THE MISSION OF MARY ELIZA HAWEIS (1848-1898)

by

Laura Allen

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Contents

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Abstract

This thesis reclaims the author and illustrator Mary Eliza Haweis and is the first study to bring together the various facets of her career including published literature, unpublished writings, and memoranda. The current presentation of Haweis in scholarship is one-dimensional – Haweis is a connoisseur of women's fashion, a female aesthete. Her other literary outputs, mentioned anecdotally, tie her casually to the Suffrage movement. The first aim of this thesis is to fill the gap in the current understanding of this under-researched woman writer. Secondly, this thesis will showcase a way to recover marginalised women writers that reads across modes and which challenges binaries, including the categories of feminist and anti-feminist.

Haweis' mission – the empowerment of women - is like a mosaic. It is made up of many pieces, sometimes fragmentary, and this thesis encapsulates a range of the writer's works to produce a rich, comprehensive work of recovery. Haweis' writings, which span 1848 to 1898, cover both the domestic and political lives of women in the nineteenth century. She wrote of dress, furniture, housekeeping, unionising, the right to vote, and divorce. Haweis' works present seemingly conflicting ideas, some traditional and others progressive, and it is this which is significant to the scholarship of marginalised women writers. The academic work on recovering such women writers is extensive, yet it has been criticised for "producing reductive versions of their oeuvres, which highlight politically pleasing utterances and gloss over the rest" (Schaffer 11). This study starts at the end of Haweis' career with the last work published in her lifetime, her "politically pleasing" novel *A Flame of Fire* (1897), and then works backwards to tease out a complex presentation of Haweis. This thesis ultimately demonstrates how Haweis and her works challenge, thwart, and expand upon the existing categories in feminism and women's writing.

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A PhD is often described as a solitary endeavour, and in many ways that is true, but looking back I can see clearly now that never once was I ever alone.

I dedicate this thesis to the women writers of the past, for without your voices I could not have found my own.

Published parts of this thesis are as follows:
"[T]he laws themselves must be wicked and imperfect": The Struggle for Divorce in Mary Eliza Haweis's *A Flame of Fire* chapter for *For Better, For Worse: Marriage in Victorian Novels by Women* edited collection, published by Routledge, 2018.

The Mission of Mary Eliza Haweis (1848-1898)

Introduction

"It may well be asked, how did Mrs. Haweis find time for such numerous and diverse activities, and how was she able to carry such perfection into them all?"

(*The Woman's Signal*. 1899)

Mary Eliza Haweis (née Joy) was born in London on 21 of February 1848 and during her lifetime, up to her death in Bath on the 24 of November 1898, she wrote and illustrated various works of literature. Her full corpus of works include: *Chaucer for Children: a Golden Key* (1877; 2nd edition 1882), *The Art of Beauty* (1878), *The Art of Dress* (1879), *Chaucer for Schools* (1881; 2nd edition 1899), *The Art of Decoration* (1881), *Beautiful Houses: Being a Description of Certain Well-Known Artistic Houses* (1882), *Chaucer's Beads: a Birthday Book, Diary and Concordance of Chaucer's Proverbs or Soothsaws* (1884), *Rus in Urbe: Flowers that Thrive in London Gardens & Smoky Towns* (1886), *Tales from Chaucer* (1887), *The Art of Housekeeping: a Bridal Garland* (1889) and finally *A Flame of Fire* (1897).

Reading across different modes of literature will be shown to be an important element in this thesis, and, indeed, in the larger context of the study of marginalised women writers. In order to recover Haweis and her works in as full, and undistorted, a way as possible the texts chosen for this thesis have been selected from across the broad spectrum of her published, and unpublished, literature. These works have been divided into the following chapters chiefly by theme. The thesis will discuss all of the aforementioned works, with comparatively less emphasis placed on *Beautiful Houses*, *Chaucer's Beads*, and *Tales from Chaucer* as the content of these works are similar to *The Art of Decoration* and the Chaucer works which are discussed. There are four classifications which Haweis' works can be divided into. These include the Chaucer

books, the aesthetic manuals, writing for the periodical press, and fiction. *Chaucer for Children* (1877) and *Chaucer for Schools* (1881) are texts in which Haweis translated the original work into modern language. The former is intended for mothers to read to their children, whilst the latter was written as part of a school course and is intended for students. These texts also included Haweis' own illustrations of the tales. In these works, Haweis blended the masculine study of the literary forefather Chaucer with the feminine pastime of reading to children. The aesthetic manuals are all titled '*The Art of*' and are advice manuals written for women concerning domestic matters. These are also illustrated by Haweis. In these texts, Haweis combined aestheticism with the popular, and gave them a conspicuous capital A for art. The articles for the periodical press span Haweis' entire career, as her first published articles were later recycled into '*The Art of*' books. She continued to write articles for the press, alternating between domestic articles and articles on the Suffrage. Whilst Haweis only had one novel published, she had written many fragmented pieces of fiction which were never completed. Her novel, *A Flame of Fire* (1897), should certainly be considered as part of the genre of New Woman Fiction. It demonstrates considerable resistance to the institution of marriage, what had been contemporarily termed the 'marriage question', and which is considered to be a core element of New Woman writing during the *fin de siècle*. Yet Haweis, and many other marginalised woman writers from the same time, have not found their place amongst writers such as Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, or Marie Corelli. Haweis herself can be considered as much a 'New Woman' as Grand or Caird, whom she knew professionally. For example, Haweis' diverse ideas about women's rights and traditional values are not mutually exclusive, leading to the conclusion that she is emblematic of the 'New Woman' who was a "mobile and contradictory figure" (Pykett xi).

The ‘New Woman’ as an historical construct is essential to the foundation of this thesis. The New Woman, and her fiction, challenges modern structures and parameters of feminism. Through an exploration across modes of writing, this thesis will show the resistance of Haweis’ works to categorisation. It will also demonstrate that this is in fact an integral aspect of the ‘New Woman.’ Many scholars have highlighted this feature in their works. In 1997, Sally Ledger wrote of the “radical instability of the New Woman as a category” (154) and this idea was taken forward in later works such as *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminism* (2000) which states that “Even the factual writers who defined and were defined as New Women were apt to shift and contest the parameters of the category” (Heilmann 2). Pykett contended that New Woman writing served to “problematise the category of woman” (195) continuing in the foreword to *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms* (2019) to state that the editor’s aims in writing the book were to “resist any tendency…to homogenize the category” (xii). It is ironic that one way in which to unify the New Woman is through her desire to resist unity itself. This thesis takes forward this idea, which is represented in the vital scholarship on the New Woman and the *Fin de Siècle* and which can become a tool through which to understand, and build upon, the current understanding of Haweis.

The following chapters are loosely structured upon genre classifications, but the focus is more upon the similar themes presented in her works of literature rather than the type of literature itself. Thus, whilst some of the aesthetic texts are grouped together, *The Art of Housekeeping* (1889) is given a separate chapter from the rest. Haweis’ multimodal writing enables a reading which destabilises categories and genre. Haweis wrote in a variety of forms, partly because she had an interest in many topics of the day and partly because of financial necessity. In his thesis, “‘Furniture is a kind of dress’: Interiors as Projection of Self” (2006)

Mark Taylor posited that Haweis' "diverse outpourings might signify either a scattergun approach to publishing, or that she sees connections between all sides of a social and political issue, such that her apparent vacillations are simply proof of open mindedness and tolerance" (5). These readings are plausible, but they do not consider that for Haweis money was a key motivator. Her household finances were continually strained and she explicitly stated that she had to write to earn for her family, like so many women writers during this period. Thus, the need to make money perhaps pushed Haweis into genres of writing that would sell well. That is not to say that her intentions were purely financial, for Haweis' extensive research showcases a commitment to her works of literature that goes beyond this base necessity. Haweis' writing is used in this thesis to challenge the binaries of 'high' or 'low' literature which are "premised on gendered hierarchies which privilege the supposedly 'masculine' (serious, aesthetic, form-orientated, important art) over the 'feminine' (popular, polemical, content-oriented, inessential)" (Heilmann 7). Haweis' works, when read in tandem, provide thought-provoking combinations of what was, and still is, understood to be traditionally masculine or feminine literary styles. Haweis, this thesis will show, was therefore adept at circumventing the binaries of high and low literature and is a significant case study for scholarship on marginalised Victorian woman writers.

Haweis' was the eldest of three children to Thomas Musgrave Joy and Eliza Rohde Joy (née Spratt). Although Haweis was not formally educated, she was taught an appreciation for art at a young age by her father. He was a portrait painter who had earned some renown after being commissioned to paint a royal portrait of the Prince of Wales for Queen Victoria, alongside a portrait of her dogs. At eighteen, Haweis had one of her own paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy. This penchant for drawing and painting, exhibited in the numerous sketches preserved

by Haweis' family members and archived at The Women's Library in London, transferred easily to illustration. Haweis would later illustrate her own works with historically accurate period sketches. It was Haweis' artistic talents that caught the attention of a suitor, and her future husband, the Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis. It was at this moment that a young Mary Eliza entered a world in which she would herself express feeling much more in her element. The meeting between Haweis and her future husband was a pivotal moment not only for her personal life but for her professional one. Hugh Reginald was an author and popular preacher, who already had his works published. As a child, Hugh Reginald had demonstrated an aptitude for musicality which flourished when he entered Cambridge. It had been said of him that "he is one of the best amateur violinists in England" ("THE REV. H. R. HAWEIS" 930). The flair inherited from his love of music and theatricality seeped into his career as a clergyman; as a preacher he became well known for his flamboyant and eccentric style. Haweis recorded his flamboyant style, noting "The poor man did not stop talking once, though we often pressed him to rest himself" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 7). He was the incumbent at St James, Marylebone, which was the Haweis family's local church.

The earliest memorandum belonging to Haweis begins in 1864 when she was just sixteen years old. It opens, "Ever since Mr. Haweis had resided in the neighbourhood and officiated as Curate at St. James the Less, I have been ambitious of becoming acquainted with him" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 1). Haweis attempted to record his sermons word for word in her diaries, which suggests that she felt a degree of reverence towards him. Indeed, she recorded that he had "something very attractive in his face, as of a man who commands respect and affection from all who see him" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 1). As an authoritative, professional figure Hugh Reginald was an appealing prospect, and one which the young Haweis could gain much

from. Hugh Reginald often courted Haweis with lines of poetry and she recounted one such occasion in which he "walked with me and the Selfes to the park quoting many verses from "In Memoriam" which I said I had not yet finished reading" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 31). She was particularly impressed that he quoted the poem in "so tender so impassioned & solemn a tone" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 31). Hugh Reginald's formal education was, even in those early days, already benefiting Haweis' writing. He read Haweis' manuscripts and juvenilia, including her poems. Haweis wrote that he had said that there "was so much good in them so much undeveloped power – but they were without form" to which she responded, "I said I knew nothing about the rules of prose or poetry" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 61). Hugh Reginald then gifted her a volume of Emerson's poetry and Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* (1851). Ruskin would go on to be a key figure in Haweis' aesthetic philosophies and it is clear that Hugh Reginald influenced Haweis' literary tastes, though he seems to have preferred her to keep to domestic artistic pursuits: "He thinks me very clever and (!!!) quite equal in my drawing & painting, to him in his writing, preaching, & music!" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 48). Haweis' desire to be close to Hugh Reginald was compounded by her desire for knowledge. There is a telling entry in November 1866, in which she described her ideal husband. It is worth quoting in its entirety:

> he must be clever – somebody I revered, & feared a little in the right way: someone whom I felt to be far my superior & cd trust accordingly. I have never had that opinion of anyone yet: someone who cd & wd teach me to be better than I am – teach me to be forbearing & indefatigable, sincere & frank; I have been shut up so long! He must think me better than himself, he must prefer me in honour; Yet he must not be too perfect, else I should be no helpmeet. While he thought me his equal & even superior, he must be mine. We must be master & I

> servant, he keeper, & I kept, he must be King and I subject. (7MEH/5/1 "Thought Book I" 34)

Haweis' ideal husband, then, was a man who could teach her the lessons she had not been allowed to learn as a woman. She could not go to school, or engage with higher education, as her future husband had. But, Haweis could learn from Hugh Reginald.

Shortly following their marriage, Haweis became pregnant. Their first child was named for her father, Reginald Joy. Haweis recorded that she did not feel the maternal instinct espoused by Victorians. In May 1869 Haweis wrote "Even – I believe it – if the poor little squealer died, I do not think I should grieve much after a day or two" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 8). Haweis' struggles with maternal relationships continued from this first experience throughout her life and were perhaps owing to the death of this first child. In June 1869, Haweis wrote in her diary that "the next time I saw his little face it was so old and worn with suffering" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 10). Haweis lamented that she was impatient with him and reflected on how little she knew of motherhood. It must have been a similar experience for many young wives at this time, sent from their family homes into a new world that Victorian prudishness prevented them from truly understanding. When her next child was born, Haweis wrote "I know not what I want or don't want. I only know that I don't want children. But perhaps I might want them some time. If my Gub wants them I can but give him them. I do little enough for him" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 16). The irony in the nickname she ascribes to Hugh Reginald, Gub being a shortened form of gubernator, the Latin for Governor, betrays a very early resentment for the inequality between the sexes. Haweis fulfilled her duty and in 1870 Lionel was born. He was delivered by the female doctor, and Suffragist, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. Anderson was the first qualified woman physician in Britain and the founder of the first hospital staffed by women.

The New Hospital for Women (1872) was later renamed in her honour as the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Obstetric Hospital. Her sister, Millicent Garrett Fawcett was later admired by Haweis.

Haweis continued to hone her writing skills as she assisted Hugh Reginald by correcting proofs and answering letters. It soon became a task which Haweis recognised was beneath her, as she unenthusiastically wrote: "what happiness to help my old man – some wives couldn't – how thankful I ought to be – I don't suppose I am – but perhaps I am – I shd. like to be – I try to be" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 12). Despite writing in her diary how she desired to be the helpmeet of her future husband, the reality of this was underwhelming for Haweis, especially since she realised that she was fast becoming his superior. In a letter to her mother, Haweis remarked "he is a mere ship without mast or rudder when I am not by. My clear head has saved him from many sad mistakes…when he writes letters from the club I am not there to make addresses legible, to alter spellings of words of one syllable…& other general supervision" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 5). Soon, however, Haweis would come out in print under her own name with articles appearing in the *Guardian*, *Spectator*, and local newspapers from 1872 onwards. She also wrote for *St. Paul's* magazine during this period. Haweis recorded her first interest in fiction writing in 1872: "I mean to bring out a sensation novel some day: and I hope that will be a success" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 35). There are no further mentions of Haweis working on a novel, but in 1873 she is once again pregnant: "I suppose I must not complain because my Rent is needed from me again! If God needs a tithe of all I possess I ought not to be so enraged and melancholy" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 39). Rent and tithe are curious turns of phrase, and they illuminate how Haweis felt about her role in society. Childbirth was a necessity of her existence; rather than being a joy, it was transactional. Their second child

was a daughter, and she was named for her father – Hugolin Olive. The next two years were spent writing, and Haweis recorded that during this time her "evenings at home are engaged in work & silence" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 41). The following year, 1878, her third, and final, child was born – Stephen Hugh Willyams. Haweis' final journal entry is in 1876, and Haweis wrote "I close this book, chronicle of perhaps the most eventful 10 years of my life, with a sense of utter thankfulness" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 53). It is not clear whether she meant that she was thankful for the last decade, or that she was thankful that it had now come to an end. The years following this entry would see Haweis step into her role as writer and illustrator, proper.

Critical Field & Methodology

Haweis wrote of herself in a diary entry, "I laugh in reading back the book of my life…how each mood like a coloured lens, tinted the world to me" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book I" 43). The use of Haweis' memoranda in conjunction with her published literature is a major feature of this thesis. The thesis is the first work to synthesise little studied, often unpublished, documents from four different archives, offering an unprecedented study on the author. The first, and most extensively used, is the collection titled Papers of Mary Eliza Haweis and Family from the Women's Library at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The collections held in the Women's Library at the LSE track the development of the campaign for women's rights from early suffrage and the majority of the material held there dates from the nineteenth century to today. The material is focused in the United Kingdom. The Women's Library began as The Library of the London Society for Women's Services in 1926, was renamed to the Fawcett Library in 1957, and then again as the Women's Library in 2002. The Haweis collection moved to the LSE in 2013. As the major theme of the Women's Library is the

campaign for women's rights and equality, the papers of Haweis have found a suitable host. The papers were brought together, according to the custodial history, 'by Bea Howe during research for her biography of Mary Eliza Haweis, *Arbiter of Elegance*, published in 1967.' The archive consists of original familial correspondence and papers between 1857 and 1961, twenty-five drawings and poems by Haweis (the 'Juvenilia'), and transcripts of letters from 1856 to 1900 which were collated by Lionel Haweis. The papers include annotations from Haweis' sons Lionel and Stephen which further contextualise the archive. The collection is in three boxes, and is organised into the subheadings Correspondence (7MEH/1), Juvenilia (7MEH/2), Writings (7MEH/3), Family Memorabilia (7MEH/4), Transcripts of Family Papers (7MEH/5), and Publications (7MEH/6). This thesis draws chiefly upon the letters between Haweis and her family, and her diaries, and almost all quotations used in the thesis are taken from 7MEH/5 which includes three volumes: "Memoranda", "Thought Books" (of which there are two, hereafter separated as "Thought Book I" and "Thought Book II") and "Letters to her Ma". The "Thought Books" are the diaries of Haweis which begin in 1865 and which Lionel Haweis transcribed. On the title page the "Thought Books" are said to be 'the property of Lionel Haweis' though there is a pencil note which reads: "but left by his mother to Stephen Haweis!" These "Thought Books" have provided invaluable insight into the private reflections of Haweis, and as they started with her first encounter with Hugh Reginald offered details about their romantic relationship which will fuel much of the discussion of the novel, *A Flame of Fire* in chapter one. The LSE also held a copy of *Words to Women: Address and Essays* (1900) which was edited by Hugh Reginald and published posthumously. *Words to Women* contains copies of many of the lectures that Haweis gave towards the end of her life. Hugh Reginald explained that the book was possible as he found the addresses "written in very tiny characters on long strips of thin

paper…They formed small rolls, and one was found still on the little gutta-percha frame which would lie in the palm of her hand, and could be worked by turning a tiny screw, which unwound the MS. as she read" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 4). These addresses have been used through the thesis to support, expand upon, and complicate the major texts concentrated on. Some of the addresses from this text, such as the "Women as Writers" speech which Haweis gave at the Women Writer's Dinner in June 1894 are discussed at length as they, once more, permit this thesis to prove that Haweis should be considered a New Woman writer.

The second collection, the Haweis Family Fonds 1788 – 1957, held at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Archives, consists of materials collated once more by the Haweis family and likely found its way there as Lionel Haweis was on the staff for the university. The sous-fonds of Mary Eliza Haweis consists of incoming correspondence from 1880 – 1898, copies of manuscripts, and miscellaneous writings. The UBC archive held letters from Mona Caird, Frances Power Cobbe and Sarah Grand, alongside numerous others, that allowed this thesis to more strongly tie Haweis to not only a contemporary political circle but to the New Woman literary scene. The manuscripts at the UBC are crucial to many of the arguments presented in the thesis chapters, especially in chapter one which uses Haweis' fragmentary fiction writings to enhance the reading of *A Flame of Fire*, and in chapter three as the original hand-written version of "The Story of Alison" is used extensively to analyse Haweis' works on Chaucer. The Stephen Haweis Papers 1860-1968 in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Columbia University were the third collection used. This included a selection of writings by Haweis' son, Stephen, whom she was arguably the closest to of all her children. The work found in Subseries II.4: Non-fiction, *Spoilt Child: the Story of Hugh Reginald Haweis,* gave an intriguing insight into the relationship of Haweis and her husband from the perspective of their son and as such is an important addition

to this thesis. Finally, research was conducted at the British Library's reading rooms. The British Library holds a copy of *Four to Fourteen. By a Victorian child*, a work written by Haweis' daughter, Hugolin. It was published in 1939, and though the names of the family members are changed it is clear that it is Hugolin's personal experiences as the child of Mary Eliza and Hugh Reginald. It is the second piece written by one of Haweis' children that this thesis considers and it offers an alternative view to the one presented by Stephen.

Online databases including British Periodicals Collections I & II (ProQuest), British Newspapers 1600-1950 (Gale), and Periodicals Archive Online (ProQuest) were used to collate the various articles written by Haweis, and also about Haweis, for the periodical press. This was chiefly to find and cite the articles used in chapter two, but reviews of Haweis' books in contemporary newspapers are utilised across the chapters. Haweis published many articles, and whilst some are used as the focus of specific chapters others have not been analysed so thoroughly as they sit outside of the primary focus of this thesis. This certainly leaves scope for further study into, as one example, the articles that Haweis published on animal rights including "Art and Anti-Vivisection" (1894) and "Cattle Ships and Abattoirs" (1895). There are also the miscellaneous articles including "Words from the Underground" (1887) published in *Belgravia* that are available through ProQuest but for which there was not an appropriate space for discussion in this thesis. The Internet Archive (archive.org) was a fertile source for accessing copies of books from the 1800s or earlier, including copies of Haweis' '*The Art of'* texts as well as the Chaucer texts. Many of the images of Haweis' illustrations used in this thesis are taken from the Internet Archive, without which the research of this thesis would have been significantly more challenging.

Feminism is the keynote of this thesis and feminist literary criticism, informed by feminist theory, is used throughout. Whilst feminist theory may have a definition, that being the extension of feminism into fiction or philosophical discourses, feminism itself is much harder to define. British feminist literary theory examines how aspects of a culture are inherently patriarchal and suggests that women are unable to write outside of societal constraints. In contrast, French and American feminist literary theory seek to establish how a woman's experiences inform women's writing, noting that this is the key difference from other forms of literature, particularly that written by men. French feminist theory pays particular focus to feminine language. This study is informed by a range of texts from across these three major schools, citing Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar and Hélène Cixous to name but the most well-known. However, the British feminist notion that gender is shaped by a number of factors, including social class for example, is the chief position that this thesis makes use of. French and American feminism has been criticised for being essentialist, whereas British feminism presents the theory that women writers continually break boundaries and resist categorisation. Feminism, at its origins, was dominated by white Western culture ('white feminism') and whilst intersectional feminism as a term was first introduced in 1989, by civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw, and is being used increasingly more since the late 2010s, this critical concept sits outside of the boundaries of this thesis which focuses upon the experiences of a white, cisgender, heterosexual woman. First-wave feminism, which started proper in the late nineteenth century, concentrated on the economic and political rights of the white, middle-class woman. This early feminism is represented by white educated women from outside of the nineteenth century, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Virginia Woolf. However, it is not the point of this thesis to criticise

the boundaries that it sits within, but instead to use feminist criticism and the established concepts of feminism alongside the works of Mary Eliza Haweis in an unprecedented way.

