

Feminist Things: *Votes for Women* and the Circulation of Emotion

In a 1999 article that articulated his deep understanding of the significance of the object world to modernism, Bill Brown urged his readers to attend to the ordinary things around them: “You should be reading this with something in your hands besides a journal. And something, really, besides a pencil or pen. Something like an empty glass, a rubber band, a paper clip that you can rub between your fingers, that you can twist and bend back and forth. For the idea is to wonder whether—while concerning ourselves with one or another crisis of the subject—we haven’t also been in the midst of an effort to think about the object, if not indeed to liberate material.”¹ Brown’s implicit suggestion to his reader that the journal *Modernism/modernity* might not be enough to set up the proper (tactile) relationship between reader and object raises the question: if not properly a thing itself, what relationship does a periodical hold to the things represented in its pages? It is first, perhaps, in their role as tour guides to a world of things, mediators that describe, promote, and sell, that early twentieth-century periodicals open a window onto the theories of objects that organized relationships between their readers and the things surrounding them. Yet the suffrage print cultural archive hints at something more: suffrage activists and authors were quite aware that the suffrage paper was more than a guide to things, but that it counted as a thing itself, circulating in such a way that it could forge intimate relationships between readers and the movement, readers and marketers, and finally between the reader and the paper itself. That is to say, suffrage papers circulated emotion: as repositories of affect,

papers attached specific meanings to things in order to stitch women readers more intimately to an abstract idea—that of the “cause.”² These intimate relationships between readers and the periodical conceived of as a unique “thing” open a window onto the ways in which suffrage periodical culture reimagined the everyday and saturated ordinary rituals with affect.

This chapter extends explorations of what Krista Lysack calls “consumer feminism” by bringing thing theory and the materialist approaches of periodical studies to a study of the discourse about objects and everyday activities circulating in the suffrage paper *Votes for Women* in its early years.³ Considering suffrage collectibles and the suffrage paper as things rather than as commodities enables a discussion of the sentimental relationships imagined between a suffragette and the print cultural artifacts and mementoes that tied her to the movement. The militant Women’s Social and Political Union’s paper *Votes for Women* proves to be a crucial key text for such explorations, since no other suffrage organization or suffrage paper exploited more enthusiastically the relationship between activist and commodity cultures. In its advertisements, its fashion columns, and especially in its lifestyle feature “The World We Live In,” *Votes for Women* offered its readers a new way of envisioning an engagement with the everyday. I’ll be most interested here in the sentiment advanced in the pages of the paper through discourses of sympathy, self-denial, and intimacy. These vocabularies of intimacy were generated intertextually through conversations established between the paper’s various parts, as advertisements, articles about street-selling, shopping, fashion culture, and other engagements with consumer culture jostled against articles regarding imprisonment, self-denial, and feminist sacrifice. This vibrant visual and textual mixture produced new meanings by insisting that “feminist consumption” be thought together with feminist renunciation.

It is important, to paraphrase Ann Ardis writing in a different context, that these periodical relationships are understood as intertextual *rather than* para-textual.⁴ Consistent with core principles in periodical studies, Ardis contends that seemingly peripheral materials such as advertisements are central to the ways in which a paper produces meaning through its mixed-media format. In the case of the suffrage paper, *Votes for Women*, that format included cover cartoons, photographs, vibrant advertisements, literature, book and theater reviews, editorials, reportage, news of branch activity, and articles about feminist fashion

and shopping. The paper was visually lively, image-filled, and through its many articulations of an engagement with consumer culture, offered an invitation to readers to imagine themselves as members of a collective. Yet, at the same time, the paper included narratives concerning militancy, imprisonment, hunger strikes, forcible feeding, and voluntary self-denial, thus documenting the many sacrifices endured by militant suffragettes arrested for the cause. On one level, these two vocabularies for activism spoke to two potential audiences, the wider public and also group members.⁵ Additionally, these spoke to two sides of the suffragette, imagining a complex feminist identity that could accommodate both militancy and shopping. In what follows, however, I'll argue that *Votes for Women* invited its readers to think of militancy and consumerism together within a periodical environment that saw all aspects of daily life as potentially permeated by feminist sentiment. In being urged to consume and to forgo consumption, the reader of *Votes for Women* found her daily rituals renewed, saturated with affect, and infused with deep feeling. Attention to the paper's periodical codes such as its format, design, information architecture, and ways of sorting itself into meaningful arrangements, shows how *Votes for Women* educated its reader not only to see ordinary life anew but also to imbue ordinary life with politicized feeling.⁶

The periodicals produced during the suffrage campaigns in Britain and America at the beginning of the last century provide fertile territory for considering the commercial activity of suffrage since they were stitched firmly to a complex commercial, thing-filled, world. The editors of periodicals such as *Votes for Women*, the *Suffragette*, the *Vote*, *Common Cause* or the *Freewoman* in England employed various state of the art methods of advertising, marketing, and promotional spectacle to circulate feminist ideas in the public sphere, though their commitments to advertising culture varied, as did the level of concern and anxiety that accompanied an engagement with commercial culture. British and American suffragists and suffragettes used mass advertising techniques—sandwich boards, sensational political events—to promote and sell their feminist papers. As they did so they also relied upon and helped to support the development of a niche market for feminist collectibles: badges, banners, tea sets, card and board games, books, pamphlets, celebrity postcards, jewelry, and more. Given this abundance of suffrage objects, and the visibility of these objects in museum special exhibits and glossy art books like Diane Atkinson's *Suffragettes in the Purple, White & Green*, most scholars of suffrage culture would agree that feminist

activists on both sides of the Atlantic exploited and helped to create the new forms of commercial (and visual) culture that dominated the first part of the twentieth century.⁷

This engagement with the marketplace has been persuasively read as a central practice through which suffrage culture established a feminist public sphere or a counterpublic sphere.⁸ Scholars have traced the ways in which suffrage periodicals advertised themselves and a wide array of suffrage collectibles in order to market the movement, the ways in which suffrage papers borrowed heavily from the vocabulary and strategies of modern advertising culture in order to engage the public sphere, the ways in which suffrage activists were invited to participate actively in promoting the publicity of the suffrage campaign by street-selling, and the ways in which suffrage sympathizers were invited to engage the movement in their role as shoppers.⁹ All of these approaches have shown, definitively, that suffrage politics was perfectly compatible with the seemingly more traditionally feminine consumer activities of modern culture. They have also broadened our definitions of both the public sphere and what counts as political speech or action within the public arena. Michelle Tusan, for example, has found in the diversity of suffrage publications—each presenting the aims and goals of a particular organization—the emergence of multiple locations for public debate and the coexistence of multiple counterpublic spheres.¹⁰ Maria DiCenzo has shown that it was precisely *through* an engagement with commercial culture that suffragists and suffragettes created their counterpublic spheres, a claim that runs against the grain of the notion that the rise of a (feminized) commercial market and the capitalization of the press indicated the demise of the public sphere.¹¹ Krista Lysack brings Michel de Certeau's understanding of consumption as a productive activity of the everyday to the realm of feminist consumption in *Votes for Women*, arguing that "[t]he militant suffrage campaigns ... can be characterized not only as the choreographed, spectacular politics of both orderly and disorderly street spectacle, but also as persistent tactics [in de Certeau's sense of the term] that inscribed gendered, political identities in contingent, local, and improvised ways through engagements of shopping as a mode of the everyday."¹² By harnessing the possibilities of the new advertising culture associated with New Journalism, developing commercial relationships with suffrage supporters in department stores and other commercial venues, transforming feminist collectives into consumer blocks, employing female "newsies" to sell periodicals in city streets, and other

vibrant techniques of promotional spectacle, suffrage editors developed a feminist public sphere through their commercial activities. This focus on the transformation of the public sphere through suffrage's commercial strategies has radically altered our understanding of the modern press and enriched our understanding of women's contributions to the making of modern periodical culture. Suffrage periodical culture has been shown to be not only a central vehicle through which women entered into and engaged the wider public but also a mechanism for shaping and producing feminist identities organized around ideas of publicity.¹³

In these pages I want to turn the question of feminist advertising culture around and direct our attention away from the public sphere and back to the so-called "private" arena, to the potential feminist commercial activities may have had to reframe the rituals of daily life.¹⁴ As many readings of suffrage culture indicate, one of the lasting contributions of the suffrage debate was to subvert the distinction of public and private realms altogether. Yet, most work on suffrage culture has traced woman's increasing engagement with a wider public world and thus suffrage's engagement with the "feminine" worlds of home and department store has been understood, largely, in relation to its service to the larger public struggles of the movement. Though the question of the everyday has been remarked in suffrage studies, for example by Lysak's excellent work, much more remains to be said regarding the particular dynamics that made it possible for a feminist engagement with the marketplace to transform existing or developing practices of daily life. The significance of the everyday, after all, lies in its seeming insignificance and its tendency to reside just beyond our critical attention. The feminist practices cultivated within the suffrage movement had the ability to reveal the extraordinary within the ordinary without transforming daily domestic rituals and household labors out of recognition entirely. We would do well to consider the mechanisms that enabled feminist activists to reshape commercial desire and remake women's relationships to particular objects within a larger context of renunciation and sacrifice. How did a language of attachment and sympathy allow a broach or a teacup to become more than a familiar object of adornment or daily use? Rather than concentrating upon a single object (though one could easily imagine doing so: a study of the imprisonment broach, for example, or the suffrage banner could be useful), I want to track how suffrage discourse suggested new sympathetic relationships to often familiar or only slightly remade, rebranded, objects. I'll argue that suffrage discourse remade

relationships to everyday things not just through new consumption practices but also, more surprisingly, through offering non-consumption as a feminist activity. This essay will focus on some of the strategies members of the WSPU developed in the pages of *Votes for Women*—perhaps the most inventive of the suffrage papers in its use of advertising and innovative promotional strategies—for rethinking a relationship to the object during the years 1908–1911. These are the years that saw both an extensive use of promotional strategies for selling suffrage commodities and also the rise of the hunger strike as a militant tactic—the antithesis of feminist consumption. These dual strategies emerged alongside fictional and journalistic readings of everyday life within the periodical feature “The World We Live In,” and through the intertextual periodical dynamics that developed a language for the feminist subject’s affective relationship to her things. I am especially interested in what attention to the thinginess of suffrage culture can tell us about the special role the feminist periodical played in creating a feminist approach to the everyday in modernity through the refashioning of domestic objects into feminist ones. Suffrage discourse concerning the proper relationship to a thing enabled a particularly intense attachment to the paper itself as a conveyance for emotion, rather than a replaceable container of content.

FEMINIST THINGS/SENTIMENTAL THINGS: SUFFRAGE, SHOPPING AND SACRIFICE

Modernist studies has been especially drawn to the militant suffrage organization, the Women’s Social and Political Union, since its sensational promotional tactics allowed it to command the public sphere and the front pages.¹⁵ The battle cry “Votes for Women” was seemingly everywhere in London and the WSPU’s “suffragette” colors of purple, white, and green seemed to be visible in every corner of the city. Launched in Manchester in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst with her daughter Christabel Pankhurst, the WSPU soon centered itself in London where it gained fame for its attention-getting and confrontational strategies.¹⁶ In October 1905, Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney were thrown out of the Manchester Free Trade Hall for interrupting a meeting and were arrested. The interruption of male speech and confrontation with authority became a favored tactic, and suffragettes continued to interrupt governmental meetings or engage public

institutions by sending deputations to the House of Commons and the Prime Minister throughout the first years of the movement. At the same time, the WSPU worked to command public space through large, theatrical marches, open-air meetings, and a variety of advertising techniques such as poster campaigns and the use of cars, trains, or trolleys to carry the message "Votes for Women." Emmeline Pethick Lawrence joined the WSPU in 1906 and with her husband, Frederick Pethick Lawrence, launched the suffrage paper *Votes for Women* in 1907. At its height, the paper had a circulation of 40,000, and dominated the public sphere through the use of suffragettes as paper sellers in the streets of London. The years 1908–1911 brought new advertising strategies to the fore, such as close coordination between advertisers and the paper, and events for the promotion and sale of suffrage commodities such as the May 1909 Women's Exhibition at the Prince's Skating Rink in Knightsbridge. The same period also saw the development of new militant strategies. In July 1909, Marion Wallace Dunlop launched a hunger strike within the prison to protest her treatment as a second-division prisoner rather than a first-division political prisoner. Soon, the hunger strike became a dominant form of resistance within the prison. By September 1909, the forcible feeding of hunger striking suffragettes began, with first-person narratives of this brutal assault circulating in a variety of forms—letters to the editor, pamphlets, speeches, and articles published in *Votes for Women*. An exploration of the circulation of feminist commodities within this larger context of sacrifice complicates our understanding of the significance of consumption within suffrage print culture.

