one of the deadliest battles in WWI. In the background and foreground are several crosses where other fallen soldiers, VAD women and civilians have been buried. This image illustrates the harsh

reality of these women and serves to bring to light the fact that women who served on the Front had traumatic experiences like that of the soldiers, and through their exposure, they established the same homosocial bonds that are more commonly associated with male soldiers. The idea of brotherhood between men who

Figure 9. Olive Mudie-Cooke's *After the War: A VAD Ambulance Bringing in French Peasants Wounded by Shells Left on the Somme Battlefield*. © Imperial War Museums (Art Collection).

experience trauma during war time and form homosocial bonds is a socially accepted idea; however, this concept is often not extended to women, who also form homosocial bonds through wartime trauma with other women, as is the case in in *Not So Quiet*.

The bond between Smithy, Tosh and The Bug was stronger than a simple wartime friendship. The other ambulanciers, Skinny, Etta Potato and the B.F., do not share the same spotlight within the novel because they accept the normative gender expectations

for women in the war. These women do not alter their wartime behavior, but instead align with their pre-war gender role; Skinny follows any and all orders, as does Etta Potato. The B.F. does break slightly from the pre-war gender role when she pursues sexual relationships out of wedlock, but she justifies that behavior as “doing her bit,” and as an attempt to reach her ultimate pre-war gender role expectation—finding a good husband to have children with. Smithy did not share a homosocial sisterhood with all of her fellow ambulanciers the way she did with The Bug and Tosh because those two women had a shared, fundamental understanding of the futility of both the war and the confines of their gender.

While homosocial bonds were built amongst the women, homosexuality was still seen as both a crime and as immoral behavior. Homophobia was and is very real; however, the idea that a woman could be sexually attracted to, or in a romantic relationship with, another woman was still approached with the views established in the 19th century. In *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990*, Kent states that

Lesbianism was not only ignored in the 19th century, it was actively denied, despite the fact that romantic friendships of great intensity flourished between women. Victorians tolerated and even encouraged these passionate friendships between women, confident that they could only be innocent, pure relationships that were wholly compatible with heterosexual marriage. They did not entertain the possibility that these might contain a sexual component, for the dominant beliefs defined women as without passion. (248)

Women who were exceptionally close were seen as “good friends,” simply because the concept of homosexuality, as well as the idea of a passionate, sexual woman, was so

outlandish at the time. As homosexuality became a more recognized category of sexual identity to the public during and after the war, a vicious homophobia also spread out of fear of the “single woman,” as Kent explains, “the existence of large numbers of single women with jobs seems to have excited the popular imagination with anxieties about widespread ‘perversion’” (248). As we still see today, certain identifying traits are seen as indicators of sexuality, regardless of accuracy. Throughout *Not So Quiet*, the tension between Skinny and Tosh builds as Tosh isolates Skinny, who she suspects of being a lesbian. When Tosh cuts her hair in the start of the novel, Skinny makes the comment, “‘Something fascinatingly boyish’, says Skinny” (Price 22). As we do not know Skinny or Tosh’s suspicions, this can be easily written off; however, in light of Tosh’s later actions, we can see the significance of this comment. Short hair was aligned with the feminist movement of the time, which in turn was seen as a lesbian or immoral movement by much of the public. When Skinny refers to Tosh as Rosalind² and as boyish, she is pointing at an obvious insecurity; it poses the question, does Tosh’s hair indicate she is a lesbian? While we know it does not, Tosh’s response certainly shows her offense to the implication, “‘I hate being lousy; I don’t care a curse what I look like’” (Price 22). Tosh’s statement is to Skinny but announced to the group as a whole; her focus on the rational motivation of wanting to be rid of lice, while also announcing to the group that Skinny’s implication is incorrect and Tosh is unfazed by the Rosalind comment shows her clear discomfort with the homosexual implication. This rivalry and animosity only progress over time.

² Referring to Shakespeare’s Rosalind from *As You Like It*, a famously “masculine” character who acts as a man for the majority of the play.