One of the most challenging aspects of this thesis is the question of what feminism is and how this then informs the use of feminist literary criticism. Feminism covers a breadth of social and political movements which aim to establish equality of the sexes. It contends that women are oppressed by patriarchy which marginalises them, defining them as 'other', and that culture dictates gender norms. Whilst feminism may be neatly packaged into these common ideas, it is in fact an evolving, shifting ideology that is almost impossible to pin down. This is why the methodology itself is continually questioned throughout this thesis, as each reading of Haweis' literature further destabilises preconceptions when applying feminist literary criticism to Victorian woman writers. Haweis' direct challenges to the institution of marriage, for example, follow the ideologies of feminism in a comprehensive way insomuch as they do not stray outside of the boundaries that feminism is set within. Conversely, Haweis believed in natural femininity including a number of attributes that many twenty-first century feminists would see as being dictated by patriarchal gender constructs. This thesis will show that one does not negate the other and whilst Haweis sits on both sides on the imaginary scales of 'most feminist' to 'least feminist' she is certainly not alone. Roxane Gay's book *Bad Feminist* (2014) aided in the understanding shown in this thesis that the common perception of feminism is flawed. It is a collection of essays which explore feminism whilst simultaneously encouraging aspects that are often at odds with feminist ideology. Gay's argument that feminism can be pluralistic was instrumental in developing the analysis of Haweis who frequently differed from her contemporaries and from women writers that are seen as the origins of the movement. In reading *Bad Feminist* it became clear that there is no such thing. Gay argues that there is a tendency to applaud what is seen as

'good' feminism: "When these figureheads say what we want to hear, we put them up on the Feminist Pedestal, and when they do something we don't like, we knock them right off" (1). Whilst it is the aim of this thesis to demonstrate Haweis' importance, it is equally the aim to avoid standing her on the 'Feminist Pedestal' as this is as constraining a construct as those created by the patriarchy. Through the following analysis of Haweis, as an example of a Victorian woman writer who destabilises categories and defies binaries, perhaps the pedestal itself can be toppled.

A sampling of feminist literature from the late 1700s to the present was used in the writing of this thesis. Chronologically these include, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), *The Second Sex* (1949), *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), *The Female Eunuch* (1970), *The Beauty Myth* (1990), and the aforementioned *Bad Feminist* (2014). Being the only work of this feminist canon, which is utilised in the thesis, that was read by Haweis, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is central to this thesis. Indeed, as it is one of the earliest seminal works any discussion of feminism could not exclude it. Wollstonecraft famously called for women's right to education, concluding that this would be to the betterment of all society. Wollstonecraft is unique for the concrete ideas she presents in this work, arguing for radical reform of the education system which would foster equality: "I love man as my fellow; but his sceptre, real, or usurped, extends not to me, unless the reason of an individual demands my homage; and even then the submission is to reason, and not to man" (*Vindication* 62). Wollstonecraft clearly influenced Haweis a great deal, as in *A Flame of Fire* she echoed the writer's language that equated women's position in society to slavery and prison. Wollstonecraft's writing is also used to identify points of contention, or difference, of women writers' views on their own sex to argue for a more fluid approach to the idea of feminism itself.

Whilst Haweis was obviously a follower of Wollstonecraft, she was not always in agreement with her.

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) has earned a place in the annals of history. Woolf's use of metaphor, which demonstrates the limited opportunities that women had to write, is a pivotal moment in feminist literature. As the woman described in the book begins to think she is interrupted and told that women are not to walk on the grass and thus she loses her train of thought. It is the crux of the essay that women need to have the space, both physically and mentally, to write. Women writers are therefore constantly in a state of interruption, and their writing style is a response to this. Haweis is no exception. She had written many articles, which would have been easier to finish than lengthy novels. Towards the end of the essay, Woolf tells the reader to "write all kinds of books, hesitating at no subject however trivial or however vast" (*Room* 94) and this was instrumental to the scope of this thesis. Rather than selecting those works that could easily be seen as highbrow, the thesis looks at the corpus of Haweis' works including those that are more popular, or commercial, and seeks the value that each can offer to this work of recovery.

The Second Sex (1949) laid the groundwork for the second wave of feminism, which broadened the debate from focusing upon legal obstacles to gender equality and suffrage. Beauvoir explains how culture creates the concepts of masculine and feminine and in doing so relegates women to a secondary position in society where they are seen as 'other'. Masculinity is the standard for humanity: "If I want to define myself, I first have to say, "I am a woman"; all other assertions will arise from this basic truth. A man never begins by positing himself as an individual of a certain sex: that he is a man is obvious" (Beauvoir 15). Beauvoir posits the

question ‘what is a woman?’ and this extends into this thesis as it seeks to answer this very question through an analysis of Haweis and her works.

The Feminine Mystique (1963) challenged the assumption that women could happily return to a life of housework and marriage after World War II and expressed dissatisfaction with traditionally feminine roles. Friedan identified a discrepancy between the reality of women’s lives and “the image to which we were trying to conform, the image that I came to call the feminine mystique” (7). This ‘feminine mystique’ gives a name to the phenomenon seen in the study of Haweis’ life and works. The reality of Haweis’ life was not as conventional as it may be interpreted to be through reading her texts alone, particularly those texts that conform to ideals of femininity. *The Female Eunuch* is a rejoinder to Friedan’s text that delves more deeply into issues of women’s sexual passivity going so far as to suggest that marriage castrates them. Greer’s work is a crucial addition to the field, though it has been widely criticised in recent years. Greer’s main argument is that married women are denied sexual liberation. Sexual desire is also seen as one of the qualities of the ‘improper’ woman in Lyn Pykett’s *The Improper Feminine: The Women’s Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (1992) that aided in the writing of this thesis. In her novel, Haweis wrote a heroine with difficult, punishable sexual desires, emphasizing this notion.

In *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (1990) Naomi Wolf criticises the beauty industries that oppress women. Wolf claimed that the beauty myth dictated behaviour for women and utilised female appearance as a political weapon, holding the female body hostage against a series of ultimately unattainable goals. This argument improved the direction of this study’s analysis of Haweis’ aesthetic fashion and beauty texts. Assimilating

this work made it possible to bring together Haweis and modern feminist thought, as the ideas and concepts presented in *The Beauty Myth* are echoed by Haweis in *The Art of Beauty*.

In addressing what it means to be 'feminist' this thesis also draws upon works which attempt to define anti-feminism. This includes Tamara Wagner's *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel: Rereading Nineteenth-Century Women Writers* (2009) and Valerie Sanders' *Eve's Renegades: Victorian Anti-Feminist Women Novelists* (1996). Wagner's text analyses the works of Victorian writers felt to be antifeminist to show that excluding such authors from literary study is damaging. It suggests that Victorian writers cannot be pinned down neatly into categories of feminist or antifeminist and argues that revaluating such "antifeminist" works is necessary to an understanding of late Victorian literature. Sanders' work concentrates on the works of four Victorian anti-feminist women writers – Eliza Lynn Linton, Charlotte M. Yonge, Mrs. Humphry Ward, and Margaret Oliphant – to confirm the parameters of the anti-feminist writer. Sanders argues that the mission of these writers is to engender "commitment to the ideology of the home" (7). Both texts helped to create a lens through which to examine, and to understand, Haweis. As Wagner wrote, "a renewed, more open-minded, recuperative work remains the best way to show that Victorian authors are vastly different, versatile, complicated, and often self-contradictory" (9). Haweis glorified traditional roles for women and yet this thesis, in an attempt to consider her works in a more objective way, views this not as proof of her 'anti-feminism' but as testimony that Victorian women writers should not be categorised in a reductive way.

The Aesthetic Movement, which saw an increased desire to move away from the perceived ugliness of an Industrial Age, is often remembered by the phrase *l'art pour l'art* – art for art's sake. This implies that art need serve no political or moral end, and that it can just be.

The artists and writers associated with this movement included, for instance, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Oscar Wilde. Rossetti clearly played an important role in the life and works of Haweis, as will be shown in the following chapters, but from her memoranda it is clear that she felt no affinity with Wilde. In a letter to her son, Lionel, in the spring of 1895 Haweis gave her opinions on the infamous Wilde trial. She wrote that “”Eccentricity” was his beginning, and annihilation is his end, and I rejoice” (7MEH/5/4 126), and that his trial was a “tonic” that has served to “purify and healthify society” (7MEH/5/4 126). Haweis told her son that she never had “the slightest sympathy with the Cloaca Maximia which represents him and his life work” (7MEH/5/4 126). One can only assume that she is speaking of Wilde’s magnum opus *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and likening it to one of the world's earliest sewage systems. This is emblematic of Haweis’ contradictions. She is at once a follower of the Aesthetic Movement and a harsh critic of one of the most famous spokespersons for it. Aestheticism is central to Haweis’ works and Talia Schaffer’s *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (2000) claimed that Haweis “may be said to have founded the field of aesthetic fashion reform” (108). Schaffer’s book challenged the study of aestheticism that saw it as a purely masculine field. By drawing on Wilde’s magazine *The Woman’s World*, Schaffer contended that there is a side to aestheticism that had been largely forgotten. Her work centred on female aesthetes and provided one rationale for why there are inconsistencies found in the texts of writers like Haweis: “The female aesthetes were constantly trying to reconcile competing notions of identity – being female yet being aesthetic; living like New Women while admiring Pre-Raphaelite maidens; trying to be mondaines (Ouida’s term for cosmopolitan female dandies) but also emulating Angels in the House” (Schaffer 4). This notion has been taken forward in the

thesis, as “competing notions of identity” are a central motif throughout the thesis, including the ways in which Haweis tried to understand herself by writing.

Each chapter of this thesis makes use of a distinct field of study, and whilst there is crossover between these fields because Haweis unites them as a locus, it is perhaps more conducive to discuss the works used in each chapter independently. Chapter one analyses Haweis’ fiction works and therefore makes use of a landmark piece of feminist literary criticism *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979). Gilbert and Gubar’s ‘Anxiety of Authorship’ fits Haweis and the ways in which her fiction writings focus on identity. Gilbert and Gubar’s notion suggests that the women writer, having few precursors to emulate and learn from, harbours a deep sense of insecurity which translates to a struggle to find their own authorial voice. The field of New Woman fiction was crucial in the forming of this thesis. In 1894 Sarah Grand coined the term ‘New Woman’ giving a name to the phenomenon happening in the final two decades of the Victorian era. Since the 1970s the study of New Woman fiction has increased significantly. Showalter’s *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1984), Ledger’s *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (1997), and Heilmann’s *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminism* (2000) aid in the understanding of just what New Woman fiction is and offer core concepts that are then used to contend that Haweis’ novel belongs within this genre. The study of sexual consent in Victorian writing is a relatively new addition to the critical field. Articles such as Judith Pike’s “"My name was Isabella Linton": Coverture, Domestic Violence, and Mrs. Heathcliff's Narrative in Wuthering Heights” (2009) foster dialogue regarding consent that is expanded upon in chapter one which asserts that coverture is the antithesis to consent. Pike’s article critiques the ways in which Isabella has been largely

dismissed in works on *Wuthering Heights* and through an analysis of Isabella's letter Pike showcases Brontë's understanding of how coverture law was exploited to detain, control, and even force women into sexual situations due to their position as a wife. Building on the notion of imprisonment presented by Pike, and by Gilbert and Gubar, chapter one makes use of the study of Gothicism in literature. Patricia Murphy's *The New Woman Gothic: Reconfigurations of Distress* (2016) links New Woman fiction with Gothic literature to show how the gothic evolved into the metaphorical space in women's writing towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The networking that the periodical could foster between often separate groups of women is discussed in chapter two, and Marianne Van Remoortel's article "International Feminism, Domesticity, and the Interview in the Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald" (2018) contributed to the notion of community developed in this chapter. Van Remoortel's focus is on the interview, which they contend was a key feature of British feminist periodicals. They suggest that the interview became a vehicle through which it was possible to "attune the fragmented voices of early British feminism to the nascent international women's movement" (Van Remoortel 252). In chapter two, this idea is applied to Haweis as her own fragmented voice is added, and links to other women writing for the periodical press are discovered and explored.

There is, comparatively, more that has been written about the Chaucer texts than any of Haweis' other texts. First and foremost is Mary Flowers Braswell's *The Forgotten Chaucer Scholarship of Mary Eliza Haweis, 1848-1898* (2016) which is the first book-length piece focusing entirely upon Haweis as a Chaucerian. It presents Haweis as a scholar, and stresses her relationships with the historians John Richard Green and Frederic Furnivall. Of particular interest to this thesis is chapter three, 'Mary Eliza Haweis and *The Miller's Tale'* which contends that Haweis "radically changed modern-day views of the Victorian reception of the tale" (Braswell

70). The contrast between “The Miller’s Tale” and “The Clerk’s Tale” forms the central argument presented in chapter three of this thesis and Braswell’s critique is the sole piece currently written on Haweis’ rewriting of this tricky tale. Nevertheless, Braswell takes an insular view of the Chaucer books, making scant reference to the rest of Haweis’ works and in the writing of chapter three, the aim was to fill in some of the gaps left by this work, namely the connections that can be made between the Chaucer texts and Haweis’ other works. Margaret Connolly’s “Dr Furnival and Mother like the same old books': Mary Haweis and the Experience of Reading Chaucer in the Nineteenth Century” offered a second view on the Chaucer books. The focus in this article is on the relationship of mother and child and Connolly states that the preface “constructs an audience for *Chaucer for Children* that is comprised of the very young and those responsible for their care, and circumscribes Haweis's field of authority as that of the home” (8). In contrast to Connolly, this thesis focuses upon the portrayal of the female characters in Haweis’ Chaucer books instead of the relationship between the intended reader (the mother) and her child to show that her field of authority extends beyond the home.

Several pieces were invaluable to the formation of chapter four, including *Architectural Identities: Domesticity, Literature, and the Victorian Middle Class* (2010), *Women and Personal Property in the Victorian Novel* (2010), and Diana Maltz’s *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870–1900: Beauty for the People* (2006). Maltz’s work suggests that some aesthetes, particularly women aesthetes, believed that art could be used for the sake of others, and not just ‘for art’s sake’. These aesthetes sought to reform the lower classes with art. This form of philanthropy has been termed ‘missionary aestheticism’ and it is a way in which middle class reformers could “articulate their ambition for social reform, their belief in duty, their compassion for the impoverished, their revulsion at squalor, and their faith in the beautiful”

(Maltz 217). The term ‘missionary aestheticism’ engendered an approach through which to scrutinise Haweis’ gardening text, *Rus in Urbe*, which has not before been written about. Alongside this, two articles aided in the analysis of the gardening text including Sarah Bilston’s “Queens of the Garden: Victorian Women Gardeners and the Rise of the Gardening Advice Text” (2008) and Robin Veder’s “Mother-Love for Plant-Children: Sentimental Pastoralism and Nineteenth-Century Parlour Gardening” (2007).

Three key texts were used to explore the field of dress study: *Beauty's Body: Femininity and Representation in British Aestheticism (1997), Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women’s Fiction: Literacy, Textiles, and Activism (2009)* and *Dress and Identity in British Literary Culture, 1870-1914* (2016). The first book explicitly references Haweis, as a contributor to the field of female aestheticism, and Psomiades writes “by stressing desire over the regulation of desire, Haweis incites the feminine consumer to locate aesthetic taste in her own embodied interiority, rather than in an external code” (152). Psomiades’s views that Haweis advocated for women to discover their own sartorial identity through reading her texts is echoed in this thesis. Secondly, Kortsch’s text presents the notion of ‘dress literacy’ which is shown to be a specific type of feminine knowledge. Kortsch also makes brief mention of Haweis as “the well-known artist and art writer” (82) and references Haweis’ writing about corsets. In the last book referenced here, written by Rosy Aindow, sartorial identity is discussed and fashion as a new commodity in the Victorian era is investigated. Aindow examines how fiction responded to the rise of the fashion industry, and the anxieties surrounding the eroding of a class identity as clothing became more replicable and available to all classes. Aindow’s argument that “to engage in fashion – to buy, wear, and sell – in late nineteenth-century fiction was to enter (albeit

unintentionally) into a gendered discourse" (153) informed the reading of Haweis' *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress.*

The work that has been done to understand the roles and responsibilities which women had in the Victorian home provided a lens through which to view Haweis' *The Art of Housekeeping*. Specifically, the link between women and money is presented in "The economic role of middle-class women in Victorian Glasgow" (2000), *Women and Their Money 1700-1950: Essays on Women and Finance* (2008), and Lieffers' article "'Every family might be its own Economical Housekeeping Company (Limited)': managing the middle-class home in nineteenth-century England" (2012). Whilst Gordon and Nair look specifically at an area in Glasgow, they also address the middle-class woman's economic role more generally and assert that the independence and activity of such women, which has been obscured, is deserving of more recognition. *Essays on Women and Finance* further enhances the study of women and finance, also claiming that it is a neglected area of literature. Leiffers article equates domestic labour with the rise in industrialisation, forging links between the public and private spheres where both money and subordinates, or workers, were managed in similar ways. These works enhanced the presentation in this chapter of Haweis, who was arguably consumed by thoughts of money. She was dependent upon the sales of her books for income, unable to rely on her husband's alone. This chapter explores the misogynistic view of 'women's work', which suggests it is not true 'work' and utilises Haweis' domestic manual to challenge the assumptions that have, historically, been made regarding domestic labour. Haweis' work is read alongside the discourse begun by such works as Branca's *Silent Sisterhood* (1975) and Burman's *Fit Work for Women* (1979). Both texts recovered Victorian women from the myth that their space in the home was frivolous and unimportant to British social history.

As the goal of this thesis is the recovery of Mary Eliza Haweis, a broad search of mentions of the writer in any field of study was conducted in order to create an overview of how Haweis has been perceived in recent years. Though there are few works devoted solely to Haweis, with Braswell's book on the Chaucer texts being one of the more significant ones, there are many references to Haweis in a diverse cross section of literature. *The Cosmopolitan Interior: Liberalism and the British Home 1870-1914* (2008) claims that "with *The Art of Decoration* of 1881 by Mary Eliza Haweis, the principle of individuality was in full command of the entire house" (Neiswander 35). *Fashioning the Feminine: Representation and Women's Fashion from the fin de Siècle to the Present* (2001) includes brief mention that Haweis had a "concern with an appropriate level of decorum in the dress of middle-class women" (Buckley and Fawcett 31). And, in *Women, Scholarship and Criticism C.1790-1900* (2000) it is stated that "Haweis managed to secure for herself wide acclaim as an arbiter of taste; and she did so partly by justifying her opinions by reference to the better established discipline of history" (Perry 160). Most references to Haweis begin in the 2000s, and she also features in the following sampling of texts: *Feminist Realism at the Fin de Siècle* (2007), *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey* (2013), *Printing the Middle Ages* (2013), *Crossings in Text and Textile* (2015), *Home and Away: The Place of the Child Writer* (2016), *The Handbook of Interior Architecture and Design* (2017) and *Fashion and Authorship: Literary Production and Cultural Style from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Century* (2020). From this sample of titles, it is clear that Haweis' has been included in various scholarly fields – from fashion to architecture and medievalism – but that her works remain largely disjointed. This study finds connections between these various disciplines to bring together her works and to make Haweis' position in the current critical field less dispersed and tenuous.

The only other currently published work that takes Haweis as its sole subject, outside of Braswell's book, is Bea Howe's *Arbiter of Elegance*. Published by The Harvill Press in 1967, it is a biography crafted by Howe using the manuscripts and memoranda collated by Haweis' family and in particular her son Stephen to whom the book is dedicated. The biography has twelve chapters, each dealing with a period of time in Haweis' life from her childhood to her death. The introduction to the book does not discuss Haweis for three pages, and once it does find its way to Haweis, through the various women associated with decoration and design, she is said to be "destined to lead her contemporaries not into the kitchen, like Mrs Beeton, but on a grand tour of inspection around the house" (Howe 14). Alongside the title this line shows that, from the outset, the biography is clearly written through the lens of aestheticism. Indeed, Haweis is said to be a "small, elegant, ghost" (Howe 16) forgotten by contemporary studies of the field at the time that this biography was written. Bea Howe frequently includes excerpts of letters and diary entries in the biography that are taken from the papers held at the LSE. The excerpts, however, are very often misquoted or edited so that they read more 'naturally'. Whilst this adds to the narrative of the biography, it distorts the meaning of Haweis' words. For example, in *Arbiter of Elegance* Howe has included an entry from Haweis' diary from June 30 that she had written about her pregnancy. Howe quotes the following: "I do hope we shall manage better with the next. I trust it will live and if so it will be strong, so that my Darling may not have the anxiety of seeing his own delicacy repeated in his child" (95). Upon consulting the same letter at the LSE the lines were discovered to be: "I do hope we shall manage better with the next. *I do trust if it is to live, it will be strong,* (emphasis mine) so that my darling may not have the anxiety of seeing his own early delicacy repeated in his child" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 16). It is a small change but it alters the meaning behind the words significantly as in Bea Howe's version Haweis

is seen as explicitly wishing for a healthy child. Howe then continues to quote the entry, “we are really getting quite rich and this year brought the Chapel salary up to £450 (which is the utmost he will get). What talents my Gub has!” (95). The next lines of the entry differ drastically. Haweis actually wrote: “He is editing “Cassells” very successfully, but the pay is not sufficient for the work” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book II” 16). Perhaps Howe merged two different entries together, but from consulting the archived material extensively in the production of this thesis the lines which Howe quoted were not discovered. These instances of editing Haweis’ written word, which feature throughout *Arbiter of Elegance*, establish Howe’s biography as unreliable and inaccurate. Howe attempts to create a linear narrative of Haweis’ life from birth to death, slotting in her letters and diary entries as ‘evidence’ to the assertions made, but this has produced a reductive account of Haweis’ life. This thesis owes a great deal to the work done by Howe in organising the papers at the LSE archive, but ultimately aims to produce an account of Haweis that allows the archival material to inform the analysis, not the other way around.

Searching the literature that has so far been published on Haweis, a clear picture of a woman who was knowledgeable in art and literature is presented. Indeed, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Haweis, written by Professor Margaret Connolly, gives particular emphasis to Haweis’ aesthetic texts and their connection to her translations of Chaucer. In the entry, *Haweis [née Joy], Mary Eliza*, only one line is spared for Haweis’ published novel, which is said to showcase “her strong support for the women's franchise movement” (Connolly). Whilst Haweis has been anecdotally connected to the Suffrage, there have been no studies which analyse *A Flame of Fire* and its connections to Haweis’ larger body of work. It is the main aim of this thesis to unlock a fuller, more comprehensive, understanding of Haweis and in order to do this a close reading of her novel is key. It is the hope that the

existing image of Haweis in current scholarship as either ‘an elegant ghost’ or ‘arbiter of aestheticism’ is challenged by this thesis, which seeks to establish her as a multifaceted and complex Victorian woman writer.