Attending to a discourse of feminist consumption is in part a matter of noticing, as Bill Brown puts it in his discussion of the object, how the "density of the subject passes into the object" as well as developing a "feeling of regard for the object as object."¹⁷ Brown's phrase "feeling of regard" is crucial here, since feminism's engagement with the rituals and objects of everyday life entailed an adjustment of attitude. As Brown and others have argued, thing theory and material culture studies illuminate the practices through which we organize our relationships to objects and grant them a certain kind of value.¹⁸ Here, I'll be drawing on two practices of relating to the object that have been developed in multidisciplinary studies of the object and of modern commodity culture: first a strategic practice of "misuse," and secondly the organization of objects into overlapping or intersecting "domains." The first of these practices, "misuse," is elaborated in Brown's reading of modernist

anxieties concerning the disappearance of the “thing” as singular or unique in a burgeoning commodity culture.¹⁹ Modernity’s “circuits of exchange and consumption” can produce objects but never “things” themselves. A “thing” is remarkable in the degree to which it escapes the cycles of exchange and consumption that characterize the life of modern objects. Organized through a “fetishistic overvaluation or misappropriation,” a “thing” is understood best when “dislodg[ed]” from the “circuits through which it is what it typically is.” Thus, a “thing” is distinguished from an object when it is understood in terms of its “mis-use value”; its hidden qualities become visible “when the object is experienced in whatever time it takes ... for an object to become another.”²⁰ Brown is describing here, at least in part, a *practice* of experiencing the thing as such. This involves a use of, or approach to, the object that renders it more than object, and engages the “excess of the object.”²¹ To use a knife as a screwdriver, for example, is to “dislocate[e]” it from “one routinized objectification” and to have a chance at “sens[ing] its presence.”²² In Virginia Woolf’s story “Solid Objects,” Brown locates a treatment of the “luminous transparency” and “auratic singularity” of the modern thing.²³ The phrase the “auratic singularity” of the thing may be difficult to reconcile with the pragmatic bent of suffrage’s promotional strategies. Yet, it begins to make sense of the degree to which suffrage activists wrenched common objects from routine circuits of exchange and use and made them signify differently: a cup of tea as a sign of political commitment; a paste amethyst, emerald green, and imitation diamond necklace transformed into a symbol through its brilliant display of the WSPU’s colors; a periodical bound, marketed during the Christmas season, and transformed into a feminist collectable. The careful attention Krista Lysack has given to the meaning of advertisements within the pages of *Votes for Women* reveals how intimately consumer and civic identities were related in suffragette writing and practice, so that the paper generated a “discourse of shopping for the vote.”²⁴ One might say, then, through a kind of strategic “misuse,” the teacup is both itself and more than itself: an emblem of taste, certainly, but also a badge of honor, a reminder of commitment, a recruiting tool, and a memento.²⁵ The teacup is more than a teacup, in part, because of the various strategies that produce an object as a branded “feminist thing.”

Secondly, the object attains its “luminous transparency” and “auratic singularity” from the juxtaposition of clashing periodical contexts in which it is located—the teacup is neatly set within an arena of abundance

and plenitude that characterized modern shopping culture while it simultaneously holds a place within an arena of self-sacrifice and suffering that organized much militant suffrage debate and experience. That is to say that the suffrage collectable is best understood in relation to the various “domains” in which it acquires meaning. According to Daniel Miller, the “object worlds” or “domains” of modernity are striking in their sheer abundance, variety, internal diversity, and specificity. In his introduction to *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*, Daniel Miller uses the terms “domain” and “object world” interchangeably to indicate the arena in which an object operates and gains meaning. The diversity and particularity of domains in modernity are striking: “within an hour of waking we move from the paraphernalia of interior furnishing through the decisions to be communicated over choices of apparel through the moral anxieties over the ingestion of food stuffs out in the variety of transport systems held within vast urban architectural and infrastructural forms.”²⁶ These “object worlds” sometimes overlap with academic arenas of inquiry—food studies, building studies—or with academic disciplines—architecture and the like. While Miller is especially attentive to the “specific materiality” of each object, he also recognizes the interrelatedness of object worlds and the fact that objects gain meaning in relation to other objects. It is often by working the borders between material domains to notice how “material worlds” interact or “become each other’s contexts” that we can discover “how things matter,” acquire meaning, and sometimes act as embodiments of ourselves.²⁷ In one of Miller’s examples, a successful study of gardens places them not in relation to a predictable history of landscape, but in the relation to the cultural meaning of the lounge and of kitchens—interior spaces that organize our relationships to leisure. Through an attention to specificity, the materiality of specific domains, and a recognition of the diversity of material domains, Miller suggests that we can discover unstated criteria for mattering and how “human values ... exist ... through their objectification in cultural forms.”²⁸

The idea of intersecting and juxtaposed domains is suggestive for periodical studies, since the varied columns of a paper often function as distinct “object worlds” (indeed, the status of the column as “space” or “world” is a connection I’ll develop in Chap. 3 on women’s pages). A look at the interrelatedness of material domains can help us ask new questions about the ways in which modern feminists combined progressive politics and traditional patterns of consumption to create a

feminist consumer culture and feminist theories of everyday life. It was the juxtaposition of conflicting and clashing attitudes toward consumption, executed through arranged periodical “domains,” that enabled the repositioning of ordinary and nearly invisible objects (the teacup, the board game) as feminist “things” capable of containing and conveying emotion. The oft-noted periodical coverage of feminist consumption clashed significantly with reportage concerning feminist sacrifice articulated through the mechanisms of imprisonment or hunger strike. This mismatch between conflicting ideas regarding consumption effectively created a new set of meanings attached to suffrage “things.” Suffrage culture worked not just by encouraging specific kinds of consumption, but also by denying and/or troubling consumption itself, especially through articles outlining “self-denial” fundraising campaigns that were linked closely to the fate of suffragettes languishing in prison. This intertextual dynamic within the pages of *Votes for Women* enveloped both feminist things and suffrage papers within the folds of emotionally charged language and practices.

The Women’s Social and Political Union’s “Self-Denial Week[s]” launched in 1908 and run annually, raised money for the campaign and simultaneously developed new vocabularies for understanding consumption as a sentimental practice. In 1908, the WSPU raised over £6800 by shifting the meanings attached to objects and establishing new patterns of *non*-consumption. The designer of this campaign was Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, treasurer of the WSPU and also co-editor of *Votes for Women* with her husband Frederick Pethick Lawrence. Pethick Lawrence began her investment in political work as a volunteer in the 1890s with the Sisterhood of the West London Mission and then was appointed responsible for the Working Girls’ Club. In 1895, with Mary Neal, Pethick Lawrence developed the Espérance Working Girls’ Club, and also developed a dressmaking business to support working-class women, Maison Espérance. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence brought both a sentimental style of “moral uplift” to her speeches and articles for *Votes for Women* and also a set of sound and innovative business practices.²⁹ The “self-denial” scheme was structured to straddle the realms of feminine consumption and feminist sacrifice by emphasizing self-regulation.³⁰ Her report of the self-denial campaign outlines the notions of self-sacrifice, frugality, economy, and discipline that organized women’s domestic, professional, and political identities and practices:

Was it possible that our members, already giving all that they could afford, in a spirit of generosity rarely shown in any movement, could raise an additional sum of four figures by a week of ingenuity and endeavor? The Votes for Women Movement has been from the outset almost entirely supported by women. And women are poor. They seldom hold the purse strings. And the lives, especially of working women and professional women, who make up the bulk of our membership are full of careful economy and of continuous self-denial.³¹

Individual collection cards indicate how women denied themselves things in order to save for the cause: “‘Denial of a summer outfit, Savings from housekeeping expenses’; ‘Water and dry toast for breakfast and tea all the week’; ... ‘By going without butter, meat, and flowers’; ‘Fasting’; ‘From dress allowance’; ‘By walking to business and saving “bus fares”’; ‘By going without cabs, porter, etc.’; ‘A week’s earnings as schoolmistress’; ‘A day’s needlework’; ‘Two dinners’; ‘Going without cocoa and milk.’” Pethick Lawrence highlighted another contribution: “Here is the story of one contribution: ‘Saved in butter, 1s. 1d.; coals, 1s. 4d.; food, 4s.; flowers, 1s.; books, 1s. 7d.; ‘bus tickets, 10d.;—total, 9s. 10d.’”³² Such “sacrifice” was given both a political and spiritual significance through a comparison with the imprisonment of suffrage activists. In a 1909 open letter, written in expectation that she would soon be imprisoned, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence made the association between daily self-denial and feminist sacrifice explicit:

[I]f it seems to some of you difficult, think of those who have already suffered imprisonment for this movement, and make your sacrifice in the same way as they have made theirs. They have loved this Union and all that it means (the honour and freedom of women) better than their ease or their homes or their friends, better than father or mother, husband or child; better than their own life. When you love like that you can do anything. There are some who will collect on their cards £10, £20, perhaps even £50, but let the very minimum be £1. And if all do their duty, the result from the collecting cards alone will be several thousands of pounds for the furtherance of this campaign.³³

Within this context “self-denial” becomes a metonym for the greater sacrifice of suffrage activists in prison. Through strategic non-consumption, the borders between the public institution of the prison and the private

institution of the home are blurred so that female sacrifice at home feeds the movement and inspires hunger-striking militants in the prison.

Within this framework, an everyday object, in its absence, took on new meaning for the would-be consumer. Acts of non-consumption came to work as signs of political commitment and membership in a community and the anti-object came to have a certain kind of value. Within this context, for the ordinary object to become newly visible as a feminist thing, for it to take on what Brown calls its “auratic singularity,” its “misuse” must involve more than a repositioning of the object, but also its renunciation. Arjun Appadurai notes that for Georg Simmel all consumption is sacrifice: “one’s desire for an object is fulfilled by the sacrifice of some other object, which is the focus of the desire of another. Such exchange of sacrifices is what economic life is all about.”³⁴ If, as Simmel and Appadurai would have it, consumption is best understood as a kind of sacrifice, then self-denial week points out the deep entanglement of consumption with its opposite. Since self-denial was routed back into consumption as women were asked to market “Votes for Women” commodities during the fundraising period (soaps bearing the Votes for Women stamp, for example), “sacrifice” was stitched even more firmly to consumption. Indeed, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence coined the phrase “Self-Denial Produce” to describe the products developed for the Self-Denial Campaign and capture the intimate relationship between denial and expenditure. An article describing the successful Self-Denial Campaign activities of various branches in 1910, for example, provides a breathless catalogue of luxuries reminiscent of Zola’s novel of the modern department store, *The Ladies’ Paradise*: “as fast as it came in it went out, and never were sellers so busy! The daintiest sweets, Scotch shortbread, luscious Turkish delight, toffee, jams and marmalade, all found ready purchasers.”³⁵ This article also tracked the self-denial that made such an enthusiastic embrace of commodity culture possible: “One tired member, busy all day and every day, made jam and cakes at night; another, teaching all day, made dainty little ties and bows; another made sweets and sold them to her own friends.”³⁶ At the Bolton suffrage meeting, WSPU members were subject to a rule that “everyone must bring something to sell and also buy something.”³⁷ At the Newcastle meeting, suffragettes held teas at the WSPU shop where “givers pay to partake of the good things they themselves bring.”³⁸ That is to say, suffrage activists reorganized their shopping and housework patterns via the new routines associated with political sacrifice. In addition, Emmeline

Pethick Lawrence emphasized the degree to which “self-denial” in this context meant labor: “Self-Denial Week” required “sheer hard work by everyone,” and the energy of “devoted and resourceful members.”³⁹ It is crucial to this narrative that the self-denial campaign costs women extra labor and extraordinary sacrifice: women are “tired” and “busy,” they have been working “all day and every day” and yet bake or sew in the evening for the campaign. An anonymous contributor to *Votes for Women* pointed out that “a woman writes that she will do without butter, and that she will take collections; a boy is going to save up his pocket money; a family of five will adopt very simple meals through the week, and send to the funds the money they save; ... one woman writes that she is going to do without a servant for a week, doing the work herself, and sending the money which she saves in this way.”⁴⁰ This juxtaposition of a rhetoric of consumption with a rhetoric of sacrifice attached spiritual value to ordinary objects and while maintaining the female consumer’s self-identity as rational, selective, and economizing.