Things come to a head in the homophobic exclusion of Skinny when the B.F. has her going away party, and Tosh refuses to listen to Skinny's speech. Skinny begins to scream and declares to the girls, "'She thinks I'm a something'" (Price 111). The word lesbian is so insulting that it is never actually used by any of the characters. The fear of being seen or suspected of homosexuality is so strong that all of the girls talk around it, rather than speak about it directly. The girls know this, and as Smithy observes, "She begins to sob again, long, frenzied, drawn-out sobs. Tosh goes on smoking. The Bug and I avoid each other's glance elaborately" (Price 112). The homosocial in-group of women are in on Tosh's suspicion about Skinny's homosexuality and "avoid each other's glance" in a passive confirmation of their agreement. This sends Skinny over the edge, and she flies into a rage. Skinny begins to beat Tosh in the head, and Smithy states that Skinny "uses vile language, not like Tosh's good-natured swear-words that always sound characteristic of Tosh and therefore exactly 'right,' but low, shameful, foul somehow" (Price 113). Smithy does not list any of the language, but it probably does not matter; Skinny's suspected homosexuality classifies her as immoral, and her use of foul language is seen as foul because she deviates from the heteronormative sexual identity. In Jane Marcus's "Afterword" to the novel, she states that because a protentional lesbian is mixed in with the group, all of the women's reputations are at risk, "The drivers are polluted in their role as charwomen of the battlefield, and they sacrifice Skinny to purify themselves. This 'purity' is not virginity but the flaunting of credentials of heterosexual experience" (287). The purity of the ambulanciers requires the sacrifice of Skinny, so that perceived perversion can be cast out from the company. Tosh, as the upper-class straight woman, can do no wrong; the same actions when committed by Skinny are immoral and grounds

for a discharge from the company; Tosh may bend the rules and step outside of her gender role, but Skinny is in open defiance of her gender role and therefore ineligible for sympathy or acceptance among the women. The ambulanciers are allowed to step outside of their pre-war gender roles in order to complete their work; this is seen in their uniforms, interaction with men and other socioeconomic classes, and their behaviors over time, all of which could be construed as “masculine” by civilians. As stated by Albrinck, “‘Masculine’ appearance and behavior were also worrisome to the civilian population in that they were linked to lesbianism. Clearly, this concern is related to heterosexual policies of repopulation—if women turned to lesbianism, the nation would not be able to keep its army stocked. Such women were therefore seen as anti-patriotic, since women’s ‘first duty’ was to procreate” (Albrinck 273). The risk of being seen as or accused of homosexuality could have ruined the lives of every woman in the camp, and so the tensions rise as the accusations come to light. After all the women from the party are questioned by the Commandant, Skinny is sent home in under the guise of having disobeyed orders, and Tosh tells Smithy:

“I’ve always loathed that girl, and I let out at her just because I loathed her. Her morals don’t affect me one way or another. You couldn’t shock me if you tried. I should have shut my mouth; none of my business at all. [...] Remember old Thrumms? Pushed home at two hours notice for being caught in an ambulance with a man? The man wasn’t pushed home, of course, but the row - remember it? Well, that would be a gentle ruffle of winds compared to this one.” (Price 125)

This confirms that sexuality is a moral issue here, in a time when the gender role of women reinforced the idea in women that they had to be saintly and chaste. These women

know better than anyone the greyness of morality; Smithy makes several comments on the immoral actions of the war justified through false morality, and she herself begins to have sexual relations outside of wedlock, but homosexuality is against one of the main tenets of the women's gender role of the time. When women are supposed to serve, support, marry and produce children with men, a lesbian is viewed as completely outside of her gender role by ignoring those social expectations. Tosh even comments on a woman sent home for promiscuity with a man, stating that that would be small potatoes in comparison to being discharged due to suspected homosexuality.

Heterosexual Relations

While homosexuality was outside of the gender role expectations for women during the war, heterosexual relations leading to marriage were encouraged as one of a woman's main purposes within her gender role. A romantic relationship between a man and woman, and more importantly between a woman and soldier, was such a crucial expectation within the women's gender role during the war that it served to explain extreme behavior, as in Borden's short story "Rosa."

"Rosa" follows the admittance, treatment, and death of a soldier who shot himself in attempted suicide while in the trenches. While one focus of the story is the debate between allowing the soldier to die or saving him so that he can be punished via firing squad, the nurse narrator's interpretation of the soldier's actions show the importance of heterosexual relationships within a woman's gender role. The narrator in "Rosa" is still performing within her role as a Madonna Nurse, as defined in Chapter Two of this thesis, and is immediately drawn to this soldier because of her fulfillment of that role, stating, "I was appalled by his immense helplessness" (Borden "Rosa" 66). The soldier shot himself

through the roof of his mouth and survived both the initial injury and the surgery that removed the bullet from his brain. Upon admittance to the hospital, the surgeon informs the narrator that his injury was self-inflicted, presumably out of cowardice while in the trenches. The narrator cannot accept that a man would commit suicide out of cowardice and begins to try and excuse his behavior, stating, ““You've made a mistake. It wasn't fear. It was something else. He had a reason, a secret. It's locked there in his chest. Leave him alone with it”” (Borden “Rosa” 66). As she defends him, he cries out, “I heard a thin soft anguished voice cry as if from a great distance, ‘Rosa, Rosa!’ It came from his chest” (Borden “Rosa” 66). This outburst adds to the narrator’s theory that he could not have broken from his gender role of a courageous soldier, but rather shot himself as a way to end heartbreak, as she then describes, “A hollow, heartbroken voice, issuing from his blind unconscious mouth, in a long cry, ‘Rosa, Rosa!’” (Borden “Rosa” 66). The narrator then makes the assumption that “Rosa” is a woman he was in love with and that something must have happened to her.