Chapter Breakdown

The structure of this thesis is unorthodox as the chapters are not in chronological order. The intention behind this is to articulate the challenge to stereotype and category which Haweis’ works demonstrate. This thesis aims to disturb a traditional academic reading of an obscure Victorian woman writer’s works and in so doing present an alternative approach. Traditionally, such studies conform to chronological order and track an emergence of ideologies which develop with each subsequent piece of published work. This approach does not fit Haweis. The thesis began as a study aiming to track a linear progression of feminist ideas from Haweis’ first published text to the final one. As more research was conducted, and each chapter developed, it became clear that Haweis does not entirely develop new ideas with time. Instead, seemingly contradictory works of literature coexist. The prevalence of Suffragist ideas may emerge in her works as the Suffrage became more popular in the nineteenth century, but the ways in which Haweis wrote about women cannot be tracked in a linear progression from traditional to unconventional. She does not oscillate between traditional views and radical ones. She presented both and therefore through Haweis’ works it is possible to see the eroding of these binaries. The reading of her works in this thesis destabilises the categories of feminist or anti-feminist and it is this that makes the recovery of Haweis and her literature a crucial contribution to the field. The thesis will begin with the last text that was published in Haweis’ lifetime, her novel *A Flame of Fire* (1897). It is the only published work of fiction of its kind from Haweis’ pen and it is integral to subsequent readings in the following chapters. By beginning with *A Flame of Fire* the

following chapters are informed by the analysis of this New Woman novel. The following chapters will therefore illuminate the mission of Haweis, which is to shine a light upon the experience of being a woman in nineteenth century Britain. This thesis will showcase how she is able to achieve this through different genres and categories of literature. By opting for a thematic rather than a chronological structure, the thesis aims to avoid a reductive study of this marginalised Victorian woman writer. The thesis will work back through Haweis' varied career, and end with a text that could be claimed to be anti-feminist, stereotypical, and conventional. It is the aim of this thesis to challenge this very notion and to unsubscribe the reader from an analysis of Victorian women writers, and women's writing by large, as a straight line from repression to rebellion.

Chapter one, Identity in *A Flame of Fire* (1897) and Other Fictional Writings, seeks to answer the question - how far can, and should, Haweis' novel be read as a form of New Woman autobiographical fiction? The pivotal work, *The Madwoman in the Attic,* sees Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert speak of the 'looking glass' the woman writer must travel through in order to establish her own identity separate from the ones that have been prescribed to her by men throughout history. Identity is the major theme of this first chapter, which also exemplifies how the biographical context of Haweis' life will be used throughout the thesis. The novel can be seen as a form of looking glass through which Haweis "kills" those ideals that have quashed female identity. Firstly, this chapter analyses *A Flame of Fire* alongside longstanding canonical works such as *Wuthering Heights* and 'rediscovered' New Woman works of Victorian fiction such as *The Wing of Azrael* in order to show how similar trends are found in Haweis' novel. The novel is situated in the genre of New Woman fiction responding to the infamous 'woman question' with a focus upon the institution of marriage. Secondly, this chapter shows how Haweis used her own

experiences to inform the narrative. In this chapter, unpublished, fragmentary fiction pieces are used as a foil to the more substantial work, *A Flame of Fire,* as they offer further opportunities to explore the theme of identity. The heroines of these fictional writings try on numerous masks to understand their own identities and this chapter assesses if they, and by extension the writer, ever truly find themselves.

Chapter two, Network, Community, and Female Relationships in *The Woman's Herald* and Other Periodicals, focuses on Haweis' writing for the periodical press from the 1890s onwards. This chapter examines how the selected articles can be used to formulate an understanding of Haweis' female relationships, both professional and personal. The magazine was a space for collaboration and community between women writers who would have been physically isolated. In the pages of *The Woman's Herald*, for example, these writers communicated not only with their female readers but with each other. Haweis also used the periodical press to examine her relationship to other women, be they her fellow Suffragists and their critics, or her own daughter. This chapter will inform the broader understanding of Haweis, and by extension women writers, because it showcases the ways in which Feminism itself was a growing, changeable movement that simultaneously brought women together and pulled them apart. As a space to explore where women had come from, and where they were trying to go, the periodical press is a vital tool to understand the ambiguities in Haweis' ideologies. The act of writing for the press, and much of the content of her articles, is progressive and challenges gender roles but within the articles there is also a commitment to the Eternal Feminine and conventionality. This chapter acts as a space for such views to meet, and perhaps, to meld.

Chapter three, Understanding Womanhood through *Chaucer for Children* (1877), *Chaucer for Schools* (1886) and Other Writings, addresses Haweis' best-known, and long

thought to be most admirable, works. It showcases Haweis as a serious, often interdisciplinary, scholar and shows how, by taking Chaucer's tales and making them accessible to a middle-class female reader Haweis is involved in a subversive process of re-writing which manipulates the literary forefathers' works and breathes new morals and modern ideologies into them. This chapter thus establishes that Haweis usurped a place in the masculine field of literary study for the middle-class mother, for herself. It also addresses a core matter at the heart of this thesis. Haweis' fondness for the bawdy, and often disregarded, "Miller's Tale" is contrasted with her published retellings which focus upon more 'acceptable' stories that include, chiefly, female submissiveness. By taking a female character from each of Haweis' Chaucer works, Alison from "The Miller's Tale" and Griselda from "The Clerk's Tale", and comparing and contrasting the two opposing female stereotypes, one overly submissive and the other overly disobedient, the sides of Haweis that seem, at times, to be at war with another are tackled and understood. The Chaucer texts enable exploration into the writer's gender politics and this chapter will explain how the writer herself becomes a way to refocus the lens through which women writers have been viewed.

Chapter four, The Gendered Spaces of *The Art of Decoration* (1881) and *Rus in Urbe* (1886), considers the relationship between women and their physical environment, namely the home and the garden space. Virginia Woolf's seminal work *A Room of One's Own* suggested that women, being shut indoors for most of human history, have overcharged their environments with creative energy destined for the pen. Yet, women are dependent upon their physical environment if they are to use the pen at all. Haweis' decoration and gardening advice manuals, *The Art of Decoration* and *Rus in Urbe*, are utilized to demonstrate how home and garden developed into an extension of the female body. Haweis combined the field of aestheticism with

interior design to put art back into the hands of the homemaker – women. The act of gardening is shown to be gendered, and views on women who undertook gardening explored. The notion of passive influence versus active influence is central to the Victorian understanding of gender roles and this chapter will include Haweis' design and decoration texts in this debate. This chapter also focuses upon decoration and design as politically charged. Haweis encouraged her reader to impose aesthetic ideals upon their homes, and by extension, onto society as a means of charity.

Chapter five, Dressed to Protest with *The Art of Beauty* (1878) and *The Art of Dress* (1879), challenges the assumption that Haweis' preoccupation with beauty and dress inhibits her from making progressive, proto-feminist, points in her aesthetic clothing texts. Instead, Haweis' rebelliousness is shown as well as the protests she raised against oppressive fashions. Outward appearance was a contentious issue during this time. Haweis is situated alongside other women writers who analysed women's relationship to their appearance to establish Haweis' own particular point of view which was namely that beauty was a powerful tool. Whilst Haweis is remembered as an expert on fashion she was not advocating for women to follow it and instead she was a proponent of individualism and liberty in art. There is, arguably, nowhere that this is more evident than in her treatises on dress. Haweis is lauded as one of the first writers of aestheticism, earning her the moniker *Arbiter of Elegance* by Bea Howe, and her views on the movement are coded specifically in feminine language. The texts discussed show how the dichotomy between mind and body becomes, increasingly, an ineffectual separation that actually hinders, rather than supports, the advancement of women's rights. Lastly, this chapter challenges the assumption that feminism could not, or perhaps should not, be found in certain types of works and proves that women writers, even with the limited range of topics on which they could

be considered an authority, managed to write subversive rhetoric into even the most innocuous of works.

Chapter six, Women's Work and *The Art of Housekeeping* (1889), takes Haweis' domestic management manual and uses it to build upon the understanding of the Victorian housewife. This historical figure is often the object of criticism, but this approach is challenged in this chapter. 'Women's work' has been considered as the inferior of male, paid work and has been relegated to a realm of invisibility, but this chapter will highlight how 'women's work' was vital to nineteenth-century society. The figure of the 'Angel in the House' who is presented as languid and passive is questioned through the analysis of *The Art of Housekeeping*, which stresses the reality of housekeeping. This text also highlights how logistically minded, thrifty, and creative many housewives were. Marriage is argued to be a way for women to gain independence, with the home becoming the space over which women could, if they heeded Haweis' advice, govern supreme. This chapter will also delve into the problems surrounding separate spheres ideology, which deemed wives to not be involved in matters of money, amongst many other more 'masculine' pursuits from which they were barred. Instead, this chapter will suggest that Haweis, and by extension many women during the nineteenth century, were actively involved in managing personal finances. Separate spheres ideology is therefore shown to be a flawed paradigm to understand Victorians through. Lastly, this chapter will explore Haweis' final published article, which displays her views on managing servants, and which improves the overall understanding in the thesis of how Haweis perceived the lower classes. Ultimately, this chapter will show how the housewife, through her invisible 'women's work', was integral to sustaining values which the middle classes depended upon.

Haweis' mission was to shine a light on the struggles, successes, and lives of Victorian women. To this end, her seemingly multimodal works, which appear to have little in common with one another, can in fact be tied together. For example, it may be difficult at first to understand what *Chaucer for Children* (1877) can have in common with *Rus in Urbe* (1886), a gardening advice manual. Equally, how can *The Art of Housekeeping* (1889), a book which teaches the reader to succeed in the role of the traditional Victorian housewife, and her novel *A Flame of Fire* (1897), a novel with a purpose which advocates for divorce, be linked? The chapters of this thesis will explain how such connections and seemingly loose threads can be tied together. Reading Haweis' works in tandem provides a richer, fuller picture. The parallel reading of a woman writers' published and unpublished works, or her fiction against her life writing, is a developing area of critical importance to the representation of women writers. For example, in the article "'Domestic interests" in the Late Fiction and Life Writing of Mary Elizabeth Braddon" (2021), Beth Palmer highlights how this type of reading can change the perceptions of a writer like Braddon who is emblematic of sensationalism. Palmer convincingly suggests that "Pairing Braddon's late fiction with her life writing…reveals a different way of looking at her understanding of domesticity" (180). The process of researching more than a few select texts has allowed for a study which is complex and multidimensional, and which does not restrict its subject. Haweis' mission denotes her as an early feminist, and yet when the structures or categories of feminism are applied to her work the construct of feminism itself begins to break down. Haweis does not fit neatly into the traditional understanding of what a Victorian 'feminist' writer is. She eludes the category even as it becomes increasingly evident that her mission is in fact a feminist one. This implies that it is feminism itself which is the problem. Feminism is an historic construct, and once this is acknowledged it can be challenged, complicated, and

improved upon. There is a societal expectation, as well as an academic expectation for women writers to be feminists. Yet, there is no one definition of what it means to be feminist. Instead of attempting to fit Haweis into a feminist box, or adapt feminism to accommodate her, this thesis recognises and highlights that the methodology itself is not without fault. Haweis can still be considered an early feminist writer, despite some of her works being uncomfortable to the twenty-first century feminist reader. Her works challenge and destabilise what is frequently taken for granted when recovering the work of a Victorian woman writer, which is namely that it will be possible to apply feminist theory to their works to prove without doubt that they should be considered pioneers of sexual equality. This work of recovery, by reading across modes, encourages an alternative way in which to recover obscure Victorian woman writers, one which will not only look at published fiction and draw conclusions from there. Instead, this thesis will analyse and closely read across the spectrum of Haweis' published literature, be that articles for the periodical press or housekeeping manuals, to establish her mission in a holistic and nuanced way.

Chapter One

Identity in *A Flame of Fire* (1897) and Other Fictional Writings

"she must come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass, with, that is, those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face…to lessen their dread of her "inconsistency" (Gilbert and Gubar 17)

Though her public readership would not have necessarily connected the story of *A Flame of Fire* to Haweis' life, it is clear from a letter to her son in 1897 that the family should do so: "I will send you a copy of my novel when out – a 'novel with a purpose' of course (I wish I could hear the avuncular howls of horror, and the deep sighs and histrionic tears.) Poor Rennie! Poor May! Anyhow it is coming, like the Judgement Day" (7MEH/5/4 143). Haweis specifically delights in the thought of the novel distressing Lionel's aunts, Hugh Reginald's sisters, whom she did not like. She stated, "When your dear Aunt Margaret used to get into her tempers as a girl, she used to have leeches behind the ears, I suppose to save her life, and the coachman had to go 10 miles for them. I yearn to hear she has had leeches again, for I am sure my small successes will some day deprive her of reason, if they haven't now" (7MEH/5/4 144). It was not an accident, then, that the heroine of *A Flame of Fire* seems to draw upon Haweis' own experiences; from this letter it can be supposed that it was intentional. With her fiction Haweis explores Victorian womanhood and her own identity in ways that do not appear in her earlier non-fiction writings.

In the Haweis Family Fonds collection there is a selection of miscellaneous writings which includes a preface to a novel titled "Branch Lines". This preface is not dated, so it is not possible to attest that it is the outline for *A Flame of Fire,* before Haweis settled on this title. However, the content of the preface bears many similarities to the content of the published novel. Haweis wrote that the story's purpose was to "illustrate the hard, and legally hopeless position of

a woman…in the marriage state" ("Branch Lines") which is precisely what *A Flame of Fire* demonstrates. In this preface, Haweis also claimed that "The remedy for the present position of an unhappy wife is a problem perhaps too hard for the digestion of the novel reader and its solution is far too complex to be attempted in a sketch like this. I have been contented to paint but one side of a many sided picture" ("Branch Lines"). The title is seemingly chosen to represent the idea of this multifaceted issue: "the changes which most characters undergo…the suddenness with which they occasionally launch to left or to right, like trains at full speed, or branch off in unexpected directions, suggested the title" ("Branch Lines"). This preface suggests that Haweis tried her hand at fiction more often than can be supposed by her only ever publishing one novel. *A Flame of Fire* may therefore be the only completed and published novel written by Haweis, but she had written several other fictional stories throughout her life. These incomplete, and often fragmentary, pieces of fiction have also survived alongside the preface, and are currently kept at the University of British Columbia archives in the Haweis Family Fonds collection. In box twenty-three, there are five pieces: "The Story of Alison", "Dorigen Stories", "Pompey Stories", "Cuckoo", and "Almost". Four of these relate, juxtapose, or complement in varying degrees, *A Flame of Fire*. The fifth, "The Story of Alison", will be studied in chapter four alongside the other Chaucer texts. There are no dates recorded with these fictional writings but, through the themes of marriage and identity, they can be justifiably handled alongside *A Flame of Fire.*

This chapter will delve into the novel and draw out similarities between the protagonist and Haweis to add to the understanding of New Woman fiction as a genre which enabled women to utilise "a more detached, less self-revelatory medium for the exploration of controversial, intimate or painful autobiographical matters" (Heilmann 71). This chapter will explore the theme

of identity, both that of the author herself, and the identity of the female protagonist in *A Flame of Fire* and the other unpublished fictional pieces. This chapter will seek to showcase Haweis' understanding of gender hierarchies, in which men held authoritative positions of power over women and robbed them of their identities using insidious legislation, such as the coverture law. Haweis draws on the literary tradition of using Gothic imagery to show how women, epitomised by *A Flame of Fire's* heroine, are imprisoned in the institution of marriage and that their identities are in peril of being subsumed by the husband.

Firstly, I offer a short synopsis of each story handled in this chapter to orientate the analysis with the obscure material. As Haweis wrote, "some explanation is due to the reader" (Haweis, *Flame* 9). In her 'forewords' to *A Flame of Fire*, Haweis explained that she had written the novel to:

> vindicate the helplessness of womankind; and to show how completely women, like slaves, with their vagaries and irresponsibility, are often but the natural product of their artificial surroundings: how their beautiful possibilities are confined to base or noble uses, as a flame is, through the strength of their privileged partner: how in fact (to reverse the old proverb) a wife is what her husband makes her.

A Flame of Fire begins with the childhood of the protagonist – Aglae. She lives with her kindly aunt and eccentric uncle Dorriforth in picturesque Wales. She is left to roam around the countryside at liberty and encouraged to read as she pleases. Aglae is a free spirited, yet odd, girl with all the pastoral sensibilities expected of such a heroine. She knows, for instance, of all sorts of farm matters and how to cure basic ailments. Aglae is also extremely – and importantly –

naïve. She has no experience with flattery, flirting, or love. She is ignorant of the admiration of the young men who surround her, and of her own attractiveness. She has no thoughts of marriage until a suitor is introduced. Her family is visited by Captain Sylvain Mildmay, who is a typical English gentleman in manner and looks. He is immediately besotted with Aglae, and courts her gently. They take long walks in the countryside, for instance. The two quickly become engaged as per the natural course of events, but this rather banal trajectory is interrupted by the sudden and forceful entrance of Henry Quekett. He is the antithesis to Mildmay; he attracts Aglae with a sexual magnetism with which she is wholly unexperienced. His seduction of Aglae is abrupt, but successful, and she breaks off her engagement with Mildmay, who leaves devastated. Aglae and Quekett marry and move to the city, much to the distress of Aglae and her family. In the new marital home, Aglae is faced with the consequences of binding herself to Quekett. She is physically abused and made into a social outcast, left to care for her new-born son whilst her husband openly flirts with his mistress in public. Eventually, she is unable to bear the slights on her honour and escapes her husband with the aid of another admirer – Charlie Carrington, a family friend. Once Aglae is free of her husband she is confronted with the dreadful ramifications of her escape: she is left alone, in a foreign country, with Carrington, who clearly has expectations. Not willing to engage in sexual relations with him, Aglae flees again, and attempts to live alone. She is swiftly robbed and left with little money. In a state of near desolation, she staggers into Notre Dame, seeking aid from The Virgin. What she finds, however, is a man who would take advantage of her forlorn state. As she considers prostitution she is quite unexpectedly rescued by her first paramour, Captain Mildmay. Under his protection she recovers but cannot be free from her husband. She learns how difficult it is for a woman to apply for divorce, and rages against the inequalities of the law. In a stroke of fate, it is discovered that the

villainous Quekett is guilty of bigamy and their marriage is annulled. Aglae swiftly enters a second marriage with Mildmay, and they move to the countryside where they raise the son from Aglae's first marriage, Hal, and their own son, Van. The pastoral bliss is shattered in the final scenes of the novel, as a bull attacks the two sons, killing Hal who dies protecting Van.

"Cuckoo" story opens with a family called 'the Rectory people' observing a cuckoo bird in a nest in their garden. The family consists of mother, three children, and their absent father. Mother lounges underneath a fig-tree with her children surrounding her and basks in the glow of the sun and of familial love. Suddenly, her husband enters the garden bearing a letter. It is the offer of a new position in the Church. He seeks her advice for whether he should accept or not. The mother is very thankful that the offer will bring in more money, and that the children will be able to attend good schools. The piece ends with the youngest and favourite child, Lisbeth, talking about the cuckoo bird instead of congratulating her father.

"Almost" begins with the heroine, Myrtle, staring out of a window at the falling rain. Myrtle is described as having tears in her eyes as she stands alone in a luxurious room. Inside the room is a bird cage, with a sleeping bird inside, and a basinet with a sleeping baby inside. Myrtle, it seems, wed a man named Hugh but was separated from him after only a fortnight of marriage as he took up a position in India. There are letters between the couple, but they are few and far between. The letters are strewn about the room in a show of emotion, with some lying close to the grate. Myrtle seems morose and lonely even after the birth of her child, who she does not pay any attention to, and there are obvious parallels being drawn between the woman and the bird in the cage.

The heroine of the “Dorigen Stories” is an independent young woman, brought up without a mother. She works to subsidise her father’s income, with the aim of eventually attending Girton. A rather naïve girl, she agrees to visit a gentleman she met whilst travelling to work on the train, in his home. Once there she is shown to a room and rests. She is rudely awoken by someone entering the room through a secret panel on the wall who proceeds to undress himself. Dorigen, in shock and horror, exclaims and he thinks she is play-acting. Once the young gentleman realises that she has no knowledge of the transaction he stops and vows to help her escape.

In the “Pompey Stories” a Pug, named after Haweis’ own dog Pompey, is the main character. The little dog is intensely loyal and loving towards its master. The antagonist is a cat, who Pompey fears greatly, that stands in between the dog and his calling master. Pompey bravely goes to his master, being attacked by the cat for trespassing, which results in the loss of an eye. Pompey is traumatised by an operation performed on him against his will to remove the eye, and at his master’s indifference to his plight. Still, once he recovers, he tries to love his master, who is not nearly as benevolent. He is disgusted by Pompey’s new appearance and passes him off onto a family member. Pompey is devastated to be abandoned by his master, for whom he has shown nothing but devotion.

In the “Pompey Stories” and the “Dorigen Stories” the naïve protagonists are manipulated and betrayed by men who shirk their duty of care. In *A Flame of Fire,* Aglae is also deceived by the male antagonist. These three stories, considered together, offer a common theme in Haweis’ fiction writing, which is tyranny. In “Almost” and “Cuckoo” the protagonists are both mother-wife figures. The term mother-wife is used in this thesis, as frequently the dual responsibilities of women are conflated; there is not one without the other. The mother-wife figure dual wields her

role in motherhood and in matrimony and must not tip too far in either direction or risk upsetting the balance with which the Victorian family structure is built, and dependent, upon. She is often poised between these expectations, barely able to move. Aglae struggles throughout the novel to reconcile her different identities: from maiden to married to mother, each process destabilises her sense of self further. The novel is a hall of mirrors, reflecting a different Aglae at every turn. In the "Cuckoo" story the mother-wife character exemplifies the Victorian belief that motherhood was the ultimate fulfilment of women's natural role on Earth. This mother-wife is gloriously surrounded by her children and the warmth of sunshine. In contrast, the mother-wife in "Almost" is despondent and showcases the struggle to fulfil this 'natural' role. She is caged-in with her new-born by the heavily falling rain. Haweis pens two entirely different portrayals of the mother-wife, suggesting that women will come to shape and define their own experience differently. Haweis struggled with motherhood, but she still believed that it was perhaps the most important role in shaping the nation. In Aglae these two mother-wife antitheses collide as she works to build a relationship with her child. Each of these stories improves the reading of *A Flame of Fire*, which may well have survived as Haweis' only novel but was certainly not the only fictional work she turned her hand to.

Victorian Victim Blaming

Perhaps Haweis' most risqué piece of writing, the "Dorigen Stories" raise an interesting question surrounding the bodily autonomy of nineteenth-century women, and the myriad ways that men could, and did, trespass upon it. Dorigen has given no verbal, or other, consent to prostitution yet her host locks her in a room designed for that very purpose. She awakes to find "by the firelight one of the pretty panels closing as a door closes" whilst a young man busies himself by "flinging

off his light overcoat" ("Dorigen Stories"[1]). He has quite literally intruded upon her private space, stealing in through a secret door, like a villain from a fairy-tale. Dorigen, not knowing how to react, pretends to be sleeping still and waits for him to realise his error and leave. Instead, when she peeks again, he is "still undressing" and was "making no mistake" about the situation. He watches Dorigen's distress with amusement: "over his enjoyable cigar, a pair of scrutinising eyes were bent straight upon her" ("Dorigen Stories"). Dorigen is clearly in a dangerous situation, yet the narrator describes the man as having a "rather nice, jolly laugh" ("Dorigen Stories"), despite his obvious penchant for, and experience with, paying for sex. In opposition to Henry Quekett, who is more one-dimensional, this male character is complex. He is interestingly presented as a member of the upper classes, and a gentleman in manner. He has a depth of character that Quekett certainly lacks. Undercutting this is the unbalanced distribution of sexual power. The male character holds all the power and is a very real threat to the virtuous heroine. As Haweis writes: "a girl's safety is merely a man's concession" ("Dorigen Stories").