The enfolding of consumption and non-consumption, shopping and sacrifice within the pages of *Votes for Women* suggests larger questions regarding the relationship of everyday life and feminist activity, and the relationship of activities associated with the private arena and political work of the public sphere. The reframing of consumption as political activity—“shopping for the vote” as Lysak puts it—is complex.⁴¹ On one hand, “self-denial” as domestic activity reads as a simple extension of normal housewifely skills since, as Pethick Lawrence noted, women are already “full of careful economy.” Within this logic, “self-denial” is ramped up domestic labor, the “sheer hard work” of “resourceful members” as Pethick Lawrence put it. Evelyn Sharp called this a “readjustment” of the typical “picture of womanhood so dear to the past, the picture of a tired woman leaning over a cradle, or a piece of work, or a shroud, but always, always, leaning with bowed head.”⁴² On the other hand, “self-denial” is also a politicization of everyday activities—a strategic “misuse” of objects that makes them newly visible through a non-consumption that is aligned with militant activism. Periodical coverage of the self-denial campaigns consistently referenced women’s imprisonment so that self-denial was not simply an extension of the typical economizing of the private sphere but was also aligned with the bodily sacrifices of imprisoned, sometimes hunger-striking, suffragettes. What sort of meanings—and feelings—come from the collision of these varied framings of consumption and non-consumption as housewifely duty on

the one hand and metonym of the sacrifices of imprisoned suffragettes? It is worth remembering that suffragette's imprisonment and the feminist hunger strike as a practice have generally been understood as *refusals* of nurturing and domestic femininity, rather than as an extension of housewifely activity. As Jane Marcus put it, for example, in her introduction to suffrage writings by the Pankhursts: "[w]hen woman, quintessential nurturer, refuses to eat, she cannot nurture the nation. I would argue that the tactic was a symbolic refusal of motherhood."⁴³ If the blurring of the borders between private life and public life, between the everyday and activism ("water and dry toast" for breakfast sounds quite a bit like prison fare), brings the non-consumption that reorganizes the rituals of daily life significantly closer to the dramatic acts of refusal that organize feminist life within the prison, then Pethick Lawrence's notion of strategic self-denial as an extension of typical housewifely economy only tells part of the story.

The collision of varied meanings of non-consumption produces an emotional as well as a political language of sacrifice. The enfolding of "love" for the movement with sacrifice (the sacrifice *of* familial associations, friends, home, freedom, health, luxuries, and necessities as Pethick Lawrence put it rather than *for* home and family) underscores the importance of a language of affect and intimacy. Elsewhere, I detail Emmeline Pethick Lawrence's sentimental discourse from the perspective of affect studies, noting her emphasis on a kind of feminist "feeling."⁴⁴ Within the context of this chapter's focus on consumption, it is useful to note the ways in which Pethick Lawrence's letters urging participation in the self-denial campaign reminded readers of her own impending imprisonment and invited personal and emotional connection in the face of that future loss:

It may be that I shall have no opportunity for some time to come of speaking to you. As this paper goes to press it is known that I am to have the honour of leading the deputation of the Women's Social and Political Union to the House of Commons on Wednesday. It is impossible, as I write, to forecast with any certainty what may happen. Mr. Asquith may see the deputation. If he refuses to do so, the women who have taken their place upon that deputation may be in prison even before this paper comes into your hands. I am therefore taking the precaution of writing a series of letters to tell you all that I hope and wish for this movement, so that

if I should be removed from sight or from sounds of you, my voice may still speak to you of the desires that are in my heart. I feel that in a letter I can come into closer personal touch with you than I could by means of an ordinary article. I know so well by remembrance of what I have felt myself when our comrades have been in prison, that if my companions and I are arrested you will long to send us word of comfort and cheer. You will say, "Oh, if I could only do something for those who at present sit in the loneliness and shadow whilst I walk in the light of the great free world."⁴⁵

According to Pethick Lawrence, the letter provides a "closer personal touch" than an article, even though the letter is published in a weekly and addressed to "women" in general rather than an individual recipient. The intimate voice of the letter gives readers an anticipatory glimpse into the prison and provides access to the words of a suffrage leader who imagines that her voice might be silenced in the future. Pethick Lawrence's prophetic language is heavy with sentiment, binding the reader's sacrifice to her own joy: "I have set all my heart and all my hope on the result of the week of self-denial and special effort. Nothing could give me so much joy as to know that we had in every way beaten the record of last year; nothing I think would give so much joy to all the women in prison."⁴⁶

By linking emotion both to acts of consumption and non-consumption, Pethick Lawrence imagined a context in which commodity exchange becomes saturated with sentiment and household labor becomes political: "one reason that money is so essential to our agitation is that money is the symbol of love, labour, devotion, sincerity, and self-denial." "[W]e are a practical people," Pethick Lawrence wrote, "and we want to turn all this sacrifice and suffering to the fullest possible account in winning the immediate enfranchisement of women."⁴⁷ It is in a "domain" in which shopping, labor, self-denial, love, and devotion are strongly linked that one can imagine both the transformation of ordinary object into feminist thing and the saturation of everyday life with feminist political affect as well as action. It is in this regard that the activities of "Self-Denial Week" differ from other acts of feminist consumption, such as boycotts or other organized collective activities since the language of "self-denial" suggests personal sacrifice and suffering. "Self-Denial Week," beyond raising funds for the cause, worked to invest domestic life with political sentiment and circulate emotion through the exchange of feminist things.

EVELYN SHARP AND THE TROUBLE WITH THINGS

The tensions at the heart of the militant's engagement with the marketing of suffrage collectibles did not go unnoticed by suffragettes themselves. The collision of contradictory meanings attached to suffrage objects, the juxtaposition of shopping and sacrifice, meant the possibility of slippage when it came to the circulation of feminist things and emotions. In her articles, sketches, and stories, Evelyn Sharp contemplated suffrage's consumer culture, and through the revision and republication of shorter articles into longer stories collected in the volume *Rebel Women*, she meditated on the ways in which meaning became attached to suffrage objects.⁴⁸ Evelyn Sharp began her writing career with short fiction published in the journal *Atalanta*. She published several stories as one of a number of New Women contributors to the *Yellow Book* and published her first novel, *At the Relton Arms*, in John Lane's Keynote series of New Woman novels. A member of the Women Writers' Club, Sharp became successful as a writer of schoolgirl fiction and fairy tales. In 1906, Sharp joined the WSPU, contributing short fiction and sketches to *Votes for Women* while also working as a suffrage speaker. The volume *Rebel Women* (1910) was advertised in suffrage papers and sold in WSPU suffrage shops. Throughout her career, even during the war when she was editing *Votes for Women* and writing its leaders, Sharp contributed to a number of periodicals, including the *Daily Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian*. During the interwar period, Sharp became a key contributor to the *Manchester Guardian's* famous woman's page.

Sharp's coverage of the WSPU's Women's Exhibition of 1909, a festival and fundraising event for the cause, depicts an ideal shopping scenario where proper contextualization ensures a specifically feminist relationship to feminist things. In a carnivalesque setting, booths sold suffrage collectibles, books, pamphlets, hats, and more while a wide range of colorful attractions such as suffrage plays, speeches, and exhibits such as a mock prison cell featuring a suffragette as a second-division prisoner worked to delight the eye and ear.⁴⁹ Sitting at the intersection of feminism and commercial activity, the Women's Exhibition was intended to "prove to society that women who wanted votes could also interest themselves in a practical way in all that made life beautiful and attractive."⁵⁰ In an article devoted to the Women's Exhibition entitled "Planting the Flag at Prince's," Sharp suggested that this spectacular shopping event remade the city and its citizens:

If the Exhibition meant nothing more than just flying the purple, white, and green in the heart of Knightsbridge for a whole fortnight it would be worth while. Never before, perhaps, has the daily desultory conversation of the Western highway into town turned upon “Votes for Women”; never again, certainly, will any driver ... be in doubt as to the meaning of the militant tricolour.⁵¹

Through the sale of everyday objects and suffrage collectables, the Women’s Exhibition saturated the landscape with feminist meaning so that success was inescapable: “Bless you, mum, you couldn’t miss it if you tried,” Sharp’s conductor replies when asked for directions to the Exhibition.⁵² The WSPU’s tricolors, according to Sharp, were particularly effective in lending objects and shopping as an activity new meaning:

Accustomed to the colours you may be, but not to their many possibilities, till you see them in the mass at Prince’s. In repose, full of deep tones and harmonies, they look down upon you from the walls. In every summer tint and shade they smile at you in frocks and hats. Overhead, gay and impudent and irrepressible, they keep the air alive in gently waving flags and bunting.⁵³

Here, it is not the specificity of the object or its proper use that tells. Indeed, the objects themselves are largely indistinct, blurring into an impressive and impressionistic mass of the WSPU tricolors, purple, white, and green, and are animated in terms of their vivid colors rather than their function: “In repose, full of deep tones and harmonies, they look down upon you from the walls.”⁵⁴ Meaning is conveyed through the recontextualization within a specific political domain that renders suffrage things “gay, and impudent, and irrepressible.”

Despite Sharp’s claim that the “meaning of the militant tricolour” is no longer in doubt for London drivers, she also reveals the fragility of the meaning of feminist things, indicating that feminist things are only interpretable to those able to navigate the supposedly opposed domains of shopping and politics: “I suppose that nowhere outside the Women’s Exhibition would hats be bought to the tune of complaints against the existing Government. The combination of politics and millinery, though unusual, certainly added zest to the millinery, I thought.”⁵⁵ The collision of domains, shopping and politics, makes discourse illogical to those

without the requisite skills and experience: “‘I can’t wear burnt straw,’ said the other lady, waving it away. ‘Do you think you could do anything to this one to keep it from lopping over one ear? I met a man who knows Asquith yesterday and he said—.’” When the shopper asks her feminist colleague, the shopgirl, whether the hat would do for “Sunday in Hyde Park,” Sharp reminds her readers that in the domain of the Women’s Exhibition, the meaning of such a question would be transparent only to those with the proper knowledge:

“Oh yes,” answered the seller, confidently. “I’m sure nothing would make it come off.”

This might puzzle some people who associate Sunday in Hyde Park with a band and a church parade; but nobody within hearing was puzzled. We all knew what it meant to stand on a lorry on a windy day, and most of us had listened in public to the lady who could not wear straw.⁵⁶

The audience is sorted into those who “knew what it meant” to deliver a speech in Hyde Park and those who might be “puzzled” by the “mis-use” of a hat understood in terms of its solidity rather than its fashionable appeal. Suffrage objects aren’t always immediately legible within this context; despite the successful branding campaigns of the WSPU, a certain skill set is still required to become suffrage culture’s ideal reader.