The nurse’s theory that Rosa was involved in a failed relationship with the soldier confirms the utmost importance that a sexual and romantic relationship with men held within the women’s gender role. These caretakers were expected to sacrifice themselves for the men, including sacrificing the reputation of their character through premarital sex. The expectation to serve as a sacrifice to please men and take care of them is present here in the narrator’s work as a nurse, as well as her assumption that “Rosa” must be a lover who failed the wounded soldier. She cannot face the idea of his cowardice and instead blames another woman, and her failure to fulfill the role of romantic partner, for this soldier’s suicide attempt. The persistent manner in which she fights against this man

being a coward continues throughout the night, when she checks on him, “I went again and again in the night to see if, happily, he were dead; [...] and once I thought I heard sighing on his shrouded lips the name of a woman—Rosa” (Borden “Rosa” 67). This Rosa-woman could be the reason he tried to kill himself, a mystery that perplexes the narrator, “Who are you? I wondered, and who is Rosa? And what can I do? How can I help you? And I stood there waiting, miserably spellbound by the patient brute who at last turned on me from his cavernous eyes a look of complete understanding” (Borden “Rosa” 67). She sees this soldier as a “brute” and refers to him anatomically, but still makes the leap in logic that Rosa is a lover. Rosa could be his daughter, or mother, the beginning of a message for a fellow soldier, or the name of his hometown, or even a code word for a mission. She ultimately decides “That he had been kept waiting too long had shot himself in despair because the Germans wouldn’t shoot him; a woman called Rosa let him down, or perhaps she died. Perhaps he simply wanted to go to her. ‘He must have had a letter in the trenches—a letter from Rosa or about her’” (Borden “Rosa” 68); this scenario reinforces the importance of the heterosexual relationship expectation of women to the narrator, as she is focused on the failure of a woman to fulfill this role as the only reason that a man would step out of his gender role. The narrator refuses to interact with him directly or learn his name; instead, she instructs the nurses to allow him to remove his head bandage, so that he would catch an infection and die before being taken to the firing squad. The narrator’s decision to allow the man to end his life shows sympathy on the side of the narrator, who excuses the soldier’s failure to fulfill his gender role by keeping him from the firing squad. In this way, the narrator is sacrificing herself and her

reputation by aiding in his death, so that he would never officially ruin his reputation by facing the firing squad.

The importance of the romantic, sexual relationship between caretaking women and soldiers in defining the woman's gender role is also shown through Smithy's escalating sexual behavior in *Not So Quiet*. As discussed earlier, Tosh is a leader to Smithy, and Tosh's ability to step outside of her gender role directly influenced Smithy and showed Smithy that she can alter her behavior outside of her mother's expectations. Before the war, Smithy followed the societal norms in terms of romance; she was taught to pursue a life in which she married, produced children, and stayed in a home that was purchased with her husband's money, as she of course would be a stay-at-home mother. At the beginning of the novel, we are given snippets of Smithy's childhood; these memories show that her mother raised her with those ideas of success. Smithy states, "I am the nondescript daughter of a nondescript father who made money, sold his business, retired, and is spending the rest of his life in a big house on Wimbledon Common" (Price 23); and this is exactly the life that she is expected to model her own after. As the war continues and Smithy begins to see the trauma of warfare, she realizes that the generation of men that she would consider eligible for marriage will be entirely unlike the generations that came before them; the soldiers who fought in the war would turn into the husbands of her society, and these husbands would carry with them their physical injuries and the tragedy of what they endured. Smithy begins to have her own nightmares, and she realizes that she wants to marry someone who is not exposed to the war to the extent that she was: "When I marry it will be someone whose straightness and strength will erase from my mind these mangled things I drive night after night" (Price 57); the

mangled things she refers to are a nightly progression of all of the dead soldiers she has seen on duty. At the beginning of her service, Smithy still sees her life at the end of the war as containing a house, husband, and children, all of which would erase what she was doing as an ambulancier. This mentality changes as she develops homosocial bonds while the war progresses.