Dorigen is criticised by the young man for allowing herself to be put into the dangerous situation. This is a progressive issue, that deserves to be called out. Victim blaming as a term was coined in 1971 by psychologist William Ryan in his book *Blaming the Victim* but can easily be retrospectively applied to Victorian literature. For instance, Judith Pike employs the analogy in her 2009 article '"My name *was* Isabella Linton": Coverture, Domestic Violence, and Mrs. Heathcliff's Narrative in *Wuthering Heights'*. Pike contends that Isabella has received relatively little academic attention, despite the wealth of scholarship that *Wuthering Heights* has produced: "a detailed discussion of Isabella as a third narrator, however, is surprisingly absent" (350). The letter that Isabella writes is, Pike contends, another layer of narration that has been neglected. In

[1] The manuscript is not numbered by page.

the abstract to the article Pike states, “this essay demonstrates that Heathcliff’s argument acts as a carefully crafted legal rationale, based upon the laws of coverture, to defend and sanction the domestic confinement of his wife” (351) when it is compared to Isabella’s survivor story, the letter. Quekett invoked the law to control and abuse Aglae in a similar fashion. Pike pays attention to the ways that Heathcliff dismisses Isabella as a victim by blaming her for his violent actions. In his view, Isabella is taunting and deserving of such treatment. Dorigen is told “if you did not like it you should not have come to the house that it is” (“Dorigen Stories”), shifting the burden of responsibility onto Dorigen. It is not the male character’s fault, but rather Dorigen’s fault for putting herself in harm’s way. Similarly, Isabella is said to have led herself like the proverbial lamb to the slaughter: “so obstinately has she persisted in forming a fabulous notion of my character and acting on false impressions she cherished” (Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* 109). Dorigen is spared the violence that Isabella meets. She is rescued by her would-be defiler, who states “the next man may not be willing to help you as I am” (“Dorigen Stories”), reiterating his position of physical, societal, and sexual power over her. The “Dorigen” Stories are cautionary tales, which display Haweis’ understanding of the issues surrounding consent and coverture in the nineteenth century. They also showcase her belief in what Meredith writes in *The Egoist*: “men are brutes; the scent of unfaithfulness excites them, overjoys them” (85). Haweis called this the “latent brute…the forgotten germ of mere animal kind which ages of culture have failed to destroy” (Haweis, *Flame* 89).

Pike argues that Isabella’s letter survives in the narrative so that Brontë can “expose how even genteel women can become victims of abuse, due not to their slatternly behaviour but rather to their naivety and their blind inculcation of false notions of romance and marriage” (372). This is as true of Aglae as it is of Isabella. The innocence, sexual or otherwise, of the heroine is

critically important in narratives of domestic abuse. This innocence draws the heroine towards dangerous, but nevertheless magnetic, men. Aglae has little to no understanding of her own sexuality before she meets Quekett. Her susceptibility, or gullibility, is bound to her misunderstanding lust for love. Anne Heilmann has written that by "keeping middle-class girls and women ignorant of the physical side of marriage and of their husband's past, society condoned middle-class men's sexual exploits" (79). It is clear to the reader that Quekett's behaviour is brash and ungentlemanly, yet it goes unquestioned by most of the characters in the novel, except for Aglae's aunt, the sole wise elder woman in the novel. Quekett's "free-and-easy way of taking possession of a girl" is described as going much "against the good lady's grain" (Haweis, *Flame* 87). This is the only instance of opposition to Quekett's plans, and it is a weak opposition at best as Aunt Dorriforth does not stop Aglae from marrying him.

The chapter in which Quekett asks for Aglae's hand in marriage is aptly titled 'The Torch of Eros'. Each chapter of the novel begins with a quotation taken from obscure literary works by well-known writers. This chapter begins with a quotation taken from "Fragments of an Unfinished Drama", by Percy Bysshe Shelley: "he was so awful, yet/ So beautiful in mystery, and terror" (Haweis, *Flame* 82). The following lines, which Haweis does not quote, would seem to foreshadow Quekett's latter behaviour: "he was a man of blood and peril,/ And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips./ More need was there I should be innocent,/ More need that I should be most true and kind" (Shelley 101). It is a covert warning made only to the well-read reader. Haweis also foreshadows Aglae's infatuation with Quekett using Greek and Roman mythology. It is Mildmay, six chapters earlier, who compares Aglae to Psyche: "she reminded me so curiously of a statue I have seen in Naples, that it seemed to me not a real woman, but a goddess come to life" (Haweis, *Flame* 11). Haweis had a deep appreciation for Greek culture and a well-

developed understanding of women in mythology. She clearly expected her readers to understand the allusion. Psyche is the consort to Eros (or Cupid), and their tale is a quest for love and trust; it is Psyche who undertakes the proverbial Herculean tasks for love. Thus, the narrative references to mythology suggest that Aglae is destined for Quekett. From Eros, the God of love and sex, comes the term erotic and Haweis is clearly showcasing this as one of the reasons for Aglae's infatuation. There are traces of sadomasochism that underscore the Aglae/Quekett relationship. Aglae contentedly assumes "her subordinate position" (Haweis, *Flame* 83) and feels that "the suspense and pain were becoming very sharp to her, for though he was not hers, she was conscious of loving him madly" (Haweis, *Flame* 83). Quekett, the sadist in the relationship, is "dominating her in his strange way, which so shook her that tears followed the smile. "You look very pretty when you laugh, and when you cry too," said Quekett" (Haweis, *Flame* 84). It is clear sex is the influential aspect of the Aglae/Quekett relationship, and this confusion between love and lust is ultimately shown to be Aglae's downfall. As her Aunt states: "I feel as if you have signed your death-warrant, Aglae" (Haweis, *Flame* 79).

It is because Isabella creates a false idea of Heathcliff as a Romantic figure that she is put into harm's way, but it is Heathcliff who allows her to be deceived, only revealing his true nature when she is effectively trapped – that is, married to him. He victim-blames her for believing in a version of himself that never existed: "picturing in me a hero of romance and expecting unlimited indulgences from my chivalrous devotion" (Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* 109). But the reader can clearly see how Heathcliff has manipulated Isabella's naivety for his own nefarious plans. He delights in tormenting her, expressing his desire to turn "the blue eyes black, every day or two" (Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* 77). Isabella expects Heathcliff to be a gentleman, whereas Aglae seems to revel in Quekett's brutishness. She is far more masochistic than Brontë's heroine

even though she is also possessed by a "romantic view" (Haweis, *Flame* 56) of Quekett at first. Both women are bewitched by the male characters; Isabella is deluded, Aglae is "under a spell" (Haweis, *Flame* 68), and both have lost control of their respective relationships. Haweis is similarly besotted with her future husband, the Rev. Hugh Reginald Haweis. Much like Quekett with Aglae, Hugh Reginald occupied a powerful authoritative position over Haweis. As a member of the Haweis family church he was able to be revered by the young Mary Eliza Joy. As previously mentioned, Haweis obsessively recorded his sermons in her diary. Quekett is said to have an "extraordinary magnetic power" over many and "especially women" (Haweis, *Flame* 160) which echoes the young Haweis' words when she wrote about her relationship with Hugh Reginald: "he must know his power" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 58), presumably she means the power that he had over her. Their courtship was quite different to the courtship of Quekett and Aglae, but it is clear that Haweis did exaggeratedly depict their courtship when writing about Aglae and Quekett. Aglae is a version of her younger self, a fictional identity that she uses to explore the early stages of her relationship with Hugh Reginald. The young Mary Eliza Joy experiences "a wild ecstasy of every imaginable emotion" and is "dreadfully excited" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 26) when recalling speaking with Hugh Reginald. This mirrors Aglae's "sudden crisis of excited feeling" (Haweis, *Flame* 67). The liberation that Aglae experiences was first felt by Haweis: "when he asked me to be his wife, what was my feeling? …the sensation of a captive whose lifelong chains are suddenly knocked off" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 43). This language, mirrored in *A Flame of Fire* when Aglae reflects that she "felt as though she had broken out of a cage, the cage of a smooth, decorous affection; and was at sweet liberty" (Haweis 69), is evocative, even provocative, as marriage facilitates sexual liberation. But it is a false liberation, and the price that Aglae pays is a costly one.

Consent versus Coverture

Aglae surrenders control with abandon as Quekett frees her from the "cage of smooth, decorous affection" leaving her "at sweet liberty in the broad fields of endless air" (Haweis, *Flame* 69). *The Female Eunuch* finds that often "women are drawn to sexual licence because it seems forbidden and exciting, but the price they pay for such delinquency is too heavy" (Greer 298). The sexual awakening that Aglae thinks has "given her her wings" (Haweis, *Flame* 69) has ironically been used to control and bind her. Aglae is drawn to the sadomasochism that Quekett offers, which contrasts with Isabella, as "something in Aglae answered to it; she was subjugated, she was exalted" (Haweis, *Flame* 68) but Quekett oversteps the line, into abuse, when he dismisses any signs of consent from Aglae. Though Quekett does not force himself upon Aglae the scene where they kiss is fraught with problematic imagery. To begin, he commands her to kiss him and "in her violent effort to turn her head away, her head moved in opposition to her will; it was automatic action that she could not command" (Haweis, *Flame* 67-68). She is also seen to be "struggling helplessly and feeling as incapable as a small bird in a vice" (Haweis, *Flame* 67) as he presses his mouth over hers. The issue of consent, or lack thereof, is an underexplored theme in women's writing[2] of the nineteenth century when such writers suggested "not only that recent legislation did not go far enough, but that it had not even begun to touch on the central question of consent" (Heilmann 78). Aglae is coerced into kissing Quekett, and this combined with her inability to understand the situation is almost certainly grounds on which to propose that she is unable to offer her consent. Quekett is overbearing and confusing for Aglae, and his domination of her renders the courtship rituals she had experienced with the aptly named Mildmay void.

[2] The theme of consent in in British Victorian literature is thoroughly explored in Heather Nelson's thesis "The Law and the Lady: Consent and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century British Literature" (Purdue University, 2015).

Mildmay is certainly set up as the antithesis to Quekett. One is mild where the other is quick, one gentle where the other is rough. There is much more of Linton than Heathcliff in him, with his "gentle, refined countenance" and "courtly, quiet bearing" (Haweis, *Fire* 41). The emotions that Quekett incites in Aglae are quite different to her "brotherly" (Haweis, *Flame* 29) fiancée. She reflects that "she had never felt in Sylvain's presence what she felt now" (Haweis, *Flame* 70). Mildmay does not offer Aglae the same opportunities to engage in her masochistic fantasies, as she says he is "too good for me" (Haweis, *Flame* 74). Aglae sobs "you don't know, you don't know" (Haweis, *Flame* 74) when she confronts Mildmay after kissing Quekett, and though it is unclear what she means one could suggest that she means Mildmay's seeming innocence and that she is referencing his sexual inexperience in contrast to Quekett. What he does not know is her need to be dominated. Whilst Quekett is the desirable suitor for Aglae, with Mildmay presented as somewhat impotent, it is Mildmay who understands and exemplifies consent. When Aglae confronts him about her feelings for Quekett he does not display anger or an outburst of emotion. It is instead Aglae who clings to him, terrified of being the villain, and begs him to stay. Mildmay tells her: "I knew that you never loved me as I did you, but I hoped it would come" (Haweis, *Flame* 74) and seeing that it will never come he releases her from their engagement without animosity. He tells her aunt that "it is far better that we should both be free, it is for the happiness of us both" (Haweis, *Flame* 77). Whilst this could be read as weakly surrendering Aglae it is arguably a far more progressive act. Sensing that Aglae does not want to be with him, Mildmay will not force her into any situations that she will not consent to and so he leaves. This suggests that at the time consent was viewed as the domain of inadequate men, who were too weak to dominate and take what they wanted.

Aglae's sexuality is in open defiance to Victorian propriety, and perhaps Haweis felt ideologically constrained to punish her heroine for this. When Aglae leaves Mildmay she unwittingly surrenders the only consensual relationship she has or will ever again be in. In *The Female Eunuch* femininity is said to mean "without libido" (Greer 79) and as such the ideal woman is necessarily "castrated" and therefore "sexlessness" (Greer 77) becomes her primary trait. But Aglae is no eunuch. Her choice to marry Quekett over Mildmay is a revolt against such 'sexlessness'. For this she undoubtedly suffers, and sex becomes a constant threat to Aglae. In a scene rife with innuendo Mrs. Dorriforth reads a letter from Aglae in which she writes about Quekett's taming of a horse. She writes "like every other creature that comes in contact with his will, it had to give in. I saw it once come out of the stable shaking and wet all over" (Haweis, *Flame* 99). Mrs. Dorriforth immediately connects Aglae with the horse, responding to her husband's comment with "Henry doesn't turn Aglae round his finger, *broncho* or no" (Haweis, *Flame* 100). But it is obvious that he does. The next time that a sexual threat looms again is when Aglae flees England with her admirer Carrington. The pair rent a room and Aglae quickly realises that she will have to "endure this other man's society" as "nightfall and the position she had accepted, suddenly sickened her with unutterable dread" (Haweis, *Flame* 164). She flees before she has to confront this 'position', but this only leads her into further danger. Left destitute in Vitré she is assumed to be an "*Anglaise* of bad character" (Haweis, *Flame* 171) though she were really "as reproachless within and without as yourself" (Haweis, *Flame* 176). As she stumbles, destitute and desperate, into Notre Dame she attracts the attentions of a gentleman who persuades her to meet him near to his house. She rationalises her flirtation with prostitution believing that it is "not so wrong as the river" (Haweis, *Flame* 179) she had thought of drowning herself in. As Wollstonecraft wrote: "having no other means of support, prostitution

becomes her only refuge, and the character is quickly depraved by circumstances over which the poor wretch has little power" (72). The initial sexual liberation that Aglae experienced is quickly and brutally taken away from her and she stumbles between these non-consensual encounters, falling further and further.

It is not only outside of the marital bond where Aglae is vulnerable. Quekett always exacts control over Aglae, who has little ability to reject his coercive attentions. She is lost in his ideal interpretation of the mother-wife figure which she attempts to emulate and embody: ""I like a wife to *be* a wife," said Mr. Quekett. "None of your new women. She has got to see eye to eye with me, and *I'll* find her brains. Women want nothing that their husbands don't give them" (Haweis, *Flame* 94). Even when Aglae rejects Quekett's controlling behaviour she has little legal ability to reject him. Haweis references the real-life case, known as the Clitheroe case, which was a pivotal moment for women's rights in the nineteenth century, and which she writes was "of far-reaching importance to women" (Haweis, *Flame* 273). She wrote:

> known as the Clitheroe case, in which Mrs. Jackson refused to consummate her marriage, and resisted her loving husband's arguments by the tender means of assault and restraint, supported though he was by the inherited opinion of the populace. Many educated persons still believe, in the face of this and other cases, and in spite of protective Acts which they do not read, that a husband has the right to force his wife to live with him, and to bear him children, whether she likes it or not. (Haweis, *Flame* 273)

This case challenged the law known as Coverture in which men could sue for the 'restitution of conjugal rights', which Aglae later learns of. Quekett indeed is said to be "proceeding for

'restitution of conjugal rights'" and Aglae is clearly acting as a mouth-piece for Haweis when she exclaims that it is "a disgrace to a civilized country!" (Haweis, *Flame* 257). Coverture was the legal doctrine in which, upon marrying, the woman's legal rights were subsumed into those of her husband. It was literally meant to mean that she was under her husband's 'cover' – his protection. Yet who protected her from her husband? This law came under intense scrutiny with the rise of the women's rights movement. It was mainly husbands who made use of this legislation to force their wives, who would otherwise wish to live apart, to cohabit. Whilst this is the surface meaning, the true nature of the act was one of forced sexual relations, or the husband's legal right to demand intercourse. This was a principal issue that women's rights activists had with the law, but it was not only women activists who saw this problem. It was also identified by John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* in 1869. Haweis was a follower of Mill and had been to see him speak on occasion. Mill spoke out vehemently about this in chapter II of his seminal work in which he calls the position of women in nineteenth-century England "worse than that of slaves in the laws of many countries" (165). This "specious slavery which chains the very soul of woman" (Wollstonecraft, *Vindication* 14) is a comparison that occurs across the literature of the period. Just as Mill adopts Wollstonecraftian language so does Haweis. She echoes Wollstonecraft in *A Flame of Fire* in several instances, most notably in the foreword and when the characters discuss the law. Aglae's reaction to the legal advice she receives from Mildmay once more likens the Victorian wife to a slave: "I cannot defend, and I cannot come to a money agreement. He already has all my money. *I thought slavery was abolished*!" (Haweis, *Flame* 257). She is quickly reminded that her position before she sought a divorce was no different: "Had I then, as now, no right to my own privacy, maintenance, and

peace?" (Haweis, *Flame* 258), Aglae asked Mildmay, to which he answers with a sharp short "No."

Quekett has control over Aglae's money, but even more worryingly he as control over her body. She is confronted with her only two choices: she can continue to flee from him, pursued tirelessly, or she can return and effectively give herself over. As Aglae correctly states "it is a choice merely between two evils, and the restitution of conjugal rights is the worst!" (Haweis, *Flame* 258). Mill wrote about women's inability to refuse the sexual demands of their husbands at length in his work:

> However brutal a tyrant she may unfortunately be chained to – though she may know that he hates her, though it may be his daily pleasure to torture her, and though she may feel it impossible not to loathe him – he can claim from her and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations. (166)

Pike has suggested that Isabella and Heathcliff's relationship reflects the ineffectiveness of the law in protecting wives from such a situation as Mill clearly describes. Heathcliff overtly enjoys tormenting Isabella despite her hatred, and indeed fear, of him, yet they have a son together. Pike seems justified in stating that "it seems extremely implausible that Linton Heathcliff was ever conceived under amorous conditions" (375). It would have been near impossible to express marital rape in any literature published in the nineteenth century without shrouding it in allusion and metaphor. The most apparent example comes from Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), a writer and a work Haweis was familiar with. She in fact wrote a review of the novel for *The Woman's Herald* in February 1892. Although she is critical of Hardy's

rendering of the female character Tess, she does praise the work for its "peculiar significance" (Haweis, "Review" 10) to women's suffrage. Haweis argues "perhaps there never was a story that shewed up in deeper colouring the inhumanity of the law enacting that "the Woman Pays;" and the injustice which levels her *below*" (Haweis, "Review" 10). The "deeper colouring" to which Haweis alludes is most likely how Hardy writes Alec's rape of Tess. He turns the reader's focus away from the rape, describing the trees above the sleeping Tess, but in an earlier chapter she is woken from sleep to witness the death of her father's horse, Prince. The language is violent and overtly sexual: "the pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a sword and from the wound his life's blood was spouting in a stream, and falling with a hiss into the road" (Hardy 26). The two scenes are linked through sibilance; when Tess is raped her body is described as "feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer" (Hardy 65) which harks back to the hissing sound of Prince's falling blood. This famous literary scene of rape exemplifies how Victorian conventions affected storytelling and showcases how allusion and metaphor could be utilised as a workaround. Haweis chooses to write similarly in *A Flame of Fire*, with the earlier comparison between Aglae and Quekett's horse a nod to Hardy's work. Unlike Hardy, she is keen to link women's lack of bodily autonomy to their lack of financial autonomy. Thus, Aglae becomes a "possession" (Haweis, *Flame* 87) taken by Quekett "like an empty house" (Haweis, *Flame* 87). The Married Women's Property Act in 1882 meant that women could own and control their own properties, but before this their property was given over to their husband upon marriage. It is an intentional choice on Haweis' part to compare Aglae with a house; the English law that defined wives as *feme covert* erased women's legal identity, making them simply an extension of their husband – an empty being to be taken as a possession. By likening Aglae's body to a house Haweis can metaphorically show the sexual relationship

between the characters, in which Quekett is an intruder violating boundaries. Aglae, like the empty house, is infiltrated – occupied – penetrated – conquered.

Sex is another means by which to strip away women's identity and Aglae voices concerns that Haweis may have perhaps been unable to give words to in any other form of writing. Fiction was an opportunity to speak freely upon matters that are often difficult to voice. By addressing the 'restitution of conjugal rights' as Aglae, Haweis is spared any prying into her own marriage. Haweis is devoted to showing how women are helpless under nineteenth century marriage law, but Aglae's plight is not confined to Victorian women. Rape has been used historically as a form of psychological warfare meant to humiliate and control the enemy. Susan Brownmiller, a pioneer on wartime sexual violence, wrote that "man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times" (5). Rape, she states, is a means by which "*all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear" (Brownmiller 5). A law which required women to live with, and sleep with, their husbands was a means by which to subjugate and demean women – to keep them in a subservient position, unable to take political action. Issues of consent that surface in Victorian women's writing, though they are frequently covert and brief, ought to be explored for they feed into the larger narrative of sexual violence enacted against women who were often legally unable to withhold their consent. Coverture is central to understanding Haweis' work as a 'novel with a purpose.'

Marital Prisons

"I have come to demand the return of my wife to her own home. I have come to insist upon your detaining her no longer, in the face of law, decency, and her duty as a mother" (Haweis, *Flame* 234) – so says Quekett, when he comes to claim his wife. Quekett, supported by the marriage

legislation that Haweis and other campaigners desperately wanted repealed, is legally in the right yet he is portrayed decisively as a villain. The emergence of New Woman fiction was disruptive enough to warrant a revival of Gothic themes. This has been explored in depth by Patricia Murphy in *The New Woman Gothic.* Murphy stresses that "the Gothic emerges in literature during periods of cultural anxiety" (1), and the turn of the century when *A Flame of Fire* was published was fraught with unease. More often referred to as the *fin-de-siècle,* literature of this period expressed concerns around advancement and change, be it social, political, or scientific. Literature therefore alluded to earlier periods and conventions, such as Gothic horror. Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) is a renowned example of this. In the preface to the novel, Wilde seeks to destabilise the reader: "it is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors". The novel is set up to reflect the reader back to themselves, both unnerving them and subverting their expectations. New Woman fiction mirrors the female reader back to herself to foster political unrest. To do this New Woman fiction makes use of a variety of literary tropes, but of significant impact is the use of Gothic imagery. Indeed, "a startling proliferation of Gothic elements abides in New Woman fiction" (Murphy 2). For instance, the opening lines of Mona Caird's *The Wing of Azrael* (1889) are: "over the park hung a white and stealthy mist, touched by white and stealthy moonlight…the mist was thick, but one could see through it to a large white house" (1). This house is where the reader finds Viola. She is literally trapped within its walls, whilst being emotionally and socially trapped by the expectation, or truly the demand, of her parents that she should marry. Viola is told by her father that a woman who will not marry "has no meaning; she is in the way; she ought never to have been born. She is neglected, despised, left out; and who cares whether she lives or dies? She is alone" (Caird, *Wing* 64). Viola, just like

Aglae, is imprisoned by the institution of marriage causing her to lament: “am I always to be your wife, never myself?” (Caird, *Wing* 144)

The Gothic threat, portrayed in the opening pages as the house, is instead marriage. The heroines of older Gothic fiction found themselves literally trapped in great and terrifying mansions and castles, whereas her successors find that “marriage itself becomes the horrific factor” (Murphy 151). Gilbert and Gubar have explored this phenomenon and posit that many nineteenth-century heroines were “in some sense imprisoned in men’s houses” (83). They cite the obvious example of Rochester’s wife in *Jane Eyre*. Quekett comes to claim his wife in a chapter that opens with the same imagery found in Caird’s novel: “It was cold and raw out of doors, a chill moon glimmering through a pallid veil that betokened further rain, and a mist hung over the distant water” (Haweis, *Flame* 237). Mist and moonlight pervade both narratives, adding a supernatural threat to the visceral threat posed by marriage. Out of the mist comes Quekett “like an apparition from hell” to bring Aglae back to him, eliciting “horror” and “tears of terror” (Haweis, *Flame* 233). The Gothic imagery shrouds Quekett’s true demand, which is “the forced surrender of the body to the husband determined to exercise his conjugal “rights”” (Murphy 204). Aunt Dorriforth hurries Aglae away at Quekett’s approach reminding her that returning to him would mean “outrage, restraint, prison itself” (Haweis, *Flame* 239). This once more ties Haweis to Wollstonecraft as echoes of her work *Mary and The Wrongs of Woman* (1798), in which Mary claims that “Marriage has bastilled me for life” (95), are heard. Haweis, inspired no doubt by Wollstonecraft, adds to the discourse of marriage as a form of imprisonment. When Quekett enters Aunt Dorriforth likens him to a vampire, or other night-stalker, when she asks, “are you afraid of daylight, that you always come at night, always in the dark, and without warning?” (Haweis, *Flame* 240). His response to the question is rational rather

than fantastic. Quekett at least does not present himself as anything other than a man backed by the law. The "crackling of legal documents" (Haweis, *Flame* 241) drowns out the sounds of Aglae's escape. She flees, once more, this time through a window and runs "like a hunted deer, the rain and mud soaking her garments and the shawl she had flung over her shoulders" until she appears "as wet as a banshee and white as the moon" (Haweis, *Flame* 242). The chapter therefore ends, as it began, with reference to the moon.