Sharp’s recognition that the meaning attached to suffrage objects is unstable also informs short story-sketches and articles published in *Votes for Women* and in the volume *Rebel Women* concerning work in a suffrage shop. In these pieces, Sharp articulates both a recognition that feminist shops targeted the rich fantasy life of consumers and a hope that the suffrage collectable will be able to express the significance of the movement.⁵⁷

I suppose by the time one has finished one’s journey through life all the ambitions of childhood will have been realized, except, perhaps, the more exalted ones, such as discovering a desert island or snatching somebody from the angry flames. And another one went by the board the other day when the Kensington W.S.P.U. was suddenly inspired to open shop at 143 Church Street. Nobody said so in committee, but I do not believe a single member of that serious and grown-up group of Kensington Suffragettes was above feeling a secret thrill of glee at the thought of keeping shop at last—real shop, with a counter, and a bell, and a cash-box, and a staircase

leading up to a sort of Never-Never Land, where tea is made every day at five o'clock, and up which you can shout "Shop!" whenever you want to appear particularly professional. It is like raising a humdrum existence to the level of dreams.⁵⁸

Sharp's article, "Painting Kensington Purple, White, and Green" published in *Votes for Women* in 1909, recognizes the "shop girl" as a new figure in the metropolitan cultural imagination and stitches that figure firmly to the rich fantasy life of childhood. Here, the suffrage shop blends the glittering dream world of modernity's shopping culture ("everything, wherever you look, is glowing with purple, white and green") with the reality of the business of suffrage ("Food for the mind is rather our aim, and the mind we try to catch is expected to feed just as hungrily on purple, white, and green 'goods' as on pamphlets and books").⁵⁹ On the opening of a new WSPU suffrage shop at Charing Cross Road in May 1910, Sharp is reported to have pointed out "that in a nation said to be, by the greatest rebel of his time, a nation of shopkeepers, the great thing was to keep shop well, and this was certainly done by the Women's Social and Political Union."⁶⁰ But the business of suffrage, suffrage *as* business, continually points to the ways in which the suffrage shop is more than, or not quite, a shop: the "coy" public must be persuaded by "enticing invitations in the window" that it is "safe to come inside"; the suffragettes are visited by a "real" "shop assistant" who in offering to dress their window before she goes to work in the morning highlights the suffragette's appropriation of the shopgirl's role as childish playacting; indeed, suffragettes "never feel quite so much like real shopkeepers as when someone comes in and planks down a sovereign, with a cursory 'Can you kindly oblige Mr. So-and-So with change, miss?'"⁶¹ It is the ambiguity of the suffrage shop in Sharp's writings, its status as both a central participant in modernist commodity culture and as something quite different, that highlights the uncertain status of the feminist thing.

Efforts at selling suffrage wares are explored in Sharp's writings as entirely new kinds of transactions entailing new relationships to objects—not really marketing at all. Her suffrage stories and sketches register both the energy and discomfort that accompanied the involvement of feminist politics with the marketplace. In the "Never Never Land" of the suffrage shop in "Painting Kensington Purple, White and Green," the hope is that feminist things can be relied upon to be unambiguous. A "well known man of letters" buys a suffrage tie to wear to events when

he is prohibited from speaking on militant tactics. “‘The tie will speak for itself,’ said the member of committee who happened to be playing at shop that day.”⁶² In “Votes for Women–Forward!” an expanded version of “Painting Kensington Purple, White and Green,” Sharp is less confident.⁶³ This fiction concentrates upon the suffrage shop as a space for what Sharp calls “buying” as opposed to “shopping.” The distinction for Sharp is a fine but important one: Sharp’s narrator seems quite dismayed by the fact that her “amateur” suffrage shop is frequented by wandering “professional” consumers who know how to spend a half hour in a hat shop without buying anything.⁶⁴ Yet, despite the amateur status of the suffragette shopkeepers, her suffrage shop seems to be doing exactly what it should—selling a lifestyle to its public. The shop is frequented by passers-by who want to stop and chat, shoppers who think that all of the saleswomen are “Pankhursts,” the down and out who are told by the police that the suffragists, if anyone, can help, and by small schoolchildren who shout “Votes for Women!” into the mail slot before running away. The story culminates in a photography session that is intended to establish the suffrage shop’s professional status but instead works to reinforce the suffrage shop’s celebrity status. Never fully secure in the “Never Never Land” of shopping culture, Sharp’s narrator is caught in two worlds simultaneously, as are her customers. The narrator’s frustration with browsing shoppers, and the store’s ambivalent status between amateur and professional ultimately results in an uncertain meaning attached to the objects sold. Though one shop assistant announces that a suffrage tie in the colors will “speak for itself” echoing the journalistic piece Sharp had published earlier in *Votes for Women*, the narrative here suggests that such confidence is ill-placed.⁶⁵ Of a tobacco pouch given to a policeman who had once arrested the most militant of the store’s staff, the suffragette says that “he might use it for the rest of his life without discovering what the sketch of Holloway Gaol was meant for.”⁶⁶ This is a recognition that an object has a “biography.” As Igor Kopytoff has argued, objects cycle in and out of their status as commodities. Culture and individuals both insist on “singularization,” on moving some objects out of their status as commodities through sacralization, collection, preservation, or other techniques: “Culture ensures that some things remain unambiguously singular, it resists the commoditization of others; and it sometimes resingularizes what has been commoditized.”⁶⁷ The strategies of misuse and collection into a proper domain are crucial if a new

meaning for the object is to be secured and to be available to all. Sharp's narrative is a cautionary one. Without its location in a number of intersecting domains, without being stitched to the lifestyle of suffrage, without a practice of "misuse" to give it meaning, the tie is just a tie, the tobacco pouch is just a tobacco pouch. The energy devoted to establishing new shopping practices for suffragettes in the pages of *Votes for Women* does more than sell goods; it gives things their status as something other than a commodity and secures a meaningful relationship to the feminist object.

LIFESTYLE FEMINISM: "THE WORLD WE LIVE IN"

Through advertisements, features, and even fashion columns that described shopping in new ways, *Votes for Women* provided new ways of thinking and feeling about objects in relation to politicized emotion. Understanding consumption as part of what we might call a "feminist lifestyle" situates shopping as part of and intimately related to a larger set of everyday activities described and explored within the feminist press. The eclectic and multi-authored *Votes for Women* column "The World We Live In" during the years 1909–1910 approached all aspects of daily life from a feminist lens—art, fashion, children's games, occupations for women, paper selling, social work, and more.

In another context, Jennifer Wicke describes a modern "lifestyle" based on new relationships to the market and its commodities, arguing that modernity offered consumers new ways of locating meaning through shopping: "a re-auratization under the sign of personal history, fantasmatic agency, collective desire."⁶⁸ Wicke's interest lies with the "coterie consumption" of the Bloomsbury group and the circulation of its aesthetic products (under the Omega Workshop brand in the early twentieth century and under the Laura Ashley brand in the later decades). Within the context of modernity, consumption becomes a matter of "lifestyle," "a dimension of modern art production and social tastes articulated by contemporaries like Henry James, and Oscar Wilde, among others," and "coterie consumption" becomes a group activity meaning both the "consumption of art by a coterie" and the "marketing and consumption of their art (and thought and lifestyle) as produced by a celebrated coterie."⁶⁹ Substitute politics for art (or politics *and* art) in the above, and you have a fairly good description of how writings

regarding literature, art, and drama, as well as shopping, household labor, and other aspects of daily life, circulated in a feminist community through the lifestyle column "The World We Live In." "The World We Life In" engaged the market and "coterie consumption" particularly through articles devoted to fashion, but contextualized them within a larger frame that included all aspects of daily living.

A sampling of articles from the column "The World We Live In" during the years 1909–1910 includes Evelyn Sharp's story-sketch "The Game that wasn't Cricket" on children's games (reprinted later in her volume of suffrage stories, *Rebel Women*), Christopher St. John's drama reviews, Mary Neal's treatment of the Espérance Club, "G.V." on the woman fruit-farmer, and, delightfully, an article on ju-jitsu as self-defense. In addition, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence contributed book and theater reviews that not only approached modern culture from a feminist perspective but also reviewed texts and plays that foregrounded gender issues. In "The World We Live In: Woman in the Home," for example, Pethick Lawrence reviewed a production of Charles Rann Kennedy's play *The Servant in the House*, highlighting those aspects of the play that revealed a variant of what contemporaries termed a modern "sex war," in this case a struggle between man and the womanly "parasite": "The man strikes as a drowning swimmer strikes at the hands held out to clasp him. He is fighting for his soul. The woman gazes in despair as one who sees the walls of her home totter in an earthquake and the foundations of her existence swept away. Heaven help them both!"⁷⁰ For Pethick Lawrence, this play, like other works she reviewed, was best understood in relation to suffrage struggles: "And for those who are concerned in the great fight which women to-day are making for liberty of body, mind, and soul, that remarkable play *The Servant in the House*, now upon the boards of the Adelphi Theatre, is full of absorbing interest."⁷¹ Similarly, Evelyn Sharp's story-sketch, "The Game That Wasn't Cricket," understands daily life within the context of feminist revolt. The narrator of this short piece observes the gender politics of children at play in a cricket match. When the sister of one of the boys at play enters the game, her improvisational style wreaks havoc on both the agreed upon gender assignments and upon the rules of the game: "I have felt for a long time that it would be at least interesting to see what would happen if the little girl were to stand up at the wicket for a change while her brother dealt with the baby."⁷² When the young girl's

modifications of the game are adopted by the team of boys, Sharp's narrator calls her the "Spirit of Revolt," thus aligning the child's protest with the larger "Cause."⁷³

Just as a discourse of self-denial and sacrifice infused suffrage things with emotion, the language of "The World We Live In" insisted upon the powerful feelings that accompany activism. Christopher St. John (the pseudonym of suffrage activist and author Christabel Marshall), wrote that "[t] here is not one play on the London stage at the present time which takes any account of women except on the level of housekeeping machines or bridge players—the actual or potential property of some an valuable or worthless as the case may be." The disconnect between the drama of the streets and that of the stage was shocking to her: "It is strange to go out [in] the world, where women are fighting for freedom an showing unparalleled courage when most despised and rejected, into the theatre, where the dramatist appears unaffected by this new Renaissance."⁷⁴ One month later, in a review of Edith Craig's production of Cicely Hamilton's *A Pageant of Great Women*, performed as a fundraiser by the Actresses' Franchise League and the Women Writers' Suffrage League, St. John linked that production to the "movement for women's enfranchisement, which has brought so much joy into many lonely lives."⁷⁵ Thus, "The World We Live In" used the eclectic form of a lifestyle column to trace how feminist attitudes and analysis circulated through all aspects of daily life.

In Mary Neal's article on the Espérance Club, to explore just one example in a bit more depth, "joy," as well as the promise of "health," "colour and sunshine" circulate through the feminist community, in this specific case through the symbol of the "red campion" rather than through the tricolors.⁷⁶ The Espérance Club and the Maison Espérance Dressmaking Cooperative, developed by Neal and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, provided dressmakers with alternative and less oppressive work environments. In addition, Pethick Lawrence and Neal promoted healthy recreation such as Morris Dancing and trips to the country. "Red Campion" traces the circulation of a symbol of renewal through the working-class community served by the Espérance Club. The narrator is moving "somewhat absent-mindedly" through her daily rituals when "cryptic words, '[r]ed campion!,'" are uttered by a child. As other children greet her in a similar fashion, she begins to interpret this strange urban code: "It is not the password of a secret society uttered in the ear of a passing comrade, but a child's recollection of a day spent

in the country and a child's trust in one's word that the day shall come again."⁷⁷ "Red campion" references the flower Neal had used to decorate her country home when hosting a group of urban children for a day in the country, and the phrase becomes a password linked to a possible renewal of the invitation: "All that winter the words 'red campion' came to mean to me the password of a secret between me and the children, a secret of what I wanted to club to be to them and the elder girls. 'Red campion' meant colour and sunshine, health and joy."⁷⁸ Emotion circulates with "feminist things" such as a red campion, even when they are part of the natural world, rather than emerging from the marketplace.