As Smithy spends more and more time with Tosh, she realizes that some of the gendered expectations placed on her are irrelevant in her current lifestyle. The straight-laced ideology of the Homefront clashes with life on the frontlines; at home, a woman is in need of a husband, but on the warfront, that woman could die at any moment. In a streak of rebellion, Smithy follows Tosh to the POW camp and is introduced to Captain Baynton, who kisses her as they walk back towards the girls' camp. At first, Smithy is angry at his improper advances, to which he responds, "Have a heart, old dear, I'm going up the line to-morrow. I'll probably be dead mutton before I get a chance to kiss another girl" (Price 145). This line of reasoning exposes how poorly the pre-war gender roles functioned in wartime. While defending their country, the men and women who served were giving up their lives; not only were they giving up the time they would have used to find spouses and start families, but they may never live long enough to make it back and start that search. The idea that Baynton may die tomorrow is a shocking one for Smithy, not just because he could die, but because she is in the same boat. If Baynton were to die the next day, no one would know she had kissed him, or him her; wartime has given both men and women a reason to commit little indiscretions. Realizing this, Smithy makes an active decision to begin to step outside of her gender role, saying,

So I let him kiss me again. I have never looked at it in that light before. 'I wish we could spend the night together,' he whispered just before we parted. I was just about to ask if he thought the remark worthy of a gentleman when it struck me as being silly. Silly to accuse a man of being ungentlemanly when he was practically sentenced to death. Instead I kissed him of my own free will. (Price 145)

The absurdity of refusing to enjoy life to please her mother back home has given Smithy a chance to enjoy her own decisions. Upon returning to their camp, Smithy thinks more of Baynton, and of Roy, her childhood friend and neighbor. The reader gets to witness Smithy's abandonment of the gender expectations for women:

Oh, damn, why not? Why not? Why not get something out of life before... You, Nellie Smith, a virgin, thinking these things, after the sheltered way you've been brought up, after... If there had been a chance would you?... I don't know, I don't know - I might be dead and buried tomorrow, killed in an air-raid, smashed up in an ambulance, anything [...] Oh damn, what does virtue matter - a little thing like chastity? (Price 146-147)

Smithy originally rejects the idea of this romantic sexual freedom with "a virgin, thinking these things, after the sheltered way you've been brought up, after... If there had been a chance would you?", but like Baynton had said, they could die any day. Smithy's resolution is ultimately, "what does virtue matter," and with this abandonment of her gender role, she decides to cut off her hair, following in Tosh's more independent footsteps. Smithy ultimately answers her question of the importance of chastity when she meets Robin.

After the deaths of Tosh and The Bug, Smithy is sent home and travels back to England, where she meets Robin, a new soldier headed to France for his first deployment at the front. After the death of her two closest friends, Smithy is done with the war and the things that remind her of the front, including the ghosts of dead soldiers that parade through her nightmares; Robin's youth and his lack of war experience gives Smithy a glimmer of relief,

He is clean and young and straight and far removed from the shadow procession I watch night after night, the procession that came to me early this morning and wakened me shrieking in the presence of a compartment full of shocked strangers. He is so gay, so full of life, this boy who is holding me closely in his arms... He could never join that ghostly parade. (Price 171)

The men who have seen battle are no longer "full of life," and Robin is like a vision from her life pre-war, when soldiers were handsome and whole. As they dance, Smithy decides to have sex with Robin; he flirts with her and tries to lure her into sex, something she notices and overlooks, choosing instead to actively allow herself to be seduced,

But it was not only because he was whole and strong-limbed, not only because his body was young and beautiful, not only because his laughing blue eyes reflected my image without the shadow of war rising to block me out... But because I saw him between me and the dance orchestra ending the shadow progression of cruelly maimed men. (Price 174)

Robin is a blank slate for Smithy, and her brief relationship with him serves as a transformation. She cannot be involved in the war after the loss of Tosh and The Bug, but she is not ready to return to Wimbledon Common and her militant mother. She uses

Robin as a transition in her relationships with men; men on the front are damaged and living for today, like Captain Baynton, while men at home are living for building a future untouched by the trauma of war service. Smithy exists somewhere in between these two types of men. She is emotionally wrecked by the loss of her friends and unable to swing fully back to life on the Homefront and its pre-war gendered expectations. Robin serves as a perfect transition; she is able to sleep with a soldier and leave that life behind her without adding him to the crowd of maimed soldiers' faces in her mind; Robin allows her to leave the trauma of France and the changes to her gender role behind her as she attempts to rejoin civilian life and civilian gendered expectations. Robin's acceptance of her short hair, dirty uniform and depression allows her to accept them herself before facing her family back home.