As Quekett demands the restitution of his conjugal rights the language changes from earlier scenes in the novel to create a parallel between Quekett and the Gothic villain, and Aglae and the Gothic heroine. In Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), the archetypal gothic novel, the heroine, Emily is confined within a castle: "as she looked on the massy walls of the edifice, her melancholy spirits represented it to be her prison: and she started as at a new suggestion, when she considered how far and distant she was from her native country" (251). The true horror of Emily's confinement is the isolation from any semblance of familiarity or kindness, though Emily too faces threats of forced marriage and implicit sexual violence. The castle walls are transformed into a prison when Emily realises how alone she truly is. For Aglae, and many Victorian women, marriage was just as isolating. Aglae was swept away from her childhood home and family, placed in Quekett's household, and left to her duties, becoming a "lonely and unloved woman" (Haweis, *Flame* 149). Emily is terrified by the sublime castle Udolpho because it makes her confront her own vulnerability, but for Aglae it is marriage that looms dark and foreboding. Separated from her family, Aglae has lost "a good deal of security" (Haweis, *Flame* 146), and thus marriage has become the "massy walls" from which she cannot escape.

The prison of marriage is used to portray the eradication of Aglae's identity, and Quekett's right to detain Aglae in his home is a chief factor in the erosion of her character. The Aglae before Quekett is quite different to the Aglae after him. Immediately, Aglae, the wife, has an unstable identity and her previous self is set up as a competitor to her current self. There is a sense that this new version is a traitor to her past self, one who has "purchased", "sacrificed", and made a "bargain" (Haweis, *Flame* 3) for her new life. The narrative then shifts back in time to describe Aglae as a maiden. Before she knows of marriage the young Aglae is "larger than life" (Haweis, *Flame* 13). She is uninhibited by her aunt and uncle, who let her wander where she chooses and read what she wants. Thus, she gains a "liberty of speech and action unusual at her age" (Haweis, *Flame* 14). She takes up much more space, in both her surroundings and on the page, in this part of the novel when the "breadth of shoulders and length of arm seemed great – goddess-like" and the "curve of her lips, seemed colossal" (Haweis, *Flame* 13). It is only in her interactions with Quekett that she is rendered mute; in one instance, although she tries to speak, "no words would come" (Haweis, *Flame* 67). The degeneration of Aglae's identity is linked explicitly to marriage, which uproots her from her home and family and quashes any future aspirations and possibilities. Quekett destroys Aglae's autonomy and begins to speak for her as soon as she is parted "very completely from her old life" (Haweis, *Flame* 92). Like Emily, she is denied the comforts of familiarity and is thrust into a life of isolation and imprisonment. Aglae is broken by her imprisonment, becoming no longer "bright and striking" (Haweis, *Flame* 16) but "languid and exhausted" (Haweis, *Flame* 96). She is exhausted by the "persistent leech" that can "only to be discovered by a general uprooting, and to such experiments the whole constitution of marriage is opposed" (Haweis, *Flame* 128). Haweis clearly means separation, even divorce, from the husband – the leech.

In another instance, this time in the archived fragmentary piece “Almost”, Haweis employs Gothic imagery to imprison the heroine. Myrtle is trapped inside, looking down as the rain falls “very beautiful amongst the nodding roses and stately lilies” listening to the “fretful tapping of the rain on the panes” (“Almost” 1). Named after the flower that is the emblem of marriage, Myrtle is a clear representation of the trapped wife. Like Haweis, Myrtle is also wed to a Hugh who works overseas. Also, like Haweis, she communicates with him chiefly through letters. The reason why so much correspondence exists as proof of the disagreements between Haweis and her husband is his continual travelling to deliver sermons overseas. “Almost” reveals a number of clues which perhaps hint at Haweis’ agitation with this form of communication. In the room there is “a table on which lay a long thin envelope and letter, whilst another torn to pieces lay under the grate” (“Almost” 2). This torn letter indicates an emotional outburst from Myrtle, whereas Haweis herself only writes of her own detachment. Her fictional self is able to react, when she rips and burns the offensive letter, whereas the real Haweis always wore “chain armour under my coat so to speak” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book I” 24) referencing the steely exterior she presented to the world. Haweis revealed that “I very seldom give way to any sort of emotion” choosing instead to “always repress it in any form” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book I” 9). Possibly through her writing, and by creating different fictional identities, Haweis was able to express herself more openly. Therefore, she does not fully repress her emotions, but instead reroutes them through her writing. Myrtle interestingly occupies a liminal space as she is not truly a wife, having never spent any time living as one with her husband, but neither is she a single woman. She is described as a “half-widow, half-wife” (“Almost” 4) inhabiting an in-between state. Myrtle is like a specter, or a ghost, haunting the house where she lives alone, save for her child. She is described as “sallow and colourless, with great wistful eyes” and a

"mournful little mouth that had not opened for speech I cannot say how long" ("Almost" 2). Poised between widow and wife she exists on the peripheries like a vampire. The allusion to this mythological figure is another way in which New Woman writing often made use of Gothic themes and elements.

The control that the husband exacts upon the female body is a form of patriarchal vampirism sanctioned by the law. Aglae's individuality is sucked from her the longer she remains tied to her marriage bond. The supernatural threat of the vampire from works such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is alluded to by Haweis. After being bitten by the count, Lucy is described as being "languid and tired" (Stoker 80): almost the exact same words used by Haweis. Instead of being the victim of literal bloodsucking Aglae is prey to unjust, parasitical legislation which offered little possibility for women to successfully seek divorce. Although she is not the first to compare the law with vampirism – one need only remember the "bloodless and gaunt" (692) Vholes of Dickens' *Bleak House* – Haweis is amongst writers who tailored this metaphor specifically to women. The vampire has been seen as a way to criticise aspects of the Victorian woman's life: "both vampires and women are parasitic creatures, the one by nature, the other by economic necessity. Both are dead, the one literally, the other legally" (Senf 53). In this sense women are the vampire figures because they lack a legal identity and because they are reliant on others. They are in Senf's view economic vampires. In *A Flame of Fire,* marriage "as the small slug at the plant's root wastes but not kills the flower and leaf…sucked vigour out of Aglae's life" (Haweis, *Flame* 218) until she grows "sarcastic and bitter" (Haweis, *Flame* 183). The very laws which afforded the husband authority over his wife drained her of her independent identity.

Responsible Writers of Romance

The central purpose of *A Flame of Fire* was outlined eight years prior to its publication. In her work aptly subtitled the 'Bridal Garland' Haweis wrote the following:

> I think much mischief has been done in the "world of ladies", by the orthodox novel always ending up with the "marriage", and laying no stress whatever upon the responsibilities which marriage brings. To most girls marriage is really the beginning of the story, not the end: and to those brought up as so many are – without any knowledge at all and without a sense of the duty of learning – the story is not unlikely to end sadly. (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 160)

Talia Schaffer has noted that women writers of the 1890s "decisively ended the century-long convention of representing marriage as a delightful haven, a solution to all plot problems, and a reward for the virtuous heroine" (39). Despite referencing Haweis in this work, Schaffer does not comment upon her only novel, nor its purpose. *A Flame of Fire* is certainly a 'marriage problem' novel; it explicitly follows the structure that Schaffer describes, in which marriage is portrayed as "a site of conflict and distress" (39). Interestingly, it also subverts even Schaffer's expectations that the writers of such novels rarely "advocate divorce or extramarital arrangements" (40), which *A Flame of Fire* certainly does. It does not even end by "reinforcing marital ideology" nor "wedded bliss" (Schaffer 40) as many did. *A Flame of Fire* therefore presents a unique opportunity to unpick many contemporary critiques of the traditional courtship novel. Aglae is not an exemplary character such as Jane Eyre, who challenges convention, nor is she a martyred character like Hardy's Tess. Haweis beseeches the reader to recognise themselves in Aglae's ordinariness. The heroine is transformed into the 'Queen's looking glass' offering women the opportunity to reconcile with the "extreme images of "angel" and "monster""

(Gilbert and Gubar 17) that continue to overwhelm her. Thus not only is the novel a hall of mirrors - Aglae herself is a mirror. One reviewer for the *Morning Post* claimed that "few would recognise in her a type of woman made to prove the justice or plead the interest of any cause" ("Multiple News Items" 2), but Aglae is not designed to advocate for sexual equality; she is designed to educate the reader on the pitfalls and hazards that come with sexual naïveté.

Haweis visited America with her husband on his preaching tours and one of the most impressive elements of female education that she recorded in her journals was the attention paid to sexual education. In her article "The Revolt of the Daughters" Haweis revisits this notion, writing that in America there are "physiological classes held for the wise and decent instruction of the girls in the main responsibilities pertaining to physical life" (435). Haweis states that such lessons are "a safeguard and a preparation" and that they will save young girls from "*blundering* into ruin" (Haweis, "Revolt" 435). In light of this, *A Flame of Fire* can be seen as a cautionary tale showing the reader what can become of a young girl without proper education. Aglae says that if she had "learnt what a boy learns at school, I should have felt Henry's strange power, but I should never have married him" (Haweis, *Flame* 232). She would have recognised her feelings as lust, rather than love, and to use Haweis' words, not *blundered* into ruin. Aglae tells her aunt that her "training had been too tender, it had done nothing for my moral muscle" (Haweis, *Flame* 231). The training of this 'moral muscle' is afforded to the reader of *A Flame of Fire* as they live vicariously through the heroine. Haweis viewed this as the main responsibility, or duty, of women writers. In her talk at the Women Writer's Dinner she stated, "in women's hands – in women writers' hands – lies the regeneration of the world" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 71). Haweis then likens women writers to "*Recording Angels*" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 71), figures from Judaic, Christian, and Islamic angelology tasked with preserving a record of human events.

By ascribing to women writers this biblical duty Haweis incites a possible exploration into the opposite of literary paternity, in which the male author is "a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis" (Gilbert and Gubar 6). Women writers are instead "mothers, as it were, of the whole world (Haweis, *Words to Women* 69) – a form of literary *maternity*, which does not only focus upon actual childbirth but the propagative nature of writing itself.

In *A Flame of Fire*, Haweis does briefly touch on that most ubiquitous consequence of the sexual side of marriage: childbirth. Aglae's relationship with her child is strained at best, and it is clear that the actual birth had an effect on the heroine's health. Her aunt finds Aglae in her "sick room" with a slight change in her appearance; she now had "the pallor of the recent pang" (Haweis, *Flame* 108), presumably of childbirth. In her diaries Haweis was vocal regarding her lack of desire for children, yet she praised the 'natural' state of motherhood in many instances throughout her career, although she refused to create a manual for motherhood (in the style of her '*The Art o*f' books) despite being "urged to write" (Haweis, "Revolt" 430) one. It is certainly a curious gap in her otherwise full repertoire of advice manuals. Aglae is more similar to Haweis in this regard than another heroine from one of the fragmented fiction pieces, "Cuckoo". This piece revolves entirely around one figure, named only 'Mother', who is presented as picturesque, pastoral, and perfect: "like one of Boughton's or Marcus Stone's pictures" ("Cuckoo 2). Haweis encapsulates the sensation of looking at a Boughton or Stone painting with this piece. A female figure features centrally in many of the artists' paintings, with gentle expressions and soft hues of colour. Haweis captured this in "Cuckoo", describing "beautiful glory" and "love and joy and hopes" ("Cuckoo 2). She quotes Wordsworth, albeit incorrectly, to invoke and emphasise familial bliss. The Romantic poet's famous ruminations on the state of childhood and its

innocence add another layer of sentimentalism to the piece. Haweis referenced “Ode: Imitations of Immortality”, quoting “’sunshine is round them in their infancy’ says the poet – sunshine from the mother’s heart even if there be no other” (“Cuckoo 2) The second half of “Cuckoo” diverts jarringly from the idyllic to the perilous. The scene is underscored by references to the threat that childbirth posed to the main character, Mother. Whilst Haweis states that “there is nobody so happy as a mother” she conversely emphasised the cost of this happiness: “the airy, fairy health and vivacity which adorns girlhood” is traded for the “crown and throne of motherhood” (“Cuckoo 3). Yet, the journey to this throne is dangerous, and Mother has “passed through the valley of the shadow of death” (“Cuckoo 4). The religious imagery of the ‘valley of death’ links childbirth (in this piece) to battle in Tennyson’s ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’. Unlike male heroes of war, women’s sacrifices have not been lauded so loudly. In “Cuckoo” Haweis creates a space to openly celebrate the mother-wife figure, whereas in *A Flame of Fire* she does so only briefly. Visible domestic abuse is demonstrated in the narrative just after Aglae has given birth, a time when it is stated that “a man’s whole being should be strung to lighten and repay her sacrifice” (Haweis, *Flame* 112). Kathleen Blake’s book, *Love and the Woman Question in Victorian Literature,* terms this phenomenon ‘feminine self-postponement’. Haweis used a similar term, “self-abnegation” (Haweis, “Revolt” 433), to argue that women were made to renounce their enjoyment of any pastimes not relating directly to the home, yet she felt that “self-sacrifice ought never to overpass the bounds of reason and self-respect” (Haweis, “Revolt” 434).

Sacrifice & Suffering

“I see that the world is not a bit the better for centuries of self-sacrifice on the woman’s part and therefore I think it is time we tried a more effectual plan. And I propose now to sacrifice the man instead of the woman” (Grand, *Heavenly Twins* 80), says Evadne, the heroine of Sarah Grand’s

best-known novel. Whilst Haweis and Grand shared many similar notions, it would seem this is where they diverged from another. Haweis certainly applauded "self-sacrifice on the woman's part", provided it did not overstep and overcome reason and self-respect. She authored an entire article dedicated to it. In the preface to this article, Hugh Reginald showed his disapproval of what Haweis called "spartan virtue", but what he called "hardness…dearly bought at the expense of some of the finer and more delicate sensibilities of the soul" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 90). Haweis was an advocate for stoicism from a young age, and she wrote in her diary that she felt she would "lose a little bit of myself in every emotion good or bad" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book I" 10). For Haweis, suffering through adversity, and surviving, was an integral aspect of women's identity. The earlier treatment of women, in her opinion, made women "morally tough; and, cruel as was the process, she may have been a gainer in the end – if not on the earthly plane. To bear and say nothing was the Spartan life of many a well-appearing woman, and the simple creed had its beauty" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 96). She viewed women, at the turn of the century, as the true "soft sex" as they had grown up with greater freedoms that were hard won by Haweis' contemporaries. They were, in Haweis' eyes, spoiled.

The alterations in Aglae's manner do not extend to her appearance as she appears even more attractive for the suffering she has endured. Mildmay "thought her more beautiful than ever: for suffering, which had stolen her rich colouring, had left the perfect forms – the fine brow, the nose slightly aquiline the eyes and eyelids beautifully formed, and set beneath bronze eyebrows of wonderful length, like a Greek mask" (Haweis, *Flame* 188). This image contrasts wholly with the initial description of Aglae's appearance: "beauty with "character" in it" (Haweis, *Flame* 12). Aglae's face has become a mask, no longer bearing the personality and charm of her youth. It is not only Mildmay who discusses the effect suffering has had upon the

heroine's character, but Aglae herself. She tells her aunt that girls "don't develop without suffering. They must suffer, to live" (Haweis, *Flame* 230), and is convinced that "if I had a gloomy, or an unhappy, or even a dull and tight-laced childhood, consider what it would have been to meet Sylvain" but because it had been pleasant "any new flavour, sour, acrid, or bitter, would have attracted me away from pure curiosity" (Haweis, *Flame* 229). Quekett is the instrument of curiosity, and then torment, which ultimately shapes and refines Aglae into an improved version of herself. Aglae even admits that she "liked the novelty of the bit" (Haweis, *Flame* 229) and that she "rather respected him when he first used to – strike me" (Haweis, *Flame* 230), though she does recognise that her love for Quekett was, in reality, an "infatuation little less than madness" (Haweis, *Flame* 188). At their first meeting Quekett evokes the image of "the Bluebeard King" (Haweis, *Flame* 49) when speaking of himself. In the French Folktale Bluebeard is a wealthy, and violent man, who enjoys testing the obedience of his wives and when finding it lacking, murdering them. It is a tale of explicit domestic violence, which allows Haweis to implicitly suggest the unsavoury nature of the novel's antagonist. Actual acts of violence are alluded to throughout the narrative, and Aglae's vulnerability is coded into her similarities with small timid animals. As many Victorian writers often did, Haweis displaces domestic violence. Instead of the "brute" (Haweis, *Flame* 89) inflicting violence upon the heroine it is acted out upon the bodies of animals. In *A Flame of Fire* Aglae witnesses her future husband's violence towards animals first-hand. As he steps on a mouse she remarks that the "crunch seemed upon her heart" (Haweis, *Flame* 60). This prompts Aglae to tell her aunt that "if Mr. Quekett had a wife, I believe he would beat her" (Haweis, *Flame* 62). Despite the mouse being trampled and killed, it is Aglae who has the physical reaction towards death: "she could

not breathe, could not speak" (Haweis, *Flame* 60). Thus, the mouse and Aglae are conflated to foreshadow the abuse she will face as Mrs. Quekett.

The last fragment of Haweis' fiction writing to be discussed is the "Pompey Stories", in which the long-suffering Victorian woman is explored through an anthropomorphic lens. Much like her literary hero, Chaucer, Haweis uses animals to explore sides of humanity. Haweis conflates women with pets, stating that "the pet dog was the real old soft sex thirty or forty years ago" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 94), and asserting that women are slowly transitioning to the status of the pet dog themselves. In the "Pompey Stories" Haweis creates a pure and gentle dog who has undivided devotion to his master. The storyline is cautionary; when Pompey becomes unattractive, despite his continual devotion, he is discarded by his master. Haweis was also an advocate of animal welfare, as many nineteenth-century women's rights activists were. She had links with the anti-vivisection campaign, which she discussed in letter to Mona Caird, who was famous for championing animal welfare amongst other political pursuits. Although Haweis' letter is not archived alongside Caird's reply, it was evidently sent and Caird praises her for the "capital letter on the Viva question you enclose".[3] An essay by Haweis titled "Cattle Ships and Abattoirs" (1895) appeared in *The Westminster Review* in which she provided her own views on animal welfare and the "obvious inhumanity to sensitive, terrified creatures" (680). Although she states that "the treatment of the poor beasts is hideous" (Haweis, "Cattle Ships" 682) she does not deny the necessity to eat meat, but she does present the clear view that animals suffer just as their human counterparts suffer. In the "Pompey Stories" the cruelty of humans who "ought not to tyrannically handle dogs", nor use their "superior strength" to do so is revealed and compared

[3] See full citation from work's cited list: Caird, Mona. Letter to Mary Eliza Haweis. 23 November 18??. Haweis Family Fonds, Mary Eliza Haweis sous-fonds, 1866-1898. Box 3, Folder 11. University of British Columbia Archives, Vancouver, Canada.

to the similar way Victorian society treated women. As a woman choosing to live separately from her husband, in contempt of the law, Aglae is told that she can choose between "the life of a fugitive, and the life of a dog" (Haweis, *Flame* 202).

Later in the novel, the reader is confronted with the physical abuse that Aglae is made to suffer. The overt indication of domestic abuse is another way in which *A Flame of Fire* deviates from the nineteenth-century 'norm' to become distinctly 'New Woman'. In front of her aunt and also in full view of the reader, Aglae "resisted angrily" (Haweis, *Flame* 110) when Quekett demands she give him her wrist, and he does manage to forcefully take hold of it. She reveals that "he has a way of pinching my wrist – when he's angry" (Haweis, *Flame* 111) afterwards. Her aunt speaks to the servants after this incident, fearing that Aglae is being mistreated. They tell her that "missis and master don't at all times agree, in a quiet way, and the nurse did say how she saw big blue marks" (Haweis, *Flame* 124). The proof of the violence is therefore narrated in such a way as to neither shy away from the truth, nor confront the reader with Aglae's bruised body itself. The "invisibility and silence" (7), which Lawson and Shakinovsky argue typically applied to the "violated bodies of these women" (7) is denied. The very act of the servants gossiping between themselves about Aglae's bruises mitigates against any attempt to sweep the issue under the carpet. Suffering, then, is portrayed by Haweis as integral to Aglae's later identity. Only through suffering, is she able to recognise the best route for her life: "The suffering came, then," Mrs. Dorriforth said sadly; "and the minister was indeed a flame of fire." (Haweis, *Flame* 231).

Thus, denied a separate legal identity, and denied the rights to a divorce Aglae struggles throughout the novel to reconcile the different roles she must play. From maiden to married to mother, each process destabilises her sense of self further. The identity of the aptly named *feme*

sole is fractured into the competing branches of female identity: socialite, housekeeper, caregiver, and sexual partner. Female identity is illusive precisely because it does not exist, cannot exist when women are constantly denied the opportunity to cultivate it. Thus Haweis' novel proposes the idea that by becoming Wife, women are no longer Myself. This phenomenon, voiced by Gaskell in her letters can be simplified into the phrase 'many mes': "One of my mes is, I do believe, a true Christian…another of my mes is a wife and mother…then again I've another self with a full taste for beauty and convenience…How am I to reconcile all these warring members?" (Chapple and Shelston 108)

Haweis certainly felt that her 'many mes' were warring with each other. In her diary she wrote: "I do not know my way – I drift; I reflect; I am nothing in myself" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book I" 34). Haweis felt an absence of self that she may have attempted to fill with varying Victorian gender roles. This is a plausible rationale to the continually changing genre and focus her literary works adopted throughout the years. Yet, what is clearly demonstrated by *A Flame of Fire* is that none of these assumed roles is ever truly representative of the woman. This is not solely a Victorian dilemma, but a ubiquitous consequence that feminists have been unpicking for generations. Betty Friedan's 'feminine mystique', which "permits, even encourages, women to ignore the question of their identity" and which "says they can answer the question 'Who am I?' by saying 'Tom's wife…Mary's mother.'" (53) will extend well into the future. Aglae oscillates between stereotypes, yet the narrator refrains from labelling her in any way. Instead, the reader is reminded that Aglae was "as reproachless within and without as yourself" (Haweis, *Flame* 176) allowing Aglae's character to depend upon the reader, with all their differing perspectives and experiences, for interpretation.