This recognition that all aspects of the everyday are relatable to the feminist struggle is so dominant in the column "The World We Live In" that this sensibility is itself gently parodied in G. Vaughan's "At the Society of Women Artists" where a suffragette exploring an exhibition attempts to push aside the critical lens that the feminist struggle provides: "In the old days, before the New Spirit leavened everything as it is doing today, it was possible to go to a picture gallery and choose one's likes and dislikes according to one's idiosyncrasies—portrait, landscape, sea scene, or whatever it might be. But the New Spirit has come, and it permeates one's life and refuses to be left outside any part of one's experiences."⁷⁹ The suffragette finds herself continually interrupted by the interpretive force of the "New Spirit," or the "N.S." who directs her attention to particular paintings and forces her to view them in relation to suffrage culture:

I: "Now do let me enjoy the pictures; 'A Corner of the Fruit Market, Rialto, Venice': we will begin with that—No. 14." The N.S. (whisking me away to No. 11): "No, we will begin with 'Reflections'—an early Victorian lady gazing into a mirror. She is thinking, 'Will he like the way I have done my hair?' Women of to-day are different."⁸⁰

Following the conventions established in "The World We Live In," Vaughan concludes her sketch with a gesture to a more equitable future achieved through the sacrifice of suffragette activists. Under the spell of the New Spirit, the suffragette gazes upon a painting called "The Lesson," a "study in brown" depicting a young girl "with the unawakened spirit looking out from the dreamy eyes." The painting transforms itself, so that the image of this young questioning girl comes to resemble that of an imprisoned suffragette:

I do not know how it happened—it must have been because the New Spirit was there—but while I looked the girl's expression seemed to change; a light came into the eyes and a strength and resolution into the mouth. It was as if she began to see the meaning of the lesson. And—but this can only have been an optical illusion, due to the presence of the New Spirit—the white Breton cap became a prison cap and the dress was marked with the broad arrow [typical of prison garb worn by suffragettes].⁸¹

Feminism is an interpretive approach here that colors one's view of reality—the “optical illusion” is produced by a shift in attitude, a new form of attention that reveals new aspects to all daily encounters, whether with aesthetic or ordinary objects. Within the pages of “The World We Live In,” examining a painting and consulting a feminist fashion column are intimately related activities, so that all aspects of the daily are infused with a “New Spirit.”

“The World We Live In” also included articles on fashion, when they weren't appearing separately in the fashion column that ran in *Votes for Women* between 1908 and 1911. The fashion writings of *Votes for Women* directed shoppers to wares sold by advertisers and was bordered by a variety of advertisements for up-market fashionable items.⁸² Advertisements were crucial to the paper's survival, so the New Journalist strategy of providing vibrant advertising copy and content devoted to shopping worked together to develop a “mutually beneficial consumer relation” that profited both major retailers while “hold[ing] the movement together.”⁸³ As the paper moved toward a larger format, Lysack argues, advertisements came to “rival the paper's editorial content for visual dominance” so that the “public sphere was reimagined as a commercial marketplace.”⁸⁴ By April 1909, a full-page advertisement for Derry & Toms (a consistent advertiser *Votes for Women*) featured four dresses of the season and mentioned that the store made “wedding and court gowns a speciality.”⁸⁵ As others have noticed, the links forged between advertisement copy and the fashion column article reminded suffrage supporters that Emmeline Pethick Lawrence had encouraged readers to both shop with advertisers and to suggest that their favorite shopkeepers advertise with *Votes for Women*. The increasing presence of ads for department stores, milliners, dress-makers, and others connected with dress meant that suffrage could be articulated as a lifestyle complete with its own look, vocabulary, behavior, and locations. If the rise

of the *grand magasin* redefined shopping as “a luxurious and eminently pleasurable pursuit,” feminist consumption gave such “luxurious” activity direction and purpose and suggested that consumers were not irrational victims of their own desires, but were powerful and could exercise control within the public sphere.⁸⁶ As Katrina Rolley and others have argued, fashion was a key vehicle for both the display and the rethinking of dominant norms of femininity within suffragette culture. By carefully participating in modern fashion culture, suffragettes could establish their “‘true’ womanliness and ‘femininity,’” and could present themselves as “modern” and “up-to-date.”⁸⁷ Thus, the vocabulary of fashion within the pages of *Votes for Women* became an ideal channel for debating the meaning of feminism and the challenges it posed. As Michelle Tusan points out, “[t]he paper’s unbridled consumerism ... literally made political activism fashionable.”⁸⁸

For the majority of its run, especially during the period 1909–1910, the fashion column was incorporated into “The World We Live In,” and was published alternately with articles on art, theater, social work, street-selling the paper, and other topics. Reading the fashion column within its proper context of the lifestyle column heightens the question of the everyday by recognizing that glamorous fashion has an intimate relationship with ordinary activities such as shopping, dressing oneself, and clothing others. While the majority of the fashion articles indicated where suffragettes should shop for “the colours” or directed them to merchandise sold by advertisers, the fashion column occasionally linked dress more explicitly to a feminist everyday through language that associated fashion with a broader feminist attitude. In “The World We Live In: On Frocks and Other Things,” for example, “Nita” answered the caricature that the suffragette is a “dowd” by writing that “the Suffragist giving scope to her intellect is of all women the best fitted to express her own individuality in the clothes she wears.”⁸⁹ The reference to individuality and the linking of personal taste with intellect nicely countered the notion that in donning the WSPU colours, a suffragette had abandoned individual expression for corporate identity.

It is in its emphasis on the rhythm of fashion culture, however, that the *Votes for Women* fashion column most consistently linked feminist fashion to questions of everyday life. The colors were meant to be unchanging, and, as Evelyn Sharp noted in her treatment of the Women’s Exhibition, to make an “irrepressible” impression. Fashion, on the other hand, is organized through cycles of renewal since fashion

demands novelty. The fashion columns of *Votes for Women* self-consciously addressed these pressures in order to remark upon the unique temporality of fashion culture. For many fashion journalists, references to the seasons and to the demands of fashion cycles link shopping to the rhythms of nature and to the rhythms of everyday life. However, within the context of the feminist lifestyle column, "The World We Live In," these explorations of the temporality of fashion did a special kind of work, since they negotiated the dual temporalities of suffrage culture—the first of these aligning militant suffrage culture with the new, the modern, and the revolutionary, the second of these associating suffrage with that which is inevitable, unchanging, and lasting. Suffrage colors and suffrage fashions had to be positioned as both modern and consistent. "Nita's" fashion column consistently made reference to the rhythms of fashion culture through language that linked the feminist shopper to daily and seasonal rituals: "Slowly, but with every hastening footsteps, the drab dreariness of winter is passing, taking with it the miry streets and the gloomy vistas, the heaviness of furs and the dark hues of outdoor garments"; "Yet ever, as if in the sheer hopelessness of finding something new, we turn back upon what is old, and make it serve a fresh purpose in combination with the inventions which we have evolved"; "With winter fairly upon us we are in the era of furs."⁹⁰ The "passing" of winter, the "evol[ution]" of new "inventions," the emergence of the "era" of furs places the reader within the on-going and inevitable rhythms of the seasons and the fashion cycles that shadow them. Discussions of the tri-colors within this context suggest more than where to shop to prepare for a march but reference also feminism's revolutionary newness and its persistence.

Similarly, references to "the colours" in fashion suggested how pervasive this mode of feminist dress had become rather than how monotonous. The WSPU's colors of purple, white, and green begin to float free of their association with dress for suffrage marches or events within the fashion column, and are presented as both fashionable and modern: "[t]he colours of the Women's Social and Political Union," Nita wrote, "whether of intention or not I cannot say, are finding a really conspicuous place in some of the dresses this season."⁹¹ A "djibbah" for evening wear, "a garment which, with our usual catholicity of taste, we have adopted from Egypt, which, in seizing, we have transformed into something wholly pretty and tasteful," is of a "darkish green shade, with a yoke of tussore silk of a somewhat brighter green, this being

embroidered with a certain barbaric splendor with flowers having gold centres and a gold edging about differing shades of heliotrope.”⁹² The orientalism of this cultural adoption echoes the reference of eastern styles in the 1910s by French fashion designer Paul Poiret whose 1911 “Thousand and Second Night” fancy-dress party positioned orientalism as a style thoroughly in vogue. Poiret’s embrace of eastern fashions such as harem pantaloons, tunics, caftans, and “hobble skirts” offered what Minh-Ha T. Pham calls a “technology of virtual race” that gave wearers the ability to “expand[ing] the possibilities of somatic experience to include the experience of the Oriental Other.”⁹³ Such linkages of fashion and fascinated portrayals of the oriental other were woven deeply into the fabric of the WSPU’s imperial feminism, especially during the coverage of the 1911 Women’s Coronation Procession.⁹⁴ The Coronation Procession, organized to celebrate the coronation of George V, brought 40,000 suffragists to the streets in a highly decorative parade that celebrated women’s history by depicting significant women from the past and wove suffrage feminism into representations of imperialism by presenting women activists from India, New Zealand, South Africa, and the West Indies within the Empire Pageant section of the parade. As Emmeline Pethick Lawrence proclaimed in the pages of *Votes for Women*, the British movement in general was part of “an international and world wide renaissance,” a claim that points us not only toward the militant suffrage movement’s transatlantic and transnational ambitions, but also reveals the logic behind its fondness for cultural appropriation in service of the cause.⁹⁵ The colors of the “tasteful” “djibbah” are both specific to the local brand and a sign of international translatability; the cause knows no fashionable borders. Feminist fashion, like feminism in general, promises to elevate and tame, its civilizing mission evident in the cultural appropriation that transforms the “barbaric” into something “pretty and useful.” Such easy appropriation of the garments of the other domesticates the foreign just as the philosophy of the fashion column was to tether newness to consistency. Within the pages of *Votes for Women*, fashion and suffrage were both fully absorbed into the ongoing rhythms of daily life and were also momentous, modern, and new. Fashion was both indicative of the decorous femininity associated with English leisured femininity and absorptive of the foreign and exotic. The ongoing rhythm of renewal shared by feminism and fashion is a statement to feminism’s full incorporation into the everyday as well as its usefulness as a tool for viewing the everyday.

TERESA BILLINGTON-GREIG
AND "WOMAN'S WIDER WORLD"

"The World We Live In" as a feminist lifestyle column was by no means a unique experiment in feminist print culture. Teresa Billington-Greig developed a similarly organized feature in the first decade of the 1900s, called "Woman's Wider World," and, as I will show in Chap. 3, socialist feminists like Rebecca West and Julia Dawson remade the women's pages of pre-war socialist papers in order to more broadly engage the politics of domestic daily life. West, Dawson, and other socialist feminists writing for the *Clarion* remade the woman's page by thinking through ideas of periodical space, foregrounding the ways in which feminist materials contrasted with more traditional or conservative content in the multifaceted real estate of the women's page. Billington-Greig, by contrast, was less interested in disrupting the organization of the woman's page and more interested in exploring modern consumption practices, particularly as they related to women's domestic labor. No reading of the "feminist thing" would be complete without a discussion of Teresa Billington-Greig who, like Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, was a canny reader of the object and devoted to thinking through new relationships to commodities and thus to everyday life.

Billington-Greig's serialized column, "Women's Wider World," appeared in November and December 1907 in the *Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser* and put the dramatic shifts in the condition of women at the heart of her understanding of modern life. Women were "in transition" and the "changing ideal of womanhood [brought] to the twentieth century its most important problem."⁹⁶ Like *Votes for Women's* "The World We Live In," Billington-Greig's "Women's Wider World," cast a wide net over women's experience of modernity, placing the vote in the context of women's employment, domestic labor, underpayment, and increasing education. In eight parts, Billington-Greig covered "Women in Transition," "Woman in the Future," "Woman Workers," "Woman's Wages," "Woman and the Public Service," "Woman's Home Interests," "Woman and Politics" and "The Woman Voter."⁹⁷ Billington-Greig described the weekly column as one speaking to the new conditions for women that belonged to the suffrage period, and her pitch for this column suggests that in her mind the time had come for a feminist treatment of everyday life:

The last ten years have made great changes in women's demands upon the Press and have increased enormously the number of woman newspaper readers.