Back home, Smithy encounters Roy and enters into a new type of relationship, one that has a future after the war. With Baynton and Robin, the physical and emotional connection was fleeting and served its short-lived purpose. Once back on the Homefront, Smithy must conform to the pre-war gender role of women; she must find a husband and produce children in order to fulfill the expectations placed upon her by her mother and society. Roy is a perfect solution to her new role; he is a soldier who understands what she has been through, while simultaneously understanding what is expected of them and the life they are supposed to build once the war is over. On their first date, they decide to become engaged, and Roy fantasizes their future for Smithy, "my head tucks into his khaki shoulder as he paints our peaceful future when this mess of a war has been cleared up. A little cottage in the country somewhere – an old-fashioned oak-beamed affair brought up-to-date; a crazy pavement leading to the little green front door" (Price 191-

192). This fantasy follows the pre-war gender roles closely; the house with the garden and lawn, their future children and married life all laid out as if the war had never happened; this return to normalcy gives Smithy a temporary relief from her grief, and she states, "oh, the fun and peace and cleanliness of the life we planned after the war, Roy and I. Oh, the sweetness of the playmate I have surprisingly found I love" (Price 193). Smithy allows herself to imagine a life that will begin when the war is over for Roy, as it is for her; this fantasy dies as soon as she realizes that she must re-enlist, "I should have known. There is no lasting happiness for the stricken decoration of mine. Happiness past for the old ones, happiness to come for the young ones, but nothing for the race apart from whom youth has been snatched before it learned to play at youth" (Price 203). The happiness she derived from plans with Roy dissipates as she again puts herself into harm's way; now she is back to living one day at a time, without a future. When Roy is injured, Smithy reveals the new gender role for women post-war: the permanent caretaker.

Before the war, women were encouraged to stay home and keep the house, to marry and have children young, and to socialize with other women. During the war, women who served as caretakers witnessed firsthand the change in their gender role, as they began to socialize with men, to be around the male body in a public setting; the expectations of chastity changed and loosened, and the expectations of having children and a spouse while young also changed, as men and women put those milestones on hold to serve in the war effort. Women who served in caretaking had a unique glimpse into the future. They understood that they were a sacrifice for the man, in both the war's need for workers, as well as the societal expectation that women must behave in ways that pleased

men and made the lives of soldiers more pleasant in any way possible, but women caretakers during the war saw the carnage done to the men firsthand, and in seeing it, understood that the men of their generation would never be like their fathers. These men would need to be taken care of for their entire lives, as the cost of the happiness or individuality of whatever woman was married to them. Roy was badly injured, and wrote to Smithy,

Mother will have told you about my eyes and my leg, but there's something she hasn't told you because she doesn't know. There will never be any perambulator on that lawn of ours, Nell. Do you understand? I couldn't expect you to marry me. You're brick enough to stand the blindness and the limp, but the other is too much to ask any woman. So I release you from your promise. (Price 231)

As a caretaker for two terms of service during the War, Smithy understands her new role and falls in line with Roy's new needs. She writes to say that she never really wanted children and did not care about the rest. The fantasy they constructed is easily dismissed so that Smithy can commit to her new gender role: caretaking wife of an injured veteran. Smithy herself is an injured veteran of this war, but her shellshock is overlooked as she was not a soldier. We see the decline in her ability to connect emotionally as the novel begins to conclude, "I have no love or hate for anyone. Long ago I ceased to love Roy; long ago I ceased to hate my mother. Both processes were gradual. I'm content to drift along in the present. The past is gone; I have no future... I want no future" (Price 217). As someone who has seen all of her friends and her sister die and knows that her future is to be one spent with someone whose presence will always be a reminder of what they survived, Smithy has no real hope for a happy future. The novel concludes with the

statement, “Her soul died under a radiant silver moon [...] Her face held an expression of resignation, as though she had ceased to hope that the end might come” (Price 239).

Smithy out lives everyone she loves and survives the war, but her soul was lost in the sacrifice all the same.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Before the war, British women were expected to fulfill their gender role by becoming wives and mothers; they socialized with other women and followed the lead of men. They could not vote, were frowned upon for working outside of the home, and seldom owned their own property. Motherhood was the ultimate achievement of a woman's life, and premarital sex was demonized. As World War One progressed and the need for soldiers grew, the government had no choice but to allow women to engage in war work and support the war effort; as the war continued to grow in size, the British government went from wanting women to support the war, to actively needing more women to join in war work to free up men for the frontlines. Propaganda illustrated the societal expectations on women's new gender role. The men's needs had changed, and the gender role of women changed with it. Women were able to work in employment fields that they were turned away from before the war, such as munitions and driving, and they were able to work in careers, such as nurse and nurse's aide, without any fear of being seen as failing in their socio-economic roles by working outside of the home. Women were encouraged by soldiers to engage in relationships and could do so without major repercussions, as war babies were accepted into society along with their mothers. The constricting gender roles women had fulfilled for generations had loosened. These new freedoms for women were won at the cost of enduring trauma and only justified as the women were still existing in a caretaking role that was dependent on fulfilling the needs of men. When the war ended, it was time to go home; and now the home was filled with thousands of wounded men who needed to be taken care of.