Does Aglae ever find herself? Does Haweis? Is it even possible? Perhaps it is more suitable to say that *A Flame of Fire* demonstrates the possibility of numerous selves. If only women were not being pulled in opposing directions, if only they weren't presented with stringent choices, for example between fugitive and dog, but with a third: the choice of separation, divorce from a marriage that would squash individuality. Thus, the novel becomes a hall of mirrors, reflecting a different Aglae at every turn. And within those halls, trapped within the Gothic mansion of marriage, the heroine wanders waiting for the reader to discover her.

Chapter Two

Network, Community, and Female Relationships in *The Woman's Herald* and Other Periodicals

"women are very differently situated with respect to each other – for they are all rivals"

(Wollstonecraft, *Vindication* 194)

British periodicals such as *The Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald*, were a place where community was fostered between women writers, editors and readers. From the 1890s onwards, Haweis seems to have made a shift in writing periodical articles about fashion and clothing history and this may have been, in part, due to the eroding of her marital and familial relationships. Seeking a new community in like-minded women writers, Haweis stopped producing the types of articles she had prolifically been writing before the 1890s, such as "Colours and Cloths of the Middle Ages" (1883), "Dress. Hints to Ladies" (1873), "Embroidery for the Market" (1883), "Head-Dresses" (1872), and "Jewels and Dress: or the Philosophy of Jewels" (1889) to instead write specifically about the suffrage and women's place in Victorian society. This chapter will examine four articles closely: "Will Women Combine?" published in *The Woman's Herald* in 1891, "The Revolt of the Daughters" published in *The Nineteenth Century* in 1894, "The Soft Sex" published in *Good Words* in 1896, and "The Equality of the Sexes" published in *The New Century Review* in 1897. The reading of these four articles, against Haweis' letters and memoranda, builds upon the presentation of this nuanced writer's relationships with women. Through examining Haweis' familial relationships with other women, this chapter will show how her views on political unity – Suffrage – are set against her own inability to foster strong bonds with women, personally. In doing so, this chapter will challenge the feminist notion of 'sisterhood' to suggests that women writers in the nineteenth century had a complex understanding of community.

This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section will establish the environment in which Haweis was writing these articles, with particular emphasis upon her marriage and the juxtaposition between her ability to form bonds with men against the seeming difficulty she had forming the same types of bonds with women. The second section, New Woman; Eternal Feminine, will examine "The Soft Sex" (1896) and "The Equality of the Sexes" (1897) alongside an unpublished book that Haweis seems to have been in the process of drafting before she died, which is kept in the Haweis Family Fonds archive and is titled "The History of Woman". This section will explore the ways in which Haweis wrote about women's past contrasted with their present. Haweis compared not only their distant historical selves - from the Middle Ages to the Greeks - to their current state, but she also compared the Victorian woman to herself by contrasting the New Woman with what Haweis called 'the woman of old'. By doing so, this will showcase the conflict in Haweis' writing for the periodical press during this time. Whilst she advocated for the right to vote and equality between the sexes she was also fearful of the changes brought on women that were now growing up in an age with these new freedoms. The final section of this chapter, "Women, Collectively", analyses "The Revolt of the Daughters" and delves into Haweis's own personal relationships with her mother, sister, and daughter (and even her husband's female relations). This section also looks at "Will Women Combine?" to show how Haweis felt about women's political relationships, and how women were preventing other women from receiving greater freedoms and rights. Whilst advocating for political allegiance, for women to 'combine' or unionise, Haweis also details a sense of rivalry that she felt was natural amongst women.

Haweis: Daughter, Sister, Wife, Mother

During the years that the above articles were published, the relationship between Haweis and

Hugh Reginald broke down. For years, Haweis had been sustaining the household with the income from her books and yet they were haemorrhaging money at an alarming rate. In 1869, early on in their marriage, Haweis wrote to her mother of Hugh Reginald's poorly kept accounts: "As for the book where he writes down his accounts, if you see an entry for one week £16.2.11…you may be pretty sure without adding up that the right total is £2.16.11" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 6). This suggests that, from early on in their marriage, he was not as economically minded as Haweis. In their biography of Haweis, *Arbiter of Elegance*, Bea Howe claims that this money was being spent on Hugh Reginald's mistress and illegitimate child. Certainly, there is no disputing that Hugh Reginald had an extramarital affair that resulted in a child. In his work, *Spoilt Child: the Story of Hugh Reginald Haweis*, Stephen Haweis recounted meeting his half-sibling, who was named Margaret: "I saw my half-sister once, and can aver that she was more like my father than any of his legitimate children" (73). The accounts of this mistress are very contradictory. In a letter from the family lawyer to Lionel, Mrs. S is said to be a rich widower, and that "it wd appear that your father had all the money Mrs. S's husband left her", though the lawyer was also told "the names of two ladies to one of whom she asserts your father gave large sums" (Haweis, *Spoilt Child*[4]). Hugh Reginald certainly frittered away money on his extramarital affairs, but it seems unlikely that Mrs. S, who was a member of his Church and gave charitably to it, had blackmailed him. Hugh Reginald attempted to shift the blame onto Haweis instead of owning up to losing the household income himself and he wrote to her: "For years, as I have often tried to explain, we have been living above income" claiming that he was "expected to keep up the style" which had "now become impossible, although I have, under the ruthless pressure applied by you, made a hard fight for it" (7MEH/5/3 86a). His accusations are

[4] This quotation comes from a letter in box 8 of the Stephen Haweis Papers. It is included in the *Spoilt Child* folder but is a loose letter addressed to Stephen's brother Lionel on 20 June 1901. It is not numbered.

improbable, for Haweis's detailed account keeping is well documented, and her writing pays such close attention to economy that it is highly unlikely that she was wasting money. Indeed, in her reply Haweis wrote "What you say about my lavish expenditure is utterly groundless. I can shew you my books" (7MEH/5/3 86c).

It was not only money, however, which affected Haweis' marriage to Hugh Reginald. They also had vastly different styles of parenting and neither would meet in the middle, especially in relation to their only daughter Hugolin. Haweis, it seems, was overbearing with her daughter, choosing to dress her up in styles that she did not like, whereas Hugh Reginald spoiled Hugolin excessively despite his money troubles. Much of the animosity between Haweis and Hugh Reginald in the 1890s stemmed from this. During their many disagreements, Hugolin would often stay with Hugh Reginald's sisters despite Haweis' objections. In her book *Four to Fourteen*, Hugolin wrote a good deal about the time she spent at her grandfather's home with her aunts. In one particularly noteworthy part of the book, Hugolin wrote of a time when her aunt Margery helped her to learn a piece on the piano to "give Mother another surprise" (Haweis, *Four to Fourteen* 84). Hugolin wrote that Haweis did not believe she was musical, and it seems that her aunt really was only teaching Hugolin the piece to spite Haweis. Indeed, Hugolin wrote: "I could see Mother and Aunt Margery did not really like each other. I knew that before, because whenever I looked cross at home she said I looked exactly like my Aunt Margery" (Haweis, *Four to Fourteen* 85). There were many instances of contention between Haweis and her daughter and it seems that Hugh Reginald's sisters only exacerbated this. This strained relationship adds a new dimension to the reading of Haweis's article on 'Revolting Daughters'.

The couple also battled over the youngest son, Stephen. Hugh Reginald asserted that he was "brought up in open contempt and defiance of his father, nurtured in hatred to his sister"

(7MEH/5/3 37). As the youngest child, Stephen was born into an already strained marriage and, following her difficult relationship Hugolin, Haweis seemed determined to raise her final child as she saw fit. Interestingly, both children came to write about their parents. In her work, *Four to Fourteen by a Victorian Child*, which Hugolin dedicated to her father, she wrote that he was "so terribly good and faithful and clever" that it was "No wonder everyone liked him" (110). Hugh Reginald had a charisma that seemed to distract from his other flaws, whereas Haweis was more unyielding. Hugolin remembered her by the sound of the "chatelaine" (Haweis, *Four to Fourteen* 109) that accompanied her where she went. Stephen, on the other hand, remarked that Hugh Reginald "carried his cradle throughout his whole life like a snail's shell" (Haweis, *Spoilt Child* 196) and Haweis had developed a "strength of character" (Haweis, *Spoilt Child* 91) because she could not depend upon her husband. Haweis had a unique personality, as well as steadfast opinions, and this clashed with Hugh Reginald significantly following the exposure of his infidelity. The couple spent less time with each other, and this meant that there are numerous letters to document their disagreements. In 1894, Hugh Reginald wrote "I carry your portrait of years gone and when I am away I think of you as you were once, kind, before your mind was wasted and your judgment inconceivably distorted, and I try and fancy your true self will come back some day" (7MEH/5/3 34). At this time, Haweis had published the articles discussed in this chapter, which were all focused upon the subject of women's rights. In a letter to Lionel, Hugh Reginald wrote of Haweis: "she fancies she is going in for 'public work'. She does not know how many people laugh at her and how little fitted she is to do things she is bent on" (7MEH/5/4 181). He suggested that Haweis' public work negatively impacted on his place in the relationship: "Up to now I always had an anchorage with you at home. But that seems gone and nothing can ever take its place" (7MEH/5/3 38). This statement hints that Hugh Reginald felt his

role had been usurped and explains why he was so opposed to Haweis going in for political work.

From her memoranda and personal letters it is clear that the female relationships that Haweis herself had were far from affectionate. Indeed, in her personal relationships with other women Haweis distinctly lacked allies. From an early age, she seems to have been able to form bonds much more easily with men. Despite growing up alongside a sibling, Edith, Haweis writes very little about her sister and in her juvenilia decides instead to write about a brother who did not survive past infancy. His death inspired a poem by Haweis, written in 1862 when she was just fourteen years old:

> Anon, I half recall an anguished mind
> A heart all rent with grief – a tearless woe
> That nothing could assuage. I half recall
> My brother's lovely countenance – one eve
> As it reposed upon the pillow white. (7MEH/2/2)

Haweis continued in a similar vein, writing that her brother had become a "glorious angel" that "hovers near/ Watching above his little sister here" (7MEH/2/2). Haweis made use of the poetic form to imagine knowing a brother who, it is most likely, died before she was born or when she was very young: "her poetry had been to her, at least since the age of fourteen…a space –or "balmy spot" –in which memory and invention could invisibly coalesce" (Merchant 38). Rather than writing about her living sibling, Haweis pined the loss of a brotherly figure that she never knew. She would later write of her future husband and his sibling, a sister named Margaret, that she did not like when they were affectionate in front of her because it brought back "the old longing for a brother" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 38). In a similar vein, the young Mary Eliza

was able to develop a closer relationship with her father than her mother. The relationship between Haweis and her father was built around their shared affinity for artistic pursuits; Thomas Musgrave Joy was a genre and portrait painter. Haweis must have held her father in high esteem for in 1870, four years after his death, she wrote: “How I wish papa cd see my drawings! I am certain they are very good. I am sure there is real artistic & poetic feeling about some” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book II” 15) and later, in an interview in *Hearth and Home*, she told the interviewer, “I derive whatever artistic talent I possess from him” ("CHATS WITH CELEBRITIES" 418). Their bond, forged by their penchant for artistic pursuits, is severed in 1866 when her father dies. Haweis reflected that, “a soul is gone…that fertile brain, that all-skilful hand, all work is over” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book I” 14). After his death, Haweis was set adrift from a paternal or masculine relationship but was able to swiftly form a new one when Hugh Reginald asked Haweis to marry him. He proposed on October 4, 1867, and they shared a two-month engagement before being married on November 30, 1867. Haweis’ diaries were put aside during the first four months of their marriage, but she continued her journaling on April 1st, 1868: “I am happy now – as happy as any mortal can be…Since that date…I have been engaged, and am married…it is like a dream” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book II” 4). Haweis became pregnant soon after, and their first child, tellingly, was named for her father – Reginald Joy.

What is increasingly evident from Haweis’ private papers is the importance she placed on her relationships with men; she wrote of her brother, father, and husband far more than she ever wrote about her female relations. When she did write about her female relationships Haweis expressed a strong contempt for these women. From her childhood, Haweis recorded a dislike of her female relations, beginning with her father’s sisters. After his death, Haweis’s aunts came to

see their brother and Haweis remarked “The Joys are an odd set” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book I” 15). She clearly felt that their grief was exaggerated, even false. Haweis claimed that her aunts treated her father poorly in life and there was no evident love between them: “they have not sent to ask after us, nor taken any notice of the death of their only brother: I always said their pretended affection was false…they care only for the outward show” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book I” 14). This ‘show’ she also recorded: “They came with the undertakers, & going into the parlour where poor papa had been placed, shut themselves in with the men, where they commenced roaring so loudly that one wd have thought their sorrow great if one did not know their real characters – deep grief is not noisy” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book I” 15). Even from a young age, Haweis detested insincerity almost as much as she detested outbursts of emotion. This was not to be the only poor relationship she had with the sisters of a close male relative. Haweis disliked Hugh Reginald’s sisters as much, if not more, than her father’s as was alluded to in chapter one when Haweis wrote to her son that she hoped the publishing of *A Flame of Fire* caused Hugh Reginald’s sisters distress. That Hugh Reginald’s sisters took in Hugolin against Haweis’ wishes only further soured any relationship between them.

Despite her husband’s opinion that she as unfit for ‘public work’, Haweis appeared increasingly involved in political societies and the enfranchisement movement. She established a relationship with Sarah Grand, who in 1893 had her novel *The Heavenly Twins* published and who is credited with originating the term ‘New Woman’. Haweis also became a member of the Pioneer’s Club – a women’s club founded in 1892 by activist Emily Massingberd, which hosted lectures, debates, and discussions. Haweis documented her involvement in a letter to Lionel: “I shall open the May course of Debates at the Pioneer” (7MEH/5/4 111). Through her engagement with these clubs, and her connections with other women writers, Haweis became a part of a

network outside of her home. Through her writing for the periodical press, particularly *The Woman's Herald,* Haweis also found a sense of community she could not in her private life. A weekly British feminist magazine, *The Woman's Herald* underwent a series of name changes; it began as *The Women's Penny Paper* and ran from October 1888 to December 1890 and during these years it was edited by Henrietta Müller. Müller attended Girton and was later on the committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. From January 1891 to December 1893 the name was changed to *The Woman's Herald* and it was during Müller's editorship, when she used the name Helena B. Temple, that Haweis's article was published. The catchphrase for the magazine was 'The only paper conducted, written, and published by women' and Haweis' "Will Women Combine" was featured in volume IV on June 27, 1891. Each volume of the magazine contained an interview of a prominent female figure. It was based off of Edmund Yates's "Celebrities at Home" series which interviewed male celebrities and would frequently use women "as plot devices, driving the interviewer's quest for the celebrity's private self" (Van Remoortel 255) whereas the interviews in *The Woman's Herald* focused on women instead. However, just as Yates' series emphasised the domestic life of the celebrity, so did the interviews in *The Woman's Herald*, which appeared to "reinforce some of the most ingrained gender conventions of the age" (Van Remoortel 256). The women in these interviews were arguably defined by their domestic surroundings as much as by their political answers to the interviewer's questions. But, by situating the woman writer in her home, the interview was able to "invite" the reader inside into a more intimate, personal, space, thus fostering a sense of community and closeness between women. By describing the woman celebrity's home and the items she had chosen to surround herself with, the reader seems to almost share the space. The

interview in volume IV, where Haweis's article was placed, is of Frances Willard, the American temperance reformer and suffragist.

There were other shared spaces for women writers during this time, for example the Women Writer's Dinner. This event has previously been called the Ladies Literary Dinner, and these dinners ran from 1889 to 1914. They were held at the Criterion Restaurant, but the tradition was abandoned after the outbreak of World War One. Haweis was invited to give the after-dinner address at the 1894 Women Writer's Dinner. She advocated for "books written from the woman's special point of view" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 68). The seating plan for the Women Writer's dinner event which Haweis attended and spoke at, and which was the fifth annual meeting of the confraternity of women writers, was published by *The Woman's Signal* on June 7, 1894. The seating plan is detailed with the works that these women were chiefly known for, and their names listed below in accordance with their seat number. Haweis was seated at the head of the table, on number 57. Mona Caird is perhaps the best-known writer in attendance at the dinner where Haweis gave her lecture, but there were upwards of sixty women writers present who contribute to the outpouring of literature produced by women of the *fin de siècle*. In attendance was, for example, John Strange Winter (the pseudonym for Henrietta Eliza Vaughan Stannard) who was a novelist and later the president of the Society of Women Journalists in 1901 to 1903, as well as L. T. Meade, a prolific writer of girl's stories who wrote over three hundred books in her lifetime. Whilst Caird has had a 'revival' of sorts, many of these other women writers have works that are undiscovered but would serve to influence, complicate, and broaden our understanding of *fin de siècle* women's writing just as a study of Haweis does. Events such as the Women Writer's Dinner no doubt fostered working literary relationships. Indeed, there are letters which have been archived between Haweis and Caird, which show an exchanging of ideas and

mutual feelings on antivivisection. From the letters and the dinner they attended together there is enough evidence to argue that these two women writers, Haweis and Caird, shared a network. Whilst Haweis may have struggled to form bonds with her female family members, and had lost the companionship of her estranged husband, she seems to have been welcomed into a circle of like-minded writers.

New Woman; Eternal Feminine

In her 1896 article "The Soft Sex" Haweis began, "There was never a time when the eternal feminine had so much done for her and said about her. She is positively bristling with new privileges" (36) thus establishing, from the first two lines, a connection between women's past and present. The eternal feminine, popularized by Goethe in the tragedy *Faust,* was revived by Nietzsche in the latter half of the nineteenth century and as Haweis had a distinctly philosophical leaning in her reading she would no doubt have employed this term at the start of her article purposefully. The eternal feminine, which Simone De Beauvoir has called "a lazy, abstract cliché" (13), is an immutable concept of what it meant to be a woman and yet Haweis writes that it has "new privileges" – that it is therefore *changing*. Haweis immediately challenges gender essentialism, drawing attention to the shifting and evolving role of women in society. Although Haweis does not specifically reference Nietzsche in her memoranda or diaries, she displays an understanding of his writings on this phenomena which Sarah Kofman and Madeleine Dobie have noted: "Nietzsche appropriates the expression "Eternal feminine" only to demystify it, since…he was able to detect, beneath this pseudo-eternity, a historical creation" (180). This is precisely what Haweis suggests in her drafts of "The History of Woman", in which she sought to find specific moments in history where the 'fall of woman', as she termed it, occurred. Haweis wrote, "it is not the properties of the sex per se but the workings of the social machinery around

them, which develops or distorts man or woman" (Haweis, "History of Woman" 16) and she highlights the impact of religion and specifically of Genesis on this distortion. However, it is human interpretation of the bible that Haweis highlights as having established women to be lower than men: "the church did deprive woman of her earthly crown. Not Christ, but the church, did subvert the status of woman" (Haweis, "History of Woman"[5]). Human, specifically, male error stripped women of what Haweis believed to be their birth right – to be seen as men's equals. By uniting old and new in the first two sentences Haweis presents the main thrust of the article which is a comparison of women who grew up with new freedoms against the women who fought hard for these same freedoms. Haweis points out that women are being written about extensively, that as a "Maiden, she has her university degrees, her profession, her club; wife, she can possess property and even earn it" ("Soft Sex" 36) but that there are "ugly perils" to these "new lights" ("Soft Sex" 36). Haweis was, as ever, cautious and pragmatic in her approach to the changing role of women in her society. Whilst she clearly advocated in many instances for women to be allowed to enter professions and to own their own property, she clearly had anxieties that women would lose sight of their past. Thus, it is not possible to say whether she employs the term eternal feminine in an ironic way or if, instead, she employs it to establish a base line, as a way to stabilise herself in an ever-changing time.

In this article, Haweis asked "Will all the modern indulgences "spoil" women?" ("Soft Sex" 36). Here her concerns surrounding the true strength of women, which comes out of struggle, resurface. Haweis deemed the 'soft sex' to be those who cannot bear hardship, not the traditional meaning, which is akin to the Angel in the House who was demure, submissive, and meek: "I mean softness, not in the way of sympathy, but in being able to put up with nothing"

[5] This page of the manuscript does not have a page number, however it can be located by searching for the heading 'Chap. 5' and is towards the top of the page in Box 22, Folder 8 (22-8).

("Soft Sex" 37) she explained. Haweis contrasted the 'woman of old' to the New Woman, referencing Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* in the article. The novel, which was rebellious for its time with its anti-marriage message and illegitimate child, is one of the chief novels included in lists of New Woman fiction. Haweis clearly understood the New Woman, but she believed that two distinct types of New Woman existed and that one, the kind that grew up with new freedoms and never had to struggle, was not as intelligent nor as resilient as the other. Haweis seems to have pitied this type of New Woman. Haweis explicitly created this type of New Woman character in her novel in Joyce Pringle. Quekett uses Joyce to rile Aglae and to mock her in public. Joyce is presented as innocuous as she had a "very quiet deliberate, phlegmatic manner" (Haweis, *Flame* 119), and is "a tall, unusually tall, young woman of about thirty, with cropped hair…and no particular features, shape, or manners" (Haweis, *Flame* 118). Whilst it is Joyce's relationship with Aglae's husband that ultimately leads to the heroine's fleeing and seeking divorce, the narrator seems to pity Joyce for her involvement. Joyce's mind is turned by literary ideas, the reader is told, and shuns her mother's protection. Mrs Pringle laments: "I can't say anything, for fear of making her discontented at home, and then she would simply go off into a flat of her own, and goodness knows what her extraordinary modern notions would lead her to do" (Haweis, *Flame* 138). These are characteristics that appear to be inspired by Haweis' own daughter, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Joyce is an example of what Haweis meant when she wrote about the 'soft sex' and in her article she cautioned: "they are growing softer, as more is conceded to them. And this is an ugly peril not only to them, but to the men they live with, and the children they bring up" ("Soft Sex" 36). That is to say, it is a detriment to society at large. This softness is what Haweis cautioned against in *A Flame of Fire* when Mrs. Dorriforth tells Mildmay:

> Fire needs air and guidance, but not a violent wind and a prison; the clear flame may be developed and turned to great uses for the good of many, and that is better than a little flicker in a little lamp; but it ought not to be fanned, and then neglected, till it burns down the village. That is fire – that is the soul – that is Aglae! (Haweis 226)

In "The Soft Sex" Haweis presented a similar theory and praised women who have been roused to action by the injustices against their sex, using their fire to combat it. Haweis called this the "old bracing system" ("Soft Sex" 38) in which children were brought up "dry" and "under nursery rules as rigid as ours are lax" ("Soft Sex" 37). This system, though it denied children the pleasures Haweis claimed they were being spoiled by, "trained the women who were afterwards moral warriors" ("Soft Sex" 38) and "gave us such women as Miss Cobbe, Mrs. Ellis, and many more" ("Soft Sex" 38). Certainly, Haweis was brought up in this system:

> I was never taught to be fond of my parents, or my sister, or my relations: & it is useless to deny that I don't care for them. I was never kissed by either papa or mama except with a kind of bang when I went to bed. My sister I never embraced at all…It is only now when I observe other families and other children, that I see how 'dry' I was brought up. (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 43)

As with much of Haweis's writing, there is an undercurrent of autobiography running beneath. It is pertinent to note that this type of upbringing fostered a sense of camaraderie between Haweis and other women writers who supported the suffrage. For example, Haweis allied herself with Frances Power Cobbe, "whose lonely childhood would not appear delightful to children to-day" (Haweis, "Soft Sex" 38) but which, in Haweis' opinion, made her a woman to be emulated and admired. For a woman married to a clergyman, Haweis wrote curiously little of religion outside

of her private diaries. Yet, in her writing on women's place in society, and women's history, her religious leanings do come through. This is especially true for her belief in the moral integrity women possessed. For Haweis, women's ability to inherently understand proper conduct and appreciate right and wrong behaviour was one of their oldest qualities: "woman had again, as at the first, Eve's old craving for education – a craving to know right from wrong" ("History of Woman"[6]). In this article women are said to be "moral warriors" and "morally tough", though future generations need "a little more lime in their moral bones" (Haweis, "Soft Sex" 40). This is a fairly traditional view and a theme that comes through in much of Haweis' writing, and will be picked up again in chapter four in relation to the story of 'Patient Griselda' and in chapter five with a discussion of charitable aestheticism.