Editors recognize the change and see that the old fashion column and domestic notes while still valuable are no longer sufficient for the modern woman whose interest in public affairs and the news of the world is becoming extensive and peculiar. Only spasmodic efforts have so far been made to cater for the new feminine public, some of them too big and hurried, some of them too short and meagre. One of the problems of the day is to provide for the new and growing world of women readers a newspaper menu suited to their needs.⁹⁸

Her suggestions for possible topics extend well beyond those published in 1907 in the *Wiltshire Times*, thus indicating an ambitious goal of an ongoing series. These topics included: "Sketches of Real Life Among Women," which would entail articles on "A Woman Breadwinner," and "The Last Old Maid"; "Descriptive Accounts of Women of Different Types" including "The Modern Mother," "The Daughter in Rebellion," "The Suffragette, Old and New," and "The Female Parasite"; "Descriptive Accounts of Different Types of Women Workers"; "Articles on Women and Industry"; "Women and Home Economics" including treatments of "Women the National Purchasers"; "Articles on the Family and Marriage Relations" and other topics.⁹⁹ "Women's Wider World," then, was designed to explore all aspects of daily life through a feminist lens. She also imagined parallel series such as the proposed "The Things That Matter" dealing with the "fundamental causes of that unrest which lies behind the modern women's suffrage movement."¹⁰⁰ Teresa Billington-Greig's papers, currently held in the Women's Library at the London School of Economics, hold an impressive number of carbon copies and typescript drafts of articles on women's daily life, some clearly written for an editor's eye and marked that they should be returned if not accepted. Others indicate in Billington-Greig's hand that they have been published, but many of these have been difficult to trace. The hole in the Billington-Greig archive is substantial insofar as detailed information regarding the placement of these articles is concerned, but the extensive collection of pieces on modern daily life from a feminist perspective suggests a fervent commitment to producing a theory of woman's everyday life.¹⁰¹

Billington-Greig had been an active member of the WSPU but broke with that organization in 1907, to join the leadership of the more democratic Women's Freedom League, an organization she soon abandoned as well. Her book, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry*, offered a thorough critique of the undemocratic methods of the WSPU and a scathing review of its sensationalist strategies. However, despite this break and Billington-Greig's view of the WSPU, she shared with Emmeline Pethick Lawrence a deep understanding of the significance that woman's role as consumer had for the feminist everyday. Within the context of the wide-ranging "Woman's Wider World" series published in the *Wiltshire Times*, Billington-Greig articulated a theme that came to define much of her feminist work: the female consumer held unacknowledged and untapped power. Through woman, the "great consumer of the nation," the "purification of our systems of production" would be possible.¹⁰² In addition, Billington-Greig cannily recognized that her "Woman's Wider World" series would not only attract readers and correspondents, but that "women's articles in the modern spirit must attract those advertisers who seising [sic] the present opportunity are catering more and more for the modern type of woman."¹⁰³ In a letter to Periton Maxwell, the editor of *Nash's Magazine*, Billington-Greig wrote that a series on the consumer would reflect "a point of view almost entirely neglected so far in this country," one that "indicates a new avenue of public usefulness for women."¹⁰⁴ Like "The World We Live In," "Women's Wider World," put consumer feminism in dialogue with other aspects of daily life associated with traditionally domestic issues. Like Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Billington-Greig was aware of the significance of reaching female readers *as* consumers.

This pragmatic recognition of the needs of editors to work with advertisers is especially interesting when viewed in relation to Billington-Greig's 1912 volume, *The Consumer in Revolt*, a book that lobbied for an understanding of the rituals of daily life as deeply political and "urged a feminist liberation through the politics of consumption."¹⁰⁵ Like other socialist feminists of the early twentieth century, for example, members of the Women's Co-operative Guild, Billington-Greig saw socialism, feminism and shopping as intimately connected, and recognized that through a focus on woman's central role as consumer the feminist movement could broaden its scope dramatically and work collectively with other progressive organizations:

It is a common phrase on the lips of certain reformers that the cause of women and the cause of the workers are linked together and that each stands to gain by the advance of the other. But the full significance of this statement does not appear to have been even glimpsed by most of those who have made use of it. So far as the women's movement is a sex revolt it stands apart from all other movements; so far as it is an active demand for opportunity and fair working conditions for women workers it is a part of the great workers' movement; but its peculiar value in economics lies in the fact that the great body of women are consumers, that they are not wage-workers, and that they look upon life from the consumer's point of view. Thus the workers' movement and the women's, between them, represent both economic elements; each supplies what the other lacks; each desire what the other can give.¹⁰⁶

In putting woman as consumer at the heart of her politics, Billington-Greig argued that "the economic reorganisation of the world can only come when woman is active and free," fully participating in the public arena.¹⁰⁷ Her vision of a consumer politics sought to bridge the gaps between public and private and her call for a "new consumers' movement" can be seen as in line with feminist activities such as boycotts and the work of organizations such as the Women's Co-operative Guild.¹⁰⁸ Matthew Hilton notes that Billington-Greig's vision of a "feminine public sphere of consumption" both revises Habermas' public sphere model dramatically by taking consumption seriously while at the same time reflecting his notion of a public sphere organized through "reason, logic, and independent debate."¹⁰⁹

The planned extension of the feminist lifestyle series, "Women's Wider World," offered a number of essays on consumption that reflect the sensibility of *The Consumer in Revolt*, and mirror the commitments of *Votes for Women's* "The World We Live In." Billington-Grieg's piece, "The Woman Who Buys," for example, asserted that "[o]ne great body alone seems unorganized and inactive—the great body of the nation of purchasers—the millions of home women who, acting as agents for the rest of the household, are the buyers of the world."¹¹⁰ Rather than on the margins of the greater public sphere, the consumer and her everyday concerns are at the heart of the public; feminism, then, becomes an approach or attitude that infuses all activities. The female consumer is described here as holding an unrecognized power: "It is for her that all the factories are kept busy, for her that the great manufacturing machinery is set in motion, for her that the shop-keeper and advertiser send out

their appeal; and remembering this there are some women who think that it is not well that the representative of the consumers in our society should stand inactive while all other sections of the people are striving to play their part in national improvement.”¹¹¹ This understanding illustrates the workings of the feminist everyday, which puts women’s domestic activity at the center of the public sphere and does so through the ephemeral vehicle of a lifestyle column, generally positioned at the margins of modern print culture.

Billington-Greig’s interest in consumption and consumer goods extended well beyond the suffrage period of feminism, and encompassed more than a harnessing of the political will of the female consumer. Her imaginative writings on consumption extended to meditations on the significance of new household tools and by mid-century included sketches for new inventions that might free up the female consumer for other tasks (such as the “Hot Mat” for example, which would keep dishes hot), descriptions of perceived household needs (“Towels & Table Napkins: something better than the present”), and discussions of possible collaborations toward the production of new household inventions.¹¹² In their focus on material culture, these schemes remade the housewife’s relationship to ordinary objects in a way that paralleled the WSPU’s more flamboyant investment in producing, selling, and defining feminist things. On the backs of daily calendars, bank statements, and notices from the feminist Fawcett Society, Billington-Greig wrote drafts and notes for articles that meditated on the consumer and engaged the ordinary things of daily life. On one level, reuse of paper was common after the experience of wartime paper shortages. Yet, even accounting for a widely shared conservative sensibility regarding waste paper, these materials render the ordinary extraordinary. Billington-Greig’s handwritten notes repurposed ordinary materials in order to stitch feminist analysis to those print cultural forms that are conventionally used to record and organize the rhythms of daily life: the calendar, the shopping list, even the bank statement.

Though she did not organize these materials into scrapbooks, Billington-Greig’s repurposing of ordinary materials is akin to the creative project of “writing with scissors” that Ellen Gruber Garvey locates in the US culture of scrapbooking in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹³ Gruber Garvey argues that the scrapbook offered readers a way to manage the overwhelming amount of print material circulating in the expanded cultural marketplace of modernity. At the same time,

scrapbooking made the ephemeral substance of the newspaper into something more permanent. The scrapbook gave individuals the ability to enter into the public sphere of debate by “telling their own stories” in their collection and juxtaposition of print materials.¹¹⁴ The ordinary creators of US scrapbook culture were, of course, participating in a larger phenomenon. As I have argued elsewhere, the scrapbook was of central importance to British suffrage culture and to the feminist intellectual labor that followed in the post-vote period. Virginia Woolf’s reading notebooks for her work *Three Guineas*, for example, housed items she collected from newspapers as well as her reading notes from various printed sources. These notebooks are intimately related to the multi-volume scrapbooks produced by Maud Arncliffe-Sennett so that she might record the history of the suffrage movement.¹¹⁵ But where the scrapbook validated the creative work of ordinary “authors” who brought printed materials from the public sphere into the private arena, Teresa Billington-Greig’s efforts went in the other direction. Billington-Greig planned articles about the feminist everyday as a response to the quotidian experiences of modernity and mapped them onto the print ephemera of daily life. By writing on the back of discarded waste paper, Billington-Greig tied the published product to the organizing and disorganizing rhythms of daily life. Scrapbook culture, like the calendar or newspaper itself, produces order out of overwhelming chaos. While the calendar, the bank statement, and the newspaper are all connected to the regular and repeating schedules of modernity, the discarded leaf of the calendar or the repurposed bank statement fly free of regularizing systems, remade through misuse. Billington-Greig’s notes rejected organizing containers, instead existing as reminders of the fleeting coincidence of intellectual labor and the demands of domestic life. The correspondence between the daily as recorded on the pages of a calendar and Billington-Greig’s attempts to remake the ordinary through her feminist inventions is suggestive of a broader dedication to infusing all aspects of ordinary life—including waste and scrap paper—to feminist interrogation and use. In her personal feminist writings, Billington-Greig made scrap paper itself into a feminist thing.

CIRCULATING EMOTION: SUFFRAGE PAPERS AS THINGS

Understanding the significance of feminist objects in suffrage culture gives us an enhanced appreciation of the status of suffrage papers as not only conveyers of emotion but as objects of affection in their own right. Much of our understanding of how suffrage papers operated has to do with how they circulated in public. Papers were sold on the street and advertised through advanced marketing campaigns. These strategies and others made suffrage papers key examples of the emerging mechanisms of modern publicity, as Maria DiCenzo, Mark Morrisson, and others have shown. In an essay devoted to the female “newsy,” for example, DiCenzo explores the suffrage paper-seller as a “product of the suffrage periodical press” who functions as a “symbolic and political” representation of the “politically active, modern woman.”¹¹⁶ DiCenzo’s work, here and elsewhere, details the central importance of promotional strategies for *Votes for Women* where circulation became a kind of content.¹¹⁷ But suffrage papers existed as special objects circulating in the private sphere as well, carrying and collecting emotion. It is through the representation of papers circulating in the private sphere that suffrage papers are positioned as special and cherished things.

Though the scene of street-selling is more sensational and more often remarked upon in studies of suffrage print media, suffrage fictions also represented the circulation of emotion through depictions of private reading or personal reception of the paper. Where activities of the public sphere such as street-selling or boldly reading the paper in public brand the suffragette as a member of the movement, thus establishing a feminist collective identity, representations of private reading in Gertrude Colmore’s *Suffragette Sally* (1911) shed light on reception, revealing the many, and sometimes conflicting, ways in which readers might connect with the paper. Though the representation of private reading of the paper is certainly framed as a point of entrée to more public forms of activism, it is worth lingering over these scenes depicting the mechanisms of conversion rather than reading past them. In *Suffragette Sally*, the domestic servant Sally Simmonds comes to suffrage through an affective relationship to the paper *Votes for Women* that is, initially, organized deliberately within the context of the private sphere:

Sally Simmonds took in *Votes for Women*. She subscribed for three months in advance and had it sent to her, because it was so much more cheek (it

was a word she had heard Mrs. Bilkes use and was that lady's way of pronouncing chic) than buying it in the street. She was as proud of the paper as if she edited, wrote and printed it all herself, and the week was not long enough for her to master its contents. It was all very well for the master to have his *Daily Mail* and his *Evening News*. Such papers as them was pore stuff and had to be brought out fresh every day to keep them going; but for her paper, once a week was enough; there was so much to study in it that it took a girl the whole of her spare time to find out all the suffragettes were doing and planning to do.¹¹⁸

Taking the paper into the private sphere is more “cheek” than buying it on the street, since it confers status upon her within a home where, as a servant, she has little room for self-determination. Solitary reading and the pride of owning a paper contrast dramatically with the popular practice of sharing papers generally associated with working-class readers. Sally's private consumption of the paper is both a form of careful study and a form of resistance against the oppressive regime that exists within a household where her employer both sexually assaults her and mocks her feminist politics. Thus, the value of *Votes for Women* is dual: it gives her the intellectual arguments she needs in order to combat her master's condescension regarding women's rights and it validates Sally's use of her “spare time” as time for study and empowerment. “[M]aster[ing]” the paper's contents gives her an authority that vies with that of her master since the suffrage paper is superior, in her eyes, to her employer's chosen daily papers. The complex analysis provided by the paper fills the week, unlike the “pore stuff” provided by the dailies taken in by her employer. In this way too the paper provides a shaping rhythm to the everyday. In addition, though the paper eventually (and inevitably) takes her to the public sphere where she participates in street selling and militant activism, her political identity is forged in those stolen moments from work devoted to study of the paper. Colmore stresses the ways in which Sally steals time in order to meditate on the suffrage cause, blowing out the candle in her cold room in order to escape surveillance from her employer and to establish focus as well, “shut[ting] out immediate surroundings” (49).