The pressure to return to normalcy, in which women would completely revert back to their pre-war gender role was overwhelming. Women were once again told that they must derive meaning from life by finding husbands and raising children. They were removed from the workforce so that men could claim their jobs, jobs that these women had been mastering for multiple years. Not only were they removed from their work and told to revalue themselves as wives and mothers, they were now also placed into the position of permanent caretaker. The small freedoms they had during the war were reversed once the needs of men changed. Women were now expected to be proud of their marriage to disabled veterans because they were showing that they were still sacrificing themselves for the country; there was no room to worry about how women were treated or the happiness of women, as they were to be focused on sacrificing their happiness in order to take care of men who were physically and psychologically wounded by the war. As much as society pressured women back into a pre-war gender role with this new addition of permanent caretaking, this did not change the fact that women had survived the war, just as men had. The war transformed the gender role of women, and the pre-war gender role was too small a box that post-war society was trying to shove women back into, but they just could no longer fit. The New Woman, a woman who valued independence socially and financially, who valued her own appearance for herself and not just to attract a husband, and who was able to begin participating in her own government through voting had the strength to question the drive to return to pre-war gender roles.

Post-War Gender Role Reversion

Mary Borden's story "The Beach" encapsulates the post-war gender-role for women beautifully; women were to accept husbands or romantic partners at any cost and love them despite their behaviors. As seen with Smithy and Roy in *Not So Quiet*, being married to a disabled veteran was only discussed in terms of pride and duty, which disallowed women to discuss how physical and psychological trauma often lead to unhappy or abusive marriages. After the war, women were expected to overlook their own needs and the changes that took place in their gender role during the war in order to revert back to pre-war civilian gender norms and permanently become caretakers for their veteran husbands.

The narrator of "The Beach" is a woman who is described as young and beautiful; however, unlike Borden's other narrators, she is not a nurse and talking about the war unsettles her; her male companion goes into an extended metaphor wherein he describes the large hospital at one end of the beach as a casino, "That's a casino over there, that big thing; that's not empty, that's crowded, but I don't advise you go there. I don't think you'd like it. It's not your kind of crowd. It's all right for me, but not for you" (Borden 35). The man believes her to be unable to cope with the horrors of the hospital, but as an amputee and veteran, he sees himself as just one of many maimed men. In her reluctance to discuss trauma and difficult topics, Borden's narrator symbolizes every woman after the war; when women returned to the Homefront, they were expected to continue behaving as they had before they left, placing an emphasis on the home, marriage, and children. Society disallowed for any conversations in which women could discuss trauma with men or discuss their own trauma with anyone. The focus was to be put on the happy day

ahead, and we see this with the man's expectation of the narrator, as well as her own internal dialogue. In her opening to the story, the narrator thinks to herself: "The beach is perfect, the sun is perfect, the sea is perfect. How pretty the little waves are, curling up the beach. They are perfectly lovely. [...] it is good to be alive. It is good to be young.' but she could not say this aloud" (Borden 33). She cannot say it out loud because she understands that she cannot genuinely talk about the joys of being alive and young with her traumatized companion. Her focus on the perfection of the beach also shows how women were immediately expected to overlook the wreckage of war; it is her male companion who notices the still occupied hospital at one end, the warships still out at sea, and the abandoned, bombed out villas along the shore. The symbolism in her question to the man shows the difference between her youthful curiosity and his morbid mentality: "How many snails have left their shells behind them, do you think, to make all this fine powdery sand? A million billion?" She let the sand run through her strong white fingers and smiled" (Borden 33). The snails who left their comfort behind them in order to create the current landscape is striking in its symbolism; how many men left their homes in order to build this post-war world? She gets to ask this question, with her "strong white fingers," while the veteran sits in discomfort on the sand. The narrator represents the post-war expectation of women to keep things light and happy in order to avoid discussion of upsetting things like the war; but she also fails to do so because this expectation of women is fundamentally flawed. The women lived through this war just as the men did, and youthful naivety cannot be created overnight to soothe the hearts and minds of men.

We know that her focus on the positive is an act through her internal dialogue and her questioning of her relationship: “She searched his features, trying to find his old face, the one she knew, trying to work a magic on him, remove and replace the sunken eyes, the pinched nose, the bloodless wry mouth. ‘He's not a stranger,’ she said to herself. ‘He’s not’” (Price 33-34). Both the man and the woman have been fundamentally changed by the war, but only the woman is expected to seamlessly revert back to her pre-war role. The man reinforces this idea with his internal dialogue, “He was thinking, ‘What will become of us? She is young and healthy. She is as beautiful as a child. What shall we do about it?’ And looking into her eyes he saw the same question, ‘What shall we do?’ and looked quickly away again. So did she” (Price 34). He sees her lack of frontline experience as “youth,” and this in turn makes her “as beautiful as a child” in comparison to his “sunken eyes” and “wry mouth”; he cannot see past his own experience enough to understand that she has also lived through this nightmare. Both the man and woman question their future, but for different reasons. The man wants to focus on the war and the trauma he endured, while still requiring her to act as if nothing has happened, and so he berates her. As she sits and focuses on the beach rather than the horrible things he is saying, he judges her reaction:

He loved her. He hated her. He was afraid of her. He did not want her to be kind to him. He could never touch her again and he was tied to her. He was rotting and he was tied to her perfection. He had no power over her any more but the power of infecting her with his corruption. He can never make her happy. He can only make her suffer. His one luxury was jealousy of her perfection, and his one

delight would be to give in to the temptation to make her suffer. He can only reach her that way. It would be his revenge on the war (Borden 36)

Through his internal dialogue we get to see what he thinks the woman is, rather than the reality of who she is. The power dynamic between the gender roles of men and women are illustrated in who the man thinks she is: “He was rotting and he was tied to her perfection. He had no power over her anymore”; the post-war gender role of women was built on beauty and health, and so the reality of this woman is overlooked by focusing on her “perfection” in comparison to his “rotting”; furthermore, the need for the man to be stronger and hold more power over the woman shows how her role is built out of his needs. He needs to be strong and in control, and so her role is to be weak and controllable; his injuries show how he is physically not as strong as her, and so she is the one not fulfilling her role as the weaker, softer sex. He understands that he can “never make her happy. He can only make her suffer,” and this understanding shows the reality of their relationship in the post-war world; however, he knows that she cannot step outside of her gender role and leave him, and so he chooses to make her suffer as “revenge on the war,” and with his revenge he is able to remain in control. The role of women was one of sacrifice, women were meant to be “loosing children, nurturing the wounded, and being protected” (Albrinck 272); in this way women became a main reason that men went to war, and so they were to blame. The negative aspects of the war were feminized, and the positive reasons for going war were directly tied to protecting and saving women; this allowed for the misinterpretation and blaming of men’s suffering on women.

Women saw small freedoms in the changes to their gender role during the war; the acceptance of war babies and the loosening of the immoral connotation of pre-marital sex, as well as gains in suffrage and the opportunities for women to work and earn their own money without social repercussions allowed women to shed their pre-war gender role and become the New Woman. This New Woman was independent and intelligent in ways that men were no longer able to belittle or overlook. The narrator in "The Beach" shows a glimmer of this in her questioning of her future and her options: "She looked at him. 'I love him,' she said to herself. 'I love him,' she repeated. 'But can I go on loving him?' She whispered. 'Can I? I must.' She said, 'I must love him, now more than ever, but where is he?'" (Borden 36-37). While the man assumes she will stay with him and "suffer" to fulfill her post-war gender role of permanent caretaker, the narrator shows how unfulfilling that reversion to the gendered expectation of marriage and motherhood as the primary goals in life will be to women. This New Woman questions her options, "'But can I go on loving him?'" and realizes that the man she loved before the war is not the man beside her today, "'but where is he?"; just as she is not the same woman she was at the start of the war. Ultimately, "The Beach" ends without resolution; we do not know the fate of this man and woman or if they will stay together. Borden leaves their relationship unresolved on the beach, which only strengthens the message of the story; women cannot go back to pre-war gender roles and will question the expectations that society places on them, now more than ever.

Looking Forward

While this thesis addresses the change in women's gender role for those who served as caretakers in WWI, there are several important ways that this research could be

expanded. First and foremost, WWI was a global conflict that led to global changes in women's gender roles, and this research should be expanded to include works by other women authors about the women's experience on a global scale. Women from France, Italy, India, Africa, Ireland, Canada, Australia and more all experienced this war on some level and in that experience faced changes to their societal norms and their gender role. Secondly, it is important to evaluate women characters based on the real circumstances that women went through during the war. Many male authors are beloved for their depictions of WWI, and their stories include women; however, we have historically looked at the women characters through the male lens, and this erases the reality of their experiences from the work. A third avenue for future research would be to analyze other depictions of ambulanciers and nurses, and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* is a seamless extension of the themes discussed here with the characters of Catherine Barkley, a British nurse, and Fredric Henry, an American ambulancier. While Hemingway is American, the similarities are striking, and the character of Catherine Barkley is often analyzed through the male gaze; this research would allow for an analysis of her character to be focused on the woman's experience and allow the reader to view her actions through her own motivations, rather than Fredric Henry's opinions or beliefs. This extension could also serve to incorporate Mary Borden, as an American, into the critical conversation in regards to American literature about WWI and address the lack of women's voices on the topic. Last and most importantly, this research should be expanded to include discussion of women's voice on the women's experience with war in order to expand the canon of WWI literature. Women depicted through women's eyes is a crucial narrative that is overlooked by the focus on male authors in war literature.

Women authors need to be added to the canon of war literature because women not only lived through it, but they were actively involved in the war and their gender role was permanently changed due to this. Without the diversity of the women's experience through the female voice, the canon cannot truly represent the literature of WWI.