Haweis clung to the Christian ideal of suffering to prepare the soul for heaven, and thus woman's suffering "must glorify her when they come to the astral condition!" ("Soft Sex" 37). To return to a point made in the preceding chapter, namely that Haweis and Hugh Reginald did not reconcile their differences over the importance of what Haweis called 'spartan virtue', it becomes clear how, when the view point is shifted to male, this personality did not necessarily befit the archetypal Victorian woman. Rather than being delicate and mouldable, the ideal woman in Haweis' eyes is hard and unyielding, a "Hardened Brave" ("Soft Sex" 37). This opinion is a divergence from the generally acceptable personality of the Victorian woman and was something which caused the rift between Haweis and her husband to widen. The Victorian ideal of the home as a place of repose and sanctuary for the husband was not one which Haweis herself kept and Hugh Reginald wrote many times that he felt pushed out of the house and social circles by Haweis. However, he was often away from home by financial necessity, as he went

[6] This page of the manuscript does not have a page number, however it can be located by searching for the heading 'Chap. 5' and is towards the bottom of the page in Box 22, Folder 8 (22-8).

abroad to lecture. It is clear that Haweis anticipated retaliations against the new freedoms women were enjoying in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and feared that women could possibly lose their hard-won rights, such as property rights: “the cruellest of all cruelties in the end is the kindness which makes us dependent on kindness and then reverses the treatment” (Haweis, “Soft Sex” 39). Thus, Haweis counselled women to not be dependent upon laws which have shifted and changed from age to age but to foster a strong sense of self to bear up against such changes. Haweis praised qualities that were deemed womanly, such as forgiveness and forbearance, whilst also advocating for women to be “self-governed” and “far-seeing” (“Soft Sex” 40) and in doing so she combines new with old, Eternal Feminine with New Woman, to create an improved ideal for women.

In “The Equality of the Sexes”, Haweis expanded upon what she called “The Fall of Woman” which she stated was “as disastrous as the fall of Man” (279) by reviewing the position of women throughout history. The longest section of the article details the ways in which injustices in the law have seen women punished more harshly than men for similar crimes, and lists specific instruments of punishment invented solely to be used on women. These include the scold’s bridle and the ducking-stool, which she said were “torments which were the absolute privilege of the weaker - that is, the artificially weakened - sex” (Haweis, “Equality” 282). Her tone in this article is more satirical than in her others, and she employs irony to emphasise the inequalities that women faced whilst being viewed as something to be protected and cared for by men. She mocks the current system which, on the surface, is meant to shelter wives and daughters, but which in reality makes them inferior beings. She asked, “Have we amended matters much in the present day?” (Haweis, “Equality” 285) and it is clear that the answer to this rhetorical question is ‘not much’. Haweis asked the reader to look at the inequalities in the law,

and listed: “factory legislation tells hardest on women”, “property acquired by the joint industry of man and wife belongs to the man”, “Wives are almost without parental rights”, and “Divorce is doubly hard for a woman” (Haweis, “Equality” 285). These conditions were artificial, in that they had been imposed on women through modifications in the law similar to the one which explicitly stripped women of the right to vote. Haweis studied women’s history and strongly felt that they had all of these rights at varying points and that the stripping of these is what constituted the ‘fall of woman’. She wrote, “Ever since the Conquest, nay, ever since Augustine landed, English woman has been gradually dropping off the plane of partnership, which is her animal right” (Haweis, “Equality” 278). Haweis believed that this hit its worst point during the nineteenth century: “She reached her sleepiest point about the time when John Stuart Mill thought it wise to awaken her” (“Equality” 278). As was established in the previous chapter, Haweis was a follower of Mill and had been to hear him speak in 1868 with Hugh Reginald, so it follows that he would reappear in her writing for the periodical press. Mill’s seminal work on women was published relatively soon after Haweis had been to see him speak, so it is probable that she heard him speak on a topic similar to those presented in this work.

The unnatural inequality of women was a design, an artificial product, and one which Haweis believed went against the original word of God. Haweis acknowledged that the bible attested that men were superior, stating “If we may trust the oldest of traditions embodied in a very old document, the Bible, her birth and subjection to man who ‘should rule over her’ is dated shortly after the moulding of the hills” (“History of Woman” 1) but then argued that this interpretation is immoral. Haweis believed that men and women were created equal: “there is no subjection of woman to man or of male to female, for they are one. God created man in his own image, male and female…He called their name (the double principle) Adam” (“History of

Woman" 1). Indeed, she searched for these inconsistencies in scripture and in historical legislation to prove her belief that women were seen as equal in early human history. In the book she was working on, "The History of Woman", she had chapters on 'Matriarchate and Patriarchate' and 'The Operations of a Matriarchate'. Indeed, it is probable that Haweis was debating the title of the work as there are notes in the margins by the title that suggest she may have been considering titling it 'Early Equality'. Hugh Reginald reflected on her research for this book, stating the "indefatigable industry and minute research expended on the subject, would certainly surprise those who know her only by her lighter writings" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 133). Contrary to this statement, the layout of "The History of Woman", the tone, and the depth of detail does recall *The Art of Beauty* and all of her *'The Art of'* books. Haweis highlighted classic examples of "female athletes, female philosophers, female prophets and seers" ("History of Woman" 16) such as the philosopher Hypatia, the prophetess Deborah, and Boadicea. She also mentions Joan of Arc. Haweis employed these examples to combat the opposition to the Suffrage, and claimed, "The unhistorical types who flood the press and drown the public house whenever the humble suffrage for the Englishwoman comes up for discussion, by cries that women must not vote because they cannot fight, ought to read a little ancient history" (Haweis, "History of Woman")[7]. Haweis' study of history therefore directly informed her understanding of the Suffrage and women's rights in the time that she was crafting these articles.

Haweis firmly believed that gradually, over the course of years, women were stripped of their rights and the Suffrage was a righteous reclaiming of them. Haweis employed a metaphor to explain this phenomenon, and wrote about a wasp attacking a daddy-long-legs. She wrote that she once saw a wasp "nip off first her head, then each wing, then the legs, and fly away"

[7] This page of the manuscript does not have a page number, however it can be located by searching the papers in Box 22, Folder 8 (22-8).

(Haweis, "Equality" 278) and thought this an "interesting pair whilst observing the anomalies of English law as affecting the sexes" (Haweis, "Equality" 279). Like the insect, women had had their rights 'nipped off':

> she lost her powers, her influence, her rule, as a sex, and the era of physical supremacy nipt off first one wing, then the other – governmental power, contractual power, testamentary, maternal, possessive power, &c. – limb after limb was lost or paralysed, until she lay, as Shakespeare delicately puts it, a "froward and unable worm," her hand (and her neck) "below her husband's foot. (Haweis, "Equality" 280)

Here, Haweis references the famous moment in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* when Katherina monologues on women's marital duties to their husbands. In the preceding lines, Katherina says: "I am asham'd that women are so simple/ To offer war where they should kneel for peace,/ Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,/ When they are bound to serve, love, and obey" (Shakespeare, *Shrew* 5.2.166-169) Katherina, the titular 'shrew', is originally strong-willed and sharp-tongued until she is courted by Petruchio who is able to tame her. Though the purpose of these lines is somewhat contested, with some viewing them as ironic, Haweis clearly employed the reference here to exemplify the point that many women, like Katherina, had forfeited their rights and power for the security of a husband. This also meant that they were dependent upon another for their health and wellbeing. Haweis strongly felt that this was a mistake. In February 1894, Haweis gave a talk at her home in Chelsea about women's dependence. Haweis had read about a New Zealand bird, the Huia bird, which had the most pronounced sexual dimorphism in the shape of its bill which meant that the female was dependent upon the male for its survival. In a moment which exemplified Haweis's satirical

humour at its best, she told the audience, “It seems a pity that the New Zealand birds are not as highly advanced as the New Zealand women” (*Words to Women* 27). Women in New Zealand, at that time, had the right to vote. She then quipped about English society: “It is the other way up with us, we are behind the birds” (Haweis, *Words to Women* 27). Haweis compared the plight of these birds to the English woman’s dependence upon her husband and stated, “Perhaps you think it is a beautiful interdependence, romantic, ideal. But it isn’t” (Haweis, *Words to Women* 28). Indeed, the credo of Haweis’ writing is *in*dependence, not dependence. In this address, Haweis again reinstated her belief in the Eternal Feminine, claiming that “Men might spin and churn, knit, sew, cook, rock the cradle for a hundred generations, and not be women…God’s colours do not wash out. Sex is dyed in the wool” (*Words to Women* 31). It is not Haweis’ mission to see women concede these qualities or pastimes, but to do more and be more. The vote, she argued, would not distract women from their domestic duties: “We have got to do all we do now, and *do it better;* and do more things outside too if we can – and certainly we can” (Haweis, *Words to Women* 33). The Suffrage was a tool to be used to elevate women and their skills so that these could be thought of as equal to men’s skills. For Haweis, there was certainly a division of responsibilities, and of talents, but she did not want one to be seen as superior to the other, and if either men’s work or women’s work was going to be considered superior then, to Haweis, women’s work was the obvious choice because it served to create and nurture all of human society.

“Women, Collectively”

Haweis saw women’s work as underpinning all work, including the public actions of men, and she asked the reader, “Realise for a moment what man could do without woman’s co-operation. Could he work his parish? Could he reach the children at schools? Could he win his election?

Could he mount the throne? Could he marry and transmit his name? Could he live at all? No." ("Combine" 566). Although in much of Haweis' writing she suggested that women's most laudable role was that of the helpmeet, the helpful companion to the husband, it is also clear that this role was not one that she herself was satisfied with. As referenced in the introduction chapter, Haweis spent her early marriage helping Hugh Reginald in correcting proofs and answering letters. She clearly felt unsatisfied with this role, perhaps because in helping Hugh Reginald with his work as editor she had unwittingly become the magnifying glass for her husband's accomplishments. Haweis' accomplishments were silent, for it was her husband's name on the article or book. To be a true helpmeet meant more than toiling silently and going unacknowledged. Instead, it meant collaboration between man and woman. She did not want to merely assist her husband. "Will Women Combine" is written to explain the significant strength women could possess when they combined, or unionised. Haweis stated that the watchword for women was, at that time, *Combine.* The article takes a political, collective view of women and argues that they had it in them to be far more than the underacknowledged helpmeet. "women", she began:

> with their gigantic power to coerce, who have it in their power to stamp out the human race, no more use a little bit of it than the horse which puts up with the cruellest bit and drags the unworthiest burdens. They say the horse's eye magnifies. I suppose woman's does. (Haweis, "Combine" 566)

Haweis' indication, in this article, that women have served to magnify men's accomplishments, is a sentiment predating Virginia Woolf's statement that "Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (Woolf, *Room* 29).

Haweis argued, in this article, for women to reflect and magnify other women's accomplishments. In an article that saw women as a collective she wrote a harsh critique of women who were not campaigning and who stood in the way of progress, whether intentionally or not. She is so critical, in fact, that she paused in the midst to ask, "Do I seem to be writing a tirade against my sex? Do I not appreciate the goodness and modest usefulness of women?" to which she then told the reader, "Yes, no one more. But woman in her artificial and cramped state is all that I have sketched, and, perhaps, reviled" (Haweis, "Combine" 566). This "artificial and cramped state" is what Haweis clearly believed the Suffrage would free women from. This state of being was a gilded cage that women had grown accustomed to with fake flattery and "sham chivalry" and those women who were not cognisant of that fact were, at least in Haweis's eyes, "not fit to govern, in public or private" ("Combine" 566). Such an artificial creature, she wrote, "counts for nothing in the nation she belongs to, but it is made up to her by petting and pretty deeds of courtesy. Women have been brought up thus and thus; they have got into the groove; the caged bird is afraid to come out, for after all the cage is very comfortable." (Haweis, "Combine" 566). The terms artificial and authentic are common in Victorian dialogue surrounding the woman question, and claims of woman's authenticity depended on the stance that one took on women's rights: "What unites feminist and anti-feminist writing of the Victorian period is its central concern with questions of femininity, each side laying claim to an 'authentic' as opposed to the other camp's 'artificial', flawed, corrupted or unsexed femininity" (Heilmann and Sanders 290). Of course, the problem with defining what is authentic compared to artificial femininity was that femininity itself was unstable. Some viewed femininity as the result of a prescribed set of traits meant to make women attractive to men, whilst others, particularly those of the Victorian period and particularly Haweis, saw it as something to aspire

to. The difficulty with defining femininity as authentic or artificial lies in the debate about whether "femininity comes naturally to women, or whether it has to be constructed and performed" (Heilmann and Sanders 290). There are many aspects of femininity that are performed and constructed, especially in regards to the physical manifestation of it. The female body is enhanced by clothing, hair styling, and cosmetics to a much higher degree than the male body. Indeed, the fact that Haweis spent a great deal of her literary life writing manuals to explain to women how to look feminine suggests that it was, at its core, a performance. Though Haweis wrote frequently about the natural inclination women had to be beautiful and soothing, she made a great deal of money teaching women how to achieve this. Interestingly, however, Haweis does not use the term 'performance' or 'perform' in either *The Art of Beauty* or *The Art of Dress*.

Haweis felt that these artificial women were a direct hindrance to the Suffrage. She wrote:

> It is because they are so "delightfully inconsequent," so "refreshingly ignorant," that women so naively accept their legal classification…They know and understand nothing of the intelligent minority growing up, whom their foolishness bars from good work; nothing, probably, of the world's sorrowful need of such workers. (Haweis, "Combine" 566)

She called these women "dogs-in-the-manger" (Haweis, "Combine" 566). She stated that it was because of these women, who were preventing other women who supported the Suffrage from achieving it, that the "legal formula concerning "women, children, and idiots" is a perfectly just and fair definition of their present status, and too often an exact description of their mental attitude" (Haweis, "Combine" 566). Published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1868, Frances Power

Cobbe's article "Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors" equated women's political position in England with three other categories that were excluded from civil rights. Cobbe succinctly asked, "why is the property of the woman who commits Murder, and the property of the woman who commits Matrimony, dealt with alike by your law?" (Hamilton 9). Cobbe aligns women with criminals and idiots to showcase how unjust it is that they have been classified, legislatively, alongside such types. Haweis suggested that the women who were "not alive to the fact" ("Combine" 566) of such inequalities, were deserving of the comparison. Haweis saw the type of women who barred the way for others, those that one might now term anti-feminists but were at the very least anti-suffrage, as perhaps more numerous than the progressive ones. The chief reason Haweis lists for the "caged bird" hindering the freedom of its fellow prisoners is that women, on a fundamental level, were rivals: "The truth must out: *Women, collectively, have the deepest contempt and mistrust of themselves*. They show it in their anxiety to bar every new way to every other woman ("Combine" 566). Whilst Haweis felt that such women were unfit for public lives, she was even more astonished that they were seen as fit for household management: "this pitiable creature is allowed to create and conduct the family, adjust the household, and dispense the income. What an anomaly to be sure!" ("Combine" 566). For Haweis, management of the home required a firm hand, a shrewd mind, and a keen eye, which were traits that would serve women just as well outside of the home as in it. These traits, which she felt came instinctively to women, would enable them to do more than manage the household. Haweis described the occupations that women could excel in thusly:

> Let her nurse the sick, even when it is on the loud and terrible battlefield, ringing with groans and oaths. Let her seek out and comfort the dying pauper in the asylums and madhouses, even if to get there with any authority to act she has to

> be elected to a County Council. Let her cure disease, even if her fitness to do it involves study and the taking of a degree at college. Let her write books and edit newspapers, even if she has to sit in an inky office. (“Combine” 566)

Haweis advocated for these professions and acknowledged the dangerous and undesirable aspects, arguing that women are not too delicate for the “terrible battlefield” nor the “inky office” and that they were intelligent enough to be “elected to a County Council” and to take “a degree at college”. Haweis was thus able to defamiliarize traditionally feminine roles. She beseeched her women readers to break free of the cage even if they would then have to brave the perils outside of the “little snuggery of home” because “in spite of wearing petticoats, this great female majority are capable of helping themselves, and helping men” (Haweis, “Combine” 566). They are not children, nor criminals, and they deserve the recognition in the law that Haweis suggested they had been taken from them in 1832. She had written repeatedly about The Reform Act of 1832, which standardised voting and which explicitly excluded women. She emphasised that she and her fellow Suffragist writers were asking “not for a privilege but for a right, not for a new thing, but something they have had before” as “the Constitution of England, “no taxation without representation,” always included women until 1832” and that “women’s disfranchisement was the innovation?” (Haweis, “Combine” 566). Prior to 1832, there was no explicit phrasing in the law that denied women this right, though admittedly there were few women who were in truth able to act on this. It is Haweis’ mission in this article to get women, who did not know the facts of their disenfranchisement, to awaken to the injustices and to support their sisters and combine. That this article appeared in *The Woman’s Herald* signals this purpose clearly, for it was a newspaper written by women for women and would have the precise

audience that she wanted to reach. Yet, whilst she undeniably wished for women to band together, Haweis had a complicated understanding of female relationships.

In a letter to her son Lionel in February 1894, Haweis asked "Have you read the Revolt of the Daughters? the revolting daughters is the new pun. It has been a great comfort to me as explaining much of the inexplicable" (7MEH/5/4 111). The first article of the same name was written for *The Nineteenth Century* in 1894 by Blanche Alathea Crackanthorpe, but many were printed by the same periodical in 1894 including Haweis' own article. Before delving into the content of the article and analysing it through the lens of Haweis' relationship with her own 'revolting daughter', the presentation of this article is worth examining. Haweis is writing back to Crackanthorpe, responding to her article with one of her own. *The Nineteenth Century* facilitated this exchange, becoming a space for two women writers to communicate and debate the issue. Comparing the two articles shows how Haweis' views differ from those of Crackanthorpe who wrote "Marriage is the best profession for a woman; we all know and acknowledge it" (Crackanthorpe 25). Haweis responded, "I am far from agreeing with Mrs. Crackanthorpe and others that marriage is the 'best,' but it is doubtless a very thorough outlet for both sexes" ("Revolt" 433). The contrast of views, as exemplified in this instance of the 'revolting daughters' articles, provoked discussion and created "a written and visual forum for passionate debate which could often engage those, particularly women, for whom attendance at public meetings was often impossible" (Fraser, et al 200). *The Nineteenth Century* periodical created a network of women writers and facilitated a space for them to comment upon each other's works, to complicate the views expressed in them, and to support their fellow women writers with encouraging words and constructive criticism. Haweis was therefore able to again situate herself within an unfolding society of women writers.

It is clear, however, that she was not able to situate herself in the society of her female relations. Through her article "The Revolt of the Daughters", Haweis shone a public light on a private matter and this only becomes evident through a comparison of the article to her private letters and diaries. Revolting daughters may have been the new 'pun' or phenomena in a similar vein to the New Woman, or the woman question, but it is clearly not this alone that urged Haweis to write a rejoinder to Crackanthorpe's article. For Haweis, the close proximity of mother and daughter in the household created a rivalry that saw the daughter revolting against the mother: "If people's brains are not of a size, their tastes not of a kind, they can live their separate lives without evil-speaking, lying, and slandering, can't they? No, history says, not in one house. 'Two in a house' must entirely sympathise, or one must rule. And the head of the house cannot be the daughter" ("Revolt" 431). What these few sentences show is the notion that was observed in a fragmented piece of fiction writing discussed earlier in chapter one of the 'cuckoo' daughter ousting the mother from her position in the home. Indeed, Haweis herself likened daughters to cuckoos in the article: "many a pretty, selfish, young daughter has made herself a regular young cuckoo, and ended by kicking everybody else out of the nest" ("Revolt" 433). For Haweis, there could only be one head of the household and it is clear that it should be the mother. This is apparent in her own household, and in the ways that she tried to 'manage' her daughter Hugolin. Hugolin particularly disliked her mother's overbearing need to dress her up in styles that other children were not made to wear. It was such a prominent problem that a photograph of her wearing one such dress is used as the frontispiece to her book. *Four to Fourteen* is presented as a diary written by Hugolin aged ten, though it reads more like a short story, and it begins with a quotation seemingly borrowed from Chaucer and re-shaped to fit the work. This demonstrates that Hugolin had clearly absorbed some of her mother's fascination

with the writer, which is ironic because Hugolin seems to have wanted to separate herself from her mother's tastes and interests from a young age. The book begins: "To yow my diarie and to none other wight complayne I, for ye be my ladye deare" (Haweis, *Four to Fourteen* 13). This comes from Geoffrey Chaucer's obscure 15th Century poem, "Complaint Unto His Purse". The original line has purse in place of diary, but the sentiment remains. This is a witty, clever use of a canonical writer that is very reminiscent of her mother's writing. Haweis was overtly applying the advice she had written in *The Art of Beauty* when dressing her daughter for she wrote, "no one but the mother can so naturally and surely lead a daughter from the choked ranks of the *Invisible Girls* to her proper place among the *Visible*" (294). However, instead of feeling the "tender and ready counsel" of her mother, Hugolin felt smothered. Whilst Haweis wanted her daughter to dress aesthetically, this may have been too much of an ask for a young girl who wrote of feeling out of place and strange amongst her peers: "I would rather be dressed like other children," Hugolin wrote, "and when I told Mother so, she said I ought to like being original, and being the daughter of clever parents" (28). Hugolin recounted an instance of bullying when the other children would catch hold of parts of her 'strange' dress and pull on it.

As she matured, Hugolin became increasingly independent from Haweis and spent more time away from her. She became in many ways the type of young woman that Haweis reviled in "The Soft Sex". In "The Revolt of the Daughters" Haweis highlighted a rivalry between mothers and daughters based on beauty that continues even today to be a problematic form of self-internalised patriarchy. The notion that women are naturally jealous of other women, who are deemed to fit society's beauty standards more, is rooted in patriarchy and is a tool of control. Perhaps the largest driving force behind notions of female rivalry is the idea that there is a limit to acceptance into roles typically denied to her- that there may only ever be one seat at the table.

This notion fosters a sense of competitiveness between women, who fight for the one seat, leaving men to comfortably and easily occupy all of the rest. The negative impacts of female rivalry dates back to Wollstonecraft, who wrote of women: “They are all running the same race” and believed that this rivalry would cease to hold women back if they “did not view each other with a suspicious and even envious eye” (*Vindication* 194). This is a notion that applies well to the Victorian household. As Haweis noted, ‘one must rule’ or else be kicked from the nest.

In her book, Hugolin recalled an incident from her childhood when she was told “you’ll never be as pretty as your Mother” by “gentlemen at parties” (Haweis, *Four to Fourteen* 86) and felt herself to often be compared to her mother and found lacking. These overt comparisons, by guests to the house, no doubt reinforced the negative emotions Hugolin felt for her mother. “There is not the slightest doubt,” Haweis wrote, “that the daughter is oftener jealous of the mother than the mother of the daughter” (“Revolt” 431) and this was more evident where the mother was deemed to be pretty. In a pseudo-Freudian imaginary example Haweis wrote as one of these ‘jealous’ daughters: “‘We are going to get rid of mother,’ whispers another kind of jealous daughter in an injudicious burst. ‘I and father and X.’ (naming a brother) ‘are going to keep house together then’” (“Revolt” 432). In this fictional example, there is a form of psychosexual competition between the mother and daughter for a place alongside the father and brother reminiscent of the male-centred Oedipus complex. The reason for this rivalry is clear to Haweis, it is because of their forced proximity to one another. Women, she wrote, needed freedom: “freedom which involves *separateness*” (Haweis, “Revolt” 432). The feelings of revolt held by daughters needed “its proper outlet” (Haweis, “Revolt” 433) and this outlet, Haweis explicitly told the reader, was work. She directly advocated for the physical freedom of young women: “properly equipped, young women can travel alone, lodge alone, cultivate bachelor

quiet or bachelor conviviality" (Haweis, "Revolt" 434). Haweis compared English girls with American girls, arguing that English girls travelling alone were assumed to be improper or immoral. American girls, by contrast, were not viewed in this light as they were free from the antiquated views on female liberty in England. Only once girls are allowed the same education as boys and when women are allowed to have lives focused less on the home will this sense of female rivalry be abolished. Whilst Haweis' views on female rivalry, centred upon beauty and outward appearance, are undeniably internalised sexism, her resolution is remarkably forward thinking. Haweis stated that "child-bearing, child-rearing, and child-serving are not the whole duty of woman" and "A woman's home may be and ought to be wider than the four walls of the little house she inhabits, and a woman's heart may be bigger than a husband and a few children can wholly fill" ("Revolt" 436). Thus, in order for women to not be so preoccupied with others they need to be allowed the time and space to focus upon themselves. Haweis ends her article with a poem by Victor Hugo and tells her reader to be "like the bird that halting in its flight/ A while on boughs too slight,/ Feels them give way beneath her, and yet sings,/ Knowing that she hath wings" ("Revolt" 436).

The contrast between the political unity of women expressed by Haweis, and her own inability to form functioning relationships with the women in her own family is a conflicting area in this work of recovery. In an attempt to present the full mosaic, and to not reduce Haweis to either an anti-feminist, because she flouts the conventions of sisterhood, or early feminist, evidenced by her writing in support of the Suffrage, this chapter has instead showcased the multiple sides to this writer. Haweis supported women, this much is evident. She wrote so that their own point of view, her own point of view, was not forgotten or overlooked. But, like nearly all women writers, her opinions are multifaceted and exemplary of the New Woman who, whilst

creating new categories for literature frequently stepped outside of them. Like the bird in the poem women are caged by conventions, whether they are created by a patriarchal society that saw them as unequivocally unequal to men or by feminist categories that rarely hold up to interrogation. Bird imagery runs throughout Haweis' works, culminating in the final lines of "The Revolt of the Daughters" as Haweis metaphorically frees the bird from its gilded cage and sends it soaring up into the open air.

Chapter Three

Understanding Womanhood through *Chaucer for Children* (1877), *Chaucer for Schools* (1881) & Other Writings

"If the Queen's looking glass speaks with the King's voice, how do its perpetual kingly admonitions affect the Queen's own voice? Since his is the chief voice that she hears, does the Queen try to sound like the King, imitating his tone, his inflections, his phrasing, his point of view? Or does she "talk back" to him in her own vocabulary, her own timbre, insisting on her own viewpoint?" (Gilbert and Gubar 46)

Haweis' Chaucer texts are a rich site for unearthing the complexities that surround the author's gender politics. By analysing the female characters that Haweis chose to revive, with a specific focus upon Griselda from "The Clerk's Tale" and Alison from "The Miller's Tale", it becomes clearer what Haweis understood about womanhood including the traits which she felt were necessary to be a woman. These two female characters have many oppositions, and there has been substantial writing on how they exemplify what the original writer, Chaucer, thought about women. Such views of often tie in with much of the portrayal of women in literature, as either one side of the coin or other. Many works of literature have portrayed women as either promiscuous (the Whore, the femme fatale, the fallen woman) or pure (the Madonna, the Angel in the House). Haweis specifically presents two women who fit the opposing stereotypes of angel and whore and yet she made no attempt to either praise or criticise one over the other and there are no comparisons made in her own writings. In Haweis' works, elements of each character are lauded as essential to true womanhood. As she so often did, Haweis toed the line between dichotomies offering a way to link what may, at first, seem to be disparate. Haweis placed value on both Alison the naughty girl and Griselda the servile wife. By analysing these two tales, and

these two characters, in tandem it becomes possible to recognize what the author's own views on women are. It has been said of Haweis that she "never hid her scorn for women whom she considered to be weak" (Braswell 43) and this is certainly true. But, it is too simplistic a statement to make to suggest that Haweis scorned weakness. What weakness did she scorn? To answer this, an understanding must be reached about how weak women are defined. Society has attributed a number of different 'weaknesses' to women over the course of history. Physically, women have always been seen as inferior to men and in the Victorian age many women voiced their dissatisfaction with the assumptions many had that they were intellectually weak.

There is a common theme, surrounding weakness, in women's writing in the nineteenth century. Women's weakness was seen by many women writers as a sham delicacy, a self-imposed vanity used to manipulate the stronger sex, men, into acts of chivalry and affection. Wollstonecraft wrote that this weakness led women to be cunning, a trait that she reviled:

> Women are, in fact, so much degraded by mistaken notions of female excellence, that I do not mean to add a paradox when I assert, that this artificial weakness produces a propensity to tyrannize, and gives birth to cunning, the natural opponent of strength, which leads them to play off those contemptible infantile airs that undermine esteem even whilst they excite desire. (*Vindication* 10)

Wollstonecraft returns to this point throughout, highlighting the ways in which women have debased themselves. Relying on beauty and the sexual attraction of men, women are dependent upon "their illicit sway" and "sly tricks…to gain some foolish thing on which their silly hearts were set" (Wollstonecraft, *Vindication* 62). This type of woman has become a stereotype in literature, which is the coquettish, and frequently stupid, girl – or, the flirt. One need only

remember Lydia Bennet of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) to understand the stereotype. Preoccupied with gossiping, new clothes, and men Lydia exemplifies the type of 'weakness' that proto-feminists, and even those who have since been dubbed anti-feminist, were seeking to eradicate. Eliza Lynn Linton expressed similar thoughts to Wollstonecraft when she wrote "The Girl of the Period". Linton claimed:

> women who carry womanly gentleness into the exaggeration of self-abasement, and make themselves mere footstools for the stronger creature to kick about at his pleasure; the weak sisters who think all self-reliance unfeminine, and any originality of thought or character an offence against the ordained inferiority of their sex. They are the parasitic plants of the human family, living by and on the strength of others. (157)

Haweis was not opposed to this view, though she did not share in a rejection of flirtation or influence. Instead, Haweis seems to have recognised the power of flirtation and influence which could be used to get ahead as a woman without access to other resource. Haweis was a pragmatist, who understood the value society placed on female beauty. Though she did not advocate for the foolishness of the flirtatious girl stereotype, certainly she would have valued cunning. However, Haweis was also aware that women who depended on the benevolence of men were taking a great risk.

Haweis has been remembered by Siân Echard in their text *Printing the Middle Ages* for her criticisms of courtly love, showcased by her footnotes to "The Knight's Tale" in *Chaucer for Children*. Echard wrote "Haweis's long association with the suffrage movement…shows through in her highly unsentimental treatment of courtly love" (130). Yet, Haweis did see women's

refining and civilising nature as a ‘magic wand’ smoothing the rougher aspects of a patriarchal society. Indeed, in one footnote in *Chaucer for Children,* Haweis commented:

> How idealized, and how idolized, the passion of love had grown to be with the new elevation of women’s condition in these times is well known. Love literally covered a multitude of sins…her encouragement of all that was aesthetic, her influence over men, and therefore the impetus she gave to higher life, must never be underrated, however we may reprove of the errors of the day. (45)

Whilst Haweis was able to understand the idealised version of women’s place in the motif of courtly love, she did not forget that the reality would have been far from the picture painted by “The Knight’s Tale”. Ruskin may well speak of women’s ‘greatest function’ which he wrote, in *Of Queen’s Gardens,* was “Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest” (21) but his student, Haweis, knew that this principle, whilst noble, was false. It was, as Wollstonecraft has suggested, a sham. In her lecture, ‘Sham Chivalry’ which is recorded in *Words to Women,* Haweis stated that “we are better off now than ever we were in ‘Chivalrous’ times” (56). She emphasised this point by adding:

> Beauty is useful, but it does not save…Nothing saves, submission does not save. Griselda was turned out of doors in her shirt after years of it. George Eliot descries a similar case in her ‘Scenes of Clerical Life.’ Queens have wandered in forests, at the mercy of bandits…what happened to Lady Jane Grey and thousands more – were they protected by an artificial status? Not much. (Haweis, *Words to Women* 57)

Sham chivalry, she said, was a lie told to women to keep them supressed by men and it was employed as "a form of graceful bribery and often corruption" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 59). Weakness then, was to give into the assumption that delicacy, beauty, and femininity alone would protect women. This is what women writers, even with specifically different goals for women, agreed upon. What is different for Haweis is that she did not view manipulation of the 'stronger sex' as somehow damaging to womanhood. Haweis encouraged all ways for women to find empowerment and it is because of this that she could write "The Story of Alison" – a re-telling of the bawdy "Miller's Tale" with the main female character, a canonically adulterous, unscrupulous woman in its title and at its heart.

It is clear that Haweis found weakness in women who blindly followed fashions, who twisted and contorted their bodies with stays and who courted death because it was stylish to be pale and emaciated. This will be explored in more depth in chapter five. It is also clear that she found weakness in women who would not stand up for themselves and for other women to support the suffrage. These notions conjure the image of the mythological figure of the Angel in the House (who will be shown in chapter six to be none of the following things) who was too subservient and downtrodden to rise up, and they are also reminiscent of Griselda. Whilst Haweis at times found Griselda's character to be too far-fetched or unbelievable, she did not find her to be weak. Griselda had her own set of strengths, aspects which Haweis wanted women to emulate. It is tempting to create an argument which pits Griselda and Alison against one another, one shown to be more monster the other more angel, and use them as a tool by which to present an attempt to "kill' the images of 'Angel' and 'monster' as Virginia Woolf had famously suggested. This chapter will not do this. Instead, this chapter will seek to show what Haweis

advocated for, understood and valued about womanhood through an analysis of her re-telling of Chaucer's famous tales.

Haweis took Chaucer's characters and breathed new life into them. She made them accessible to a new type of reader, the mother and her young child, and in doing so invited new interpretations and understandings of canonical, literary, female characters. When *Chaucer for Children* came into print in 1877, the dedication read: 'chiefly for the use and pleasure of my little Lionel for whom I felt the need of some book of the kind, I have arranged and illustrated this Chaucer story-book'. Haweis had the head of a businesswoman and she quickly capitalised on the rising popularity of her earlier Chaucer book. She wrote a further two articles on Chaucer, which came out in *Belgravia* – *"*Chaucer's Characters" in 1876 and "More News of Chaucer*"* in 1882. In the foreword to the second full length book, *Chaucer for Schools* Haweis noted: "In preparing a Chaucer for Schools, I have responded to a demand which, I may say, has, in part at least, been created by *Chaucer for Children*". This was not to be another storybook for mothers to read to their children. Instead, it was textbook to be used to teach Chaucer. Braswell writes that this was "the first Chaucer textbook ever" (43). This text went through seven editions and was reissued in 1935 and in 1897 it was used in the National Home Reading Union – this is recorded by Braswell, who reiterates the book's popularity: "For forty-four years, *Chaucer for Schools* by Mary Eliza Haweis was never out of print" (43). Her next work in this vein, *Chaucer's Beads,* seems to have been produced more owing to financial necessity than artistic desire. Indeed, Haweis was critical of birthday books but she relented to the prompts from publishers and produced one. This text is the most obscure of Haweis' works – it is difficult to find any information pertaining to it, even in the archives. Braswell notes that "Except for a single curious mention in 1934 one might assume that the "small popular book" crumbled to dust

in Victorian attics among pressed flowers and dressed-up dolls" (83). In 1887, the last of Haweis' Chaucer books was published – *Tales from Chaucer*. Haweis translated the general prologue and five of the tales into modern English.

By adding copious footnotes to the tales, Haweis helped her readers to understand the context of the medieval world in which the tales existed. She also highlighted ways in which this time could be contrasted and compared to her own. The actual choice of tales, for she did not translate all of them, are seemingly symbolic of the age in which they were published. That is to say, they were entirely appropriate for a Victorian audience. As Margaret Connolly noted, "The actual selection of texts is unremarkable, and very much in line with those typically chosen for Victorian children" (7). Yet, Haweis received criticism from reviewers for her choices. An article in *The Saturday Review* asked:

> When it was possible to have told the lovely story of Constance from the Man of Law's Tale, we can hardly understand why Mrs. Haweis should have preferred the Franklin's; just as we cannot understand why she left out the Nun's Priest's Tale, with its immortal Chanticleer and Partlet and Reynard, to give us the gruesome dialogue of the Summoner and the Yeoman. ("CHAUCER FOR CHILDREN" 149)

Perhaps bending to social pressures, Haweis did go on to include "The Man of Law's Tale" and "The Nun's Priest's Tale" in the next instalment, *Chaucer for Schools.* Still, the question proposed in *The Saturday Review* is an interesting one. Why did Haweis leave out these tales of female submissiveness in the first book? Haweis was keenly aware that her readership consisted of middle-class mothers, and to leave such tales out of the book meant that they were not being

absorbed and internalised by the reader. If she could have, it is distinctly evident that Haweis would have included “The Miller’s Tale”. One can only imagine how the original reviewer would have responded, had that been the case. When Haweis eventually included “The Man of Law’s Tale”, she wrote in her ‘Notes by the Way’ – the paragraph at the end of each tale with Haweis’ own thoughts on it – that it showed “little of the Chauceresque grasp of individual character, so clear in many other tales” (Haweis, *Chaucer for Schools* 160). Instead of Constance, Haweis found the Sultaness to have the most distinct character: “the Sultaness appears the most living figure, though her appearance on the scene is but brief” (*Chaucer for Schools* 160). That Haweis found the female villainess of the story to be less “thin and filmy”, as she described Constance, is telling. It once again highlights that Haweis did not conform as she found value in the naughty girl, the villainess. Though a beast fable, “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale” is in fact a moral story regarding the corrupting nature of women. It is at its heart a retelling of Eve’s transgressions upon Adam. Chanticleer is scorned by his favourite hen-wife, Pertilote, after his dream and it is clear that the perilous situation he finds himself in is blamed on the hen-wife. The Nun’s Priest has an aside in both the original and Haweis’ text, in which he states, “A woman’s counsel is too often cold:/ And woman’s counsel brought us first to woe” (*Chaucer for Schools* 133). In these tales, the female characters fulfil a stereotypical role, that of the passive, angelic, maiden or that of a damning shrew-like woman luring her husband to his doom. That Haweis originally left these tales shows how she – initially, at least – was able to avoid reproducing a story that affirmed the two roles available to women in many stories of classic literature.

Haweis was a unique scholar of Chaucer, and scholar she undeniably was. She published two books and a collection of articles about Chaucer’s works and life. Haweis attended the

British Museum, researching various topics ranging from medieval costume to women in ancient myth and she was particularly set upon learning as much as she could about Chaucer. As a woman, she experienced difficulties in pursuing her studies that her male counterparts did not face. It only serves to exemplify her commitment to her passion for Chaucer that she continued to push against the restrictions of her sex. In a diary entry in 1867, Haweis recalled how difficult she found it to conduct her research as a woman: "it was so miserable to be a woman so bound and constrained, so much worse than a man who can do anything & go anywhere alone or otherwise" (7MEH/5/1, "Memoranda" 50) but she did not give up. Haweis sat in the Record Office, where she would sketch historically accurate drawings to go into her books on dress. She would later copy Chaucer's seal, and be the first to do so. She collaborated with James Frederick Furnivall and John Richard Green, whom she would invite to give talks at her home. Green was such a close friend of the Haweis family that he was best man at their wedding and the godfather to one of their children. Furnivall and Green are therefore lasting names in Haweis' life and works. Haweis was bright and she was engaged with studying medieval dress, and it is clear that these men esteemed her. Stephen Haweis would later write of Green's relationship with his parents in *Spoilt Child* that Green was "more than a little in love with the bride himself" (33). Her son continued to suggest that Haweis was unaware of Green's infatuation, but their "association had been intimate enough to justify the hope, for they spent long hours in the discussions which she so much enjoyed" (Haweis, *Spoilt Child* 33). Yet, her name does not so frequently appear in works on Furnivall or Green. Perhaps this is owing to the difference of their focus. Whilst Green's writings on the history of the English people focused upon ruthless Angevin kings, on conquest, and on war, Haweis' historical writing focused upon clever and benevolent queens, on subjugation, and on domestic life. That Haweis has been largely forgotten

for her work on Chaucer is evidence that Woolf 's desire to show how "a change came about which…of greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses. The middle-class woman began to write" (*Room* 66) has not yet been realised. Cultural history continues to be relegated to a subordinate role compared to militaristic historical events, such as those referenced by Woolf. For Haweis, her studies of history were cultural. She explored the fashions of the medieval period, and formed an understanding of the times through clothing. She also wrote extensively about female royals, not concentrating on warriors and great battles but instead on benevolent women and their concerns. Haweis deserves as much recognition for her works on Chaucer, and on the medieval period at large, as her male counterparts though she differs to them. Chaucer's works offered Haweis entry into the largely male-dominated sphere of literary study. They also fostered a space in which Haweis was able to 'talk back', as Gilbert and Gubar termed it, to a society that firmly stated that such serious study was the domain of men. And, not only this but she also 'talked back' to the literary forefather himself.

"Talking Back" and Taking Back

In January 1879 a piece was published for *The University Magazine* , written by Haweis, titled "Chaucer's Characters". Originally titled *The Dublin University Magazine*, this periodical was a literary and political journal published in Ireland which later became simply *The University Magazine*, in London. The magazine was edited by a number of Irish writers, including at one stage Sheridan Le Fanu. The article is a piece of scholarly work, which examines Chaucer's grip on character. It is this which Haweis was most impressed by, and which she most desired to emulate in her own works. To begin, Haweis wrote of Chaucer that he was the "first, and in some sense the greatest, English poet. His knowledge of life, his breadth of sympathy with all classes and all modes of thought, his inexhaustible fancy, his consummate art, place him

intellectually on a level with Shakespeare" ("Chaucer's Characters" 26). Haweis felt that Chaucer far exceeded his contemporaries, whom she cited as Gower, Occleve, Langland, Lydgate, and Minot. Yet, whilst championing Chaucer, Haweis felt that there was one writer who was 'ahead' of him, as she put it. Haweis wrote that Chaucer was ahead of all his contemporaries, "except perhaps the author of the "Flower and the Leaf," who was undoubtedly a lady" ("Chaucer's Characters" 26). For much of the nineteenth century, "The Floure and the Leafe" was thought to be a poem by Chaucer but here Haweis orientates herself with a different and popular theory that the writer was a woman. Indeed, the poem was thought by many to have been Chaucer's best work. It was popular until it was declared not to be by the great writer. This work is singularly interesting, because it establishes a sense of literary maternity that begins far earlier than Woolf suggests in *A Room of One's Own* with Austen, Eliot and the Brontë sisters. That the literary canon has, for the most part, ousted "The Floure and the Leafe" in favour of "The General Prologue" is not surprising. Later female writers were denied their own specific literary heritage and not welcomed into the 'boys' club' of serious literature. Even champions of women's rights such as John Stuart Mill did not believe that women had their own tradition to follow:

> If women lived in a different country from men, and had never read any of their writings, they would have had a literature of their own. As it is, they have not created one, because they found a highly advanced literature already created… All women who write are pupils of the great male writers. If women's literature is destined to have a different collective character from that of men, depending on any difference of natural tendencies, much longer time is necessary than has yet

> elapsed, before it can emancipate itself from the influence of accepted models, and guide itself by its own impulses. (210)

There are many women writers, whom we now consider to be amongst the first feminists, that agreed with this statement. Consider Woolf's statement in *A Room of One's Own* that "genius like Shakespeare's is not born amongst labouring, uneducated, servile people…How, then, could it have been born among women" (40). The comparison of the working classes, whom Woolf believed unable to create works of great talent, with women highlights their inability to write. Yet, they did write. In another example, consider Wollstonecraft's belief:

> the neglected education of my fellow creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore…women in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove, that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers that are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty. (*Vindication* 6)

How, then, does the woman writer "talk back" to the king? How does she establish herself as a woman writer in the first instance? Stripped of the security that they deserve to write, and that that they will be heard, women writers sought to orient themselves within a cultural pedagogy. They could do so by reclaiming female characters from the literary fathers.

It was not an isolated event for Haweis to analyse the female characters of other male writers. She did this not only with Chaucer, but with her contemporaries. Haweis analysed a writer that she was personally in contact with, whose letters and correspondence are held in the Haweis Family Fonds archive, for *The Woman's Herald*. In 1892, the periodical published

Haweis' review of *Tess of The D'Urbervilles*. Haweis' own novel bears similarities to the story written by Thomas Hardy, and could be considered, at points, to be a retelling of Tess' story for a different audience, and with a different purpose. Where *A Flame of Fire* is undoubtedly a 'novel with a purpose', *Tess of The D'Urbervilles* was far more aesthetic. Hardy's novel is frequently commended for its sympathetic portrayal of its tragic heroine, dubbed 'A Pure Woman' but Haweis wrote that it was "merely a story of a vindictive cruelty of that "fury of fastidiousness" with which man regards actions in woman that are common to human nature…Perhaps there never was a story that shewd up in deeper colouring the inhumanity of the law enacting that "The Woman Pays" (Haweis, "REVIEW