Parallel scenes of reading and private feminist meditation establish connections between the three activists featured in this novel, women who are separated by class, certainly, but whose lives become entwined

through the movement: Sally in her cold attic room contemplating what she has read and heard, Lady Henry Hill at her desk reading the papers to prepare for a speech, the young Edith Carstairs retreating from her demanding mother and suitors in order to contemplate whether she might bravely interrupt a government meeting. In addition to enabling Sally's feminist advancement, taking in the paper confers upon her an equal status with other more privileged members of the organization: each week she experiences the "joy—the ineffable joy—of seeing her name in the list of subscribers" (104). These subscription lists flatten class differences: all women are one through the cause, or as Edith puts it when having to explain her interest in the domestic servant Sally and in "Anne Healey," the working-class identity Lady Hill assumes to disguise her privilege within the prison, "In our Society we are all comrades, whether we have titles, or whether we work for our living" (249). Private consumption of the paper provides the threads that connect these women as well: it is through the paper that these three women learn of one another's fates, especially when Lady Hill and Sally are imprisoned, and Sally's first thoughts when imprisoned have to do with becoming a news item: "having your name in the papers" (175). I am not suggesting that the paper functions in isolation: Sally attends meetings and has significant encounters with an important representative of the movement, Lady Henry Hill (who stands in for Lady Constance Lytton, an activist who famously cross-class dressed in order to expose the unequal treatment of poor women in the prison system). And Sally's reading leads to other forms of activism: Sally eventually sells the paper, like the heroines of other suffrage fictions, and finds herself participating actively in the movement by participating in deputations and militant activism, suffering imprisonment, going on hunger strike, and enduring forcible feeding. But *Suffragette Sally* indicates the ways in which the paper does its emotional and intellectual work in private, stitching women firmly to their communities.

Similarly, Elizabeth Robins' suffrage fiction *The Convert*, a novelization of her play *Votes for Women*, suggests that suffrage papers have a particular kind of authority in the private arena. The novel's heroine, Vida Levering, begins her slow conversion to suffrage by first encouraging her sister to order an additional copy of the daily paper so that they wouldn't be forced to wait until her brother-in-law exercised his "privilege of opening [his] paper for [him]self."¹¹⁹ Once Vida begins to engage the world of suffrage open-air meetings, she invites a suffragette to her

brother-in-law's home where their conversation moves swiftly from a consideration of papers to intimate revelations.

Was it reading those papers that set you to thinking?
Reading papers? Oh, no. It was ...

A little wearily, without the smallest spark of enthusiasm at the prospect of imparting her biography, Miss Claxton told slowly, even dully, and wholly without passion, the story of a hard life met single-handed from even the tender childhood days—one of those recitals that change the relation between the one who tells and the one who listens—makes the last a sharer in the life to the extent that the two can never be strangers any more. Though they may not meet, nor write, nor have any tangible communication, there is understanding between them. (156)

On one level, Robins suggests a gap between the world of the newspaper and the more intimate world of conversation and connection—"recitals that change the relation between the one who tells and the one who listens." Yet, as the novel progresses, that distinction collapses so that intimate relations between people are symbolized through an affective relationship between the civic subject and the newspaper itself. Vida Levering becomes the shadow, protector, student, and apprentice of suffragette Ernestine Blunt in a relationship that is organized largely through misunderstandings and confusion. (When Vida first meets the suffragette, she mistakenly assumes that Ernestine Blunt is endangered by a crowd that is, in fact, thoroughly under her command.) While the novel struggles to establish an emotional connection between Vida and the suffragette, it is the suffrage pamphlets, flyers, and other elements of print culture that become recipients of Vida's care: "Ernestine, having finished what she was saying, made her way to where Miss Levering sat, not, it would appear, for any purpose so frivolous as saying good evening, but to deposit what were left of the handbills and the precious portfolio in the care of one well known by now to have a motherly oversight of such properties."¹²⁰ "Motherly oversight," indicative of a tender care brought to printed matter, is a loaded phrase in this text since Vida is decidedly *not* a mother, a scandalous fact around which the plot turns. A younger pregnant Vida had been abandoned by an ambitious politician

in the making. The paper here becomes a substitute for the child she has lost, as does the movement itself.

This ability of the suffrage paper to act as a sign or symbol of conversion binding a reader to the cause through affective relations between a person and thing suggests a slightly different way of considering the relationship of the paper to the public sphere. Harold Mah argues that we are misled when we imagine the public sphere as a “literal space” and offers instead the notion that the “public sphere is a fiction” that takes on the attributes of a “person” while demanding a whole scale transformation of subjectivity on the part of participants.¹²¹ The bourgeois public sphere “requires as a condition of entry a phantasmic reshaping of social identity” and requires that “people appear in it in a certain form.”¹²² The form in which a collective engages the public sphere is that of a “person”: a “single subjectivity, in unitary possession of reason, will, feelings, intentionality, and agency.”¹²³ The feminist paper, in this context, is less a “space” for negotiation, than a stand-in for a “person” who is “in possession of reason, will” and, importantly, “feelings.” To suggest this surrogate personhood, suffrage papers and suffrage fictions employed some of the non-rational ingredients of Edwardian fiction itself: the appeal to sentiment, sympathy, and repositioning of reader through the mechanism of identification among them. Consumption, conversion, attachment, sentiment, rational discourse, and revolution are always bound together in the pages of *Votes for Women* so that the feminist public sphere becomes a place of “feelings,” to borrow Mah’s term, as well as rational critical debate. When Emmeline Pethick Lawrence wrote “A Second Letter to Women” from prison, outlining a *Votes for Women* drive, she positioned herself as editor, advertiser, supporter and mother of the paper:

I cannot tell you how I have cared and thought and worked for the paper from the very first. You know how we started it—my husband, who had edited two papers before, and I, who was quite a novice at the work. From at the outset a small circulation of 2000, it went up in little more than one year to a circulation of 16,000. And then came the need for extension and development, and the Committee of the N.W.S.P.U. took the paper over and assumed all the financial liabilities which we two had borne alone. But still my husband and I, who had looked after it when it was little and helpless, were not severed from it, and we care for its welfare as much to-day as ever we did.¹²⁴

“Motherly oversight” is not just indicative of the poignant relationship Vida develops to the movement, but is also exactly the sort of tender relation Emmeline Pethick Lawrence suggests that she, and we, should have to her paper as it is circulated among current and potential converts. Pethick Lawrence’s language suggests that the paper is alive and organic, growing and strengthening as the movement does. The paper’s dual function—to covert new readers and to inform those already converted—depends on a symmetry between the body of the paper and the body of the collective: “Instead of a circulation of 16,000 we ought to have a circulation in the near future of 100,000. How much stronger we should be, how much easier would be the organization of our campaign!” Circulation comes to mean not just strength, economic growth, but vitality and activity itself.

In an unsigned companion piece to Pethick Lawrence’s “Second Letter,” the paper is contrasted with other mechanisms for offering information, and the particular mode of energetic circulation belonging to a weekly paper is singled out:

While a public meeting, however splendid, has a tendency to begin and end with itself, and while the purchase of a pamphlet does not necessarily lead to the purchase of further literature, one issue of *Votes for Women* is the forerunner of the next, and the circulation keeping pace with the growing interest unites readers more and more closely with the movement.¹²⁵

This is a model of mutual dependency that is organized around the rhythm of periodical publication. Through her relationship with the suffrage paper, the reader’s subjectivity is recast and she becomes united “more and more closely” with what Mah might call the “single subjectivity” of the movement. The paper serves as a route of sympathy for leaders suffering in prison, thus the reader’s relationship to her paper must be altered:

Do not forget. I think that is the cry of those of us in prison—as it is, one feels, the heart’s cry of the dead. Remember us, and spare us your thoughts; and oh! Do our work for us—do it better than we could do it ourselves, for we are few, you are many. If you will work for us, it is well for us to be here ... Work to spread and extend and enhance the value of

the paper, and when you meet the Editor on her release from prison she will bless you and thank you with all her heart.¹²⁶

The feeling extended to the periodical as a thing brings emotion to the workings of the counterpublic sphere.¹²⁷ Habermas' emphasis on both the disinterested rational discourse of citizens and the social spaces of rational-critical debate have offered a rich vocabulary for describing the function of tea rooms, open-air meetings, at-homes, deputations, feminist reading rooms, suffrage papers, women's presses, and a whole variety of feminist institutions that came to compose what has been called a feminist public sphere or feminist counterpublic.¹²⁸ The intimate relationship forged between readers and periodicals as things can be linked to the successful entrance of affect and sympathy in the public sphere. Sold with collectibles in suffrage bookshops, displayed on coffee tables in the home as signatures of political conversion, used as physical evidence in public trials, carried as badges or signs of affiliation on the street, the suffrage periodical was often the first object that a potential convert came in contact with as she became radicalized and it carried not only information about the movement but also emotional content that linked readers to the cause. Suffrage papers are treated with remarkable reverence and affection in suffrage writings: indeed, Mary Chapman has suggested that the suffrage paper is treated as more than a thing in suffrage culture, but nearly as a person.¹²⁹ It may be that attending to the thingyness of suffrage culture can help us recognize how both affect and subjectivity came to be attached to the suffrage periodical in histories of the movement. Taken together, periodical culture studies and material culture studies (or "thing theory") can reveal the value of the periodical as an object itself, thus enriching discussion of the public sphere with an understanding of the affect, sentiment, and desires that bind subjects to objects and allow for the production of new subjectivities through innovative acts of consumption.

But, of course, feminist papers aren't simply *singular* things, coherent and unified. They are, like all periodicals, both one thing and many things at the same time—singular, and yet internally complex. As Chap. 3 will show, feminist journalists were well aware of the ways in which their contributions to a paper were positioned—both ideologically and spatially—within the hierarchies that governed their publications.

NOTES

1. Brown, "The Secret Life of Things," 1. This is a position that Brown revised. In his book, *A Sense of Things*, for example, Brown speaks to the status of a print cultural object as a thing.
2. Sarah Ahmed's notion of the circulation of emotion through textual affective economies is helpful here, though Ahmed argues that "feelings do not reside in subjects or objects but are produced as effects of circulation" (Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8).
3. Lysack, *Come Buy, Come Buy*, 141. A different version of my chapter was published in 2008 as "Feminist Things" simultaneously with Lysack's work, and could not incorporate her excellent insights. See Green, "Feminist Things," in Ardis and Collier, *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880–1940*.
4. Ardis, "Making Middlebrow Culture," 34.
5. Maria DiCenzo draws on the work of Rita Felski and Nancy Fraser to describe the "internal" and "external" functions of *Votes for Women* as it spoke to both its own members and also the wider public ("Militant Distribution," 117–18).
6. As described in my introduction, the term "periodical codes" belongs to Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker and echoes both George Bornstein and Jerome McGann's work. See Brooker and Thacker, "General Introduction," 6.
7. Atkinson, *Suffragettes in the Purple, White & Green*.
8. For suffrage print culture read in relation to Habermas' notion of the public sphere, see DiCenzo, "Militant Distribution"; Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*; and Tusan, *Women Making News*.
9. Work on suffrage and consumption practice or suffrage's relation to advertising and promotion cultures includes Lysack, *Come Buy, Come Buy*; Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*; Maria DiCenzo, "Gutter Politics"; and Murray, "Deeds and Words." For histories of the suffrage shops, see Mercer, "Commercial Places"; and Mercer, "Shopping for Suffrage." Margaret Finnegan deals with suffrage and consumption cultures in the USA in *Selling Suffrage*.
10. Tusan, *Women Making News*, 108.
11. DiCenzo, "Militant Distribution," 116.
12. Lysack, *Come Buy*, 141.
13. Tusan, *Women Making News*, 141.
14. Historians of modern shopping culture suggest that the rise of the department store enabled the middle-class woman's engagement with the "public" arena. See Friedberg, *Window Shopping*; Nava, "Modernity's Disavowal"; and Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*.