WORKS CITED

- Albrinck, Meg. "Borderline Women: Gender Confusion in Vera Brittain's and Evadne Price's War Narratives." *Narrative*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1998, pp. 271–91.
- Borden, Mary. *The Forbidden Zone*. Hesperus Press, 2008, pp.17-70.
- Britain is Fighting for the Freedom of Europe and to Defend your Mothers Wives and Sisters from the Horrors of War. Enlist Now*. Parliamentary Publishing Committee, 1915. Imperial War Museum Poster Collection.
- Fara, Patricia. "Women, Science and Suffrage in World War I." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 69, no. 1, 2015, pp. 11–24.
- Foringer, Alonzo Earl. "The Greatest Mother in the World." 1916-1918. Poster Collection, Imperial War Museum.
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205324500>
- Fortunati, Vita. "Women's Counter-Memories of the First War World: Two Emblematic Case Studies Vera Brittain, Mary Borden." *La Grande Guerra Degli Italiani*, vol. 11, no. 13, 2015, pp. 8–17.
- Go! It's Your Duty Lad. Join To-Day*. British Army Recruitment, 1915, Imperial War Museum.
- Grayzel, Susan. "Women at Home in a World at War." British Libraries, 29 Jan. 2014.
- Guest, Harriet. "Bluestocking Feminism." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1/2, 2002, pp. 59–80.
- Higonnet, Margaret R. "Another Record: A Different War." *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1995, pp. 58–64.

- Hutchinson, Hazel. Introduction. *The Forbidden Zone*, by Mary Borden, Hesperus Press, 2008, pp. xiii-xvi.
- Hyde, Kurt. "The Sinking of the Lusitania." *New American*, vol. 31, no. 9, 2015, pp. 32–39.
- Kent, Susan Kingsley. *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990*, Taylor & Francis Group, 1999.
- Kingsbury, Celia M. "Propaganda, Militarism, and the Home Front in Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet... Stepdaughters of War*." *War and Words: Horror and Heroism in the Literature of Warfare*, edited by Sara Munson Deats et al., Lexington Books, 2004, pp. 235–51.
- . "VADs and Khaki Girls: The Ultimate Reward for War Service." *For Home and Country: World War I Propaganda on the Home Front*, University of Nebraska Press, 2010.
- Marcus, Jane. "Afterword. Corpus/Corps/Corpse: Writing the Body In/At War." *Not So Quiet... Stepdaughters of War*, by Helen Zenna Smith, The Feminist Press, 1989, pp. 241-93.
- Mudie-Cooke, Olive. *After the War: A VAD Ambulance Bringing in French Peasants Wounded by Shells Left on the Somme Battlefield*. Imperial War Museum.
- Nicholls, Horace. *A female driver of the London Ambulance Service. Taken in December 1917, on the roof of the offices of the Department of Information, 8 Buckingham Gate, London*. Imperial War Museum, December, 1917.
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205296259>

---. *A female general service member and a female nursing officer of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. Taken in December 1917, on the roof of the offices of the Department of Information, 8 Buckingham Gate, London.* Imperial War Museum, December, 1917. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205296288>

“Pietà (Michelangelo).” *Wikipedia*, 2 March 2021. Accessed 20 April, 2021. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet%C3%A0_\(Michelangelo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet%C3%A0_(Michelangelo))

Price, Evadne (Helen Zenna Smith). *Not So Quiet... Stepdaughters of War*. The Feminist Press, 1989.

Robert, Krisztina. “Constructions of ‘Home,’ ‘Front,’ and Women’s Military Employment in First-World-War Britain: A Spatial Interpretation.” *History and Theory*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2013, pp. 319–43.

Scholes, Lucy. “Re-Covered: Not So Quiet ... Stepdaughters of War.” *The Paris Review*. 29 March, 2019.

Sterner, Albert. *We Need You*. 1918, American Lithographic Co. N.Y. American Red Cross. Propaganda Poster Collection, Washington State University Libraries’ Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections. <https://content.libraries.wsu.edu/digital/collection/propaganda/id/92/>

Spear, Fred. *Enlist*. 1915. Poster Collection, Imperial War Museum. War Department. “War Department, February 5, 1856” *London Gazette*. 5 Feb. 1856, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21846/page/410>

“The Vatican Pieta.” *Fordham Art History*, 2016. <https://michelangelo.ace.fordham.edu/exhibits/show/vatican-pieta/vatican-pieta-history>

War Office. "ROYAL WARRANT instituting a new Decoration, entitled 'The Military Cross.'" *London Gazette*. 1 Jan. 1915.

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29024/supplement/7>

Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. *Every Fit Woman Can Release A Fit Man Join The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps To-Day*, H and C Graham Ltd, Camberwell London SE, Imperial War Museum.

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28298>