15. For approaches that take up suffrage culture in relation to modernism and the literary cultures of modernity, see Green, *Spectacular Confessions*; Lyon, *Manifestoes*; Ziarek, *Feminist Aesthetics*; and Chapman, *Making Noise, Making News*.
16. Studies of the suffrage movement and of the WSPU in particular include Rosen, *Rise Up Women!* Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*; Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*; Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*; Joannou and Purvis, eds., *The Women's Suffrage Movement*; Eustance, Ryan and Ugolini, eds., *A Suffrage Reader*; Purvis and Holton, eds., *Votes for Women*; Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*; Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*.
17. Baudrillard, quoted in Brown, "Secret Life," 1.
18. In addition to Brown, see Mao, *Solid Objects*.
19. This section of my chapter draws on my 2008 essay, "Feminist Things" which developed an appreciation of the feminist commodity via Bill Brown's thing theory in order to unpack the feminist everyday (in Ardis and Collier, *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880–1940*). Ben Highmore's 2011 work on objects and the everyday takes Brown's work in a different direction toward a psychoanalytically informed appreciation of familiar objects. See Highmore, "Familiar Things," in *Ordinary Lives*, 58–85.
20. Brown, "Secret Life," 3.
21. Ibid., 2.
22. Ibid., 3.
23. Ibid., 1.
24. Lysak, *Come Buy*, 145.
25. Lysak uses de Certeau to arrive at a parallel reading: "What is significant [in suffrage's appropriations of consumer activities] is not so much the appropriation of consumer culture as the ways in which it is used, hacked into, derailed, and redeployed from moment to moment" (*Come Buy*, 141). Lysak is less interested than I am, however, in the language of sentiment that connects readers to objects and to the newspaper itself.
26. Miller, *Material Cultures*, 6.
27. Ibid., 3, 9.
28. Ibid., 19.
29. Crawford, "Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence," *Women's Suffrage Movement*, 536.
30. Crawford suggests that Pethick Lawrence got the idea of "Self-Denial Week" from the Salvation Army (ibid., 537.)
31. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, *The National Social and Political Union Report of Self-Denial Week*, WSPU pamphlet, 1908, The Women's Library, London School of Economics, UDC Pamphlet Collection,

- Suffrage Pamphlets, Classmark 396-11, Ref. Num. PC/06/396-11/25, Box 382, 1.
32. Pethick Lawrence, *Report of Self-Denial*, 1, 4.
33. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, "A Letter to Women: Self-Denial Week," *Votes for Women*, February 26, 1909, 381.
34. Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in Appadurai, ed., *Social Life of Things*, 3-4.
35. Anon., "The Hidden Springs: How Women are Filling the War Chest," *Votes for Women*, May 6, 1910, 514.
36. Ibid., 514.
37. Ibid., 514.
38. Ibid., 514.
39. Pethick, Lawrence, "A Letter to Women," 381.
40. Anon., "Self-Denial Week," *Votes for Women*, February 26, 1909, 378.
41. Lysak, *Come Buy, Come Buy*, 145.
42. Evelyn Sharp, "Planting the Flag at Prince's," *Votes for Women*, May 21, 1909, no page available.
43. Jane Marcus, "Introduction: Re-reading the Pankhursts and Women's Suffrage," in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. Marcus, 1-2. There is quite a bit of work that investigates the representation of the suffragette's body through the practice of the hunger-strike. See, for example, Ziarek, "Bare Life on Strike"; Ellmann, *The Hunger Artists*; Howlett, "Writing on the Body?"; Green, *Spectacular Confessions*.
44. Green, "The Feel of the Feminist Network." Also see, Green, "Suffragette Celebrity at Home from Abroad."
45. Pethick Lawrence, "A Letter to Women," 381.
46. Ibid., 381.
47. Ibid., 381.
48. The information in this section is drawn from Angela John's biography *Evelyn Sharp: Rebel Woman*.
49. Also see Green, *Spectacular Confessions*, 42-4.
50. Anon., "The Exhibition Day by Day," *Votes for Women*, May 21, 1909, no page available.
51. Evelyn Sharp, "Planting the Flag at Prince's," *Votes for Women*, May 21, 1909, no page available.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.

57. For another reading of Sharp's writing in relation to feminist consumption, see Lysack, *Come Buy, Come Buy*, 157–68. Lysack points out the ways in which suffragettes are positioned as both sellers and shoppers, a positioning that blurs the "boundaries between consumption and production" (164).
58. Evelyn Sharp, "Painting Kensington Purple, White and Green," *Votes for Women*, March 12, 1909, 422.
59. *Ibid.*, 422.
60. Anon, "Under the Clock," *Votes for Women*, May 13, 1910, 533.
61. Sharp, "Painting Kensington," 422.
62. *Ibid.*, 422.
63. Sharp, "Votes for Women—Forward!," in *Rebel Women*, 92–100.
64. Lysack reads this scene as emblematic of the suffragette's ability to meet the consumer where she is: "These suffragettes are able to formulate their selling tactics only when they put themselves in the shoes of their customers, whose dislike of pressure and whose propensity to look and not to buy are commonly ascribed traits of the shopper" (*Come Buy, Come Buy*, 164).
65. Sharp, "Votes for Women—Forward!," 93.
66. *Ibid.*, 96.
67. Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," in Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 73.
68. Wicke, "Coterie Consumption: Bloomsbury, Keynes, and Modernism as Marketing," in *Marketing Modernism*, eds. Dettmar and Watt, 121.
69. *Ibid.*, 110.
70. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, "The World We Live In: Woman in the Home," *Votes for Women*, November 19, 1909.
71. *Ibid.*
72. Evelyn Sharp, "The World We Live In: The Game That Wasn't Cricket," *Votes for Women*, October 1, 1909, 7.
73. *Ibid.*, 7.
74. Christopher St. John, "The World We Live In," *Votes for Women*, October 8, 1909, 23.
75. Christopher St. John, "The World We Live In: Suffrage on the Stage," *Votes for Women*, November 12, 1909, 108.
76. Mary Neal, "The World We Live In: Red Champion," *Votes for Women*, October 15, 1909, 39.
77. *Ibid.*, 39.
78. *Ibid.*, 39.
79. G. Vaughan, "The World We Live In: At the Society of Women Artists," *Votes for Women*, February 25, 1910, 339.

80. Ibid., 339.
81. Ibid., 339.
82. Katrina Rolley notes that a fashion column appeared in "sixteen issues from 30 July 1908 to 17 November 1911," and "generally contained conventional fashion reporting aimed at fairly wealthy women" ("Fashion, Femininity and the Fight for the Vote," 52). Also see Montz, "Now She's All Hat and Ideas"; Parkins, "Taking *Liberty's*, Breaking Windows"; Parkins, "What to Wear to a Protest March."
83. Tusan, *Women Making News*, 155.
84. Lysack, *Come Buy*, 146, 165.
85. Advertisement, *Votes for Women*, April 30, 1909, 616.
86. Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor*, 3.
87. Rolley, "Fashion, Femininity," 56, 60.
88. Tusan, *Women Making News*, 154.
89. "Nita," "The World We Live In: On Frocks and Other Things," *Votes for Women*, November 5, 1909, 87.
90. "Nita," "The World We Live In: Notes upon the Changing Fashions," *Votes for Women*, April 22, 1910, 477; "Nita," "The World We Live In: Some Notes upon New Dress," *Votes for Women*, April 15, 1910, 457; "Nita," "The World We Live In: On Frocks and Other Things," *Votes for Women*, December 10, 1909, 167.
91. "Nita," "The World We Live In: On Frocks and Other Things," *Votes for Women*, December 10, 1909, 167.
92. Ibid., 167.
93. Pham, "Paul Poiret's Magical Techno-Oriental Fashions (1911)," 9, 4.
94. On imperial feminism, see Ian Fletcher, "Women of the Nations, Unite!," 106. Also see Burton, *Burdens of History*.
95. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, "A World-Wide Renaissance," *Votes for Women*, 27 January 1911, p. 276.
96. Teresa Billington-Greig, "Woman's Wider World: Women in Transition," *The Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser*, November 2, 1907, p. 11.
97. Ibid., p. 11.
98. Teresa Billington-Greig, "Scheme for a Weekly Article on Women's Wider World," typescript, Teresa Billington-Greig Papers, Women's Library, London School of Economics, Reference Number 7/TBG2/G4, Box 404.
99. Ibid.
100. Teresa Billington-Greig, "The Things That Matter," typescript, Teresa Billington-Greig Papers, Women's Library, London School of Economics, Reference number 7/TBG/G6, Box 404.

101. Materials held in the Teresa Billington-Greig collection in the Women's Library suggest that many of the articles written for this series were published after 1907, though I have not yet been able to locate the place of publication. My sources for this section include typescripts and notes for proposed articles.
102. Teresa Billington-Greig, "Woman's Wider World: Woman and World Service," *The Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser*, November 30, 1907, p. 10.
103. Ibid.
104. Teresa Billington Greig, letter to Periton Maxwell, December 26, 1912, typescript, Teresa Billington-Greig Papers, The Women's Library, London School of Economics, Reference Number 7/TBG2/G3, Box 404.
105. Hilton, "The Female Consumer," 104. For other readings of socialist feminist theories of consumption, see Karen Hunt, "Negotiating the Boundaries of the Domestic"; Tobin, "Introduction: Consumption as a Gendered Social Practice."
106. Billington-Greig, *The Consumer in Revolt*, 269.
107. Ibid., 273.
108. Ibid., 286.
109. Hilton, "The Female Consumer," 105, 104.
110. Teresa Billington-Greig, "Woman's Wider World: The Woman Who Buys," January 24, 1913, typescript, Teresa Billington-Greig Papers, The Women's Library, London School of Economics, Reference Number 7/TBG2/G4, Box 404.
111. Billington-Greig, "The Woman Who Buys," 1.
112. Teresa Billington-Greig, description of inventions, Teresa Billington-Greig Papers, The Women's Library, London School of Economics, Reference Number 7/TBG2/T1, Box 416.
113. Garvey, *Writing with Scissors*, 3.
114. Ibid., 4.
115. Green, *Spectacular Confessions*, 143–68.
116. DiCenzo, "Gutter Politics," 16. DiCenzo elaborates upon the distinction between articles promoting street selling the feminist paper published *within* the paper *Votes for Women* and those autobiographical or fictional reflections on street selling published elsewhere that often provided a complex portrait of its difficulties.
117. *Votes for Women*, for example, published "regular appeals for paper-sellers, competitions to motivate sales, and testimonials designed to encourage more women to buy, promote and sell the paper" (ibid., 16).
118. Colmore, *Suffragette Sally*, 91.
119. Robins, *The Convert*, 35.

120. Ibid., 185.
121. Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," 168.
122. Ibid., 164.
123. Ibid., 167.
124. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, "A Second Letter to Women," *Votes for Women*, March 5, 1909, 403.
125. Anon., "Votes for Women Week," *Votes for Women*, March 5, 1909, 396.
126. Pethick Lawrence, "Second Letter to Women," 403.
127. See Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*; DiCenzo, "Militant Distribution." For an alternative to the Habermasian formula for feminist periodical studies, see DiCenzo with Delap and Ryan, *Feminist Media History: Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere*.
128. See Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*.
129. I am grateful to Mary Chapman for this point. Electronic mail conversation.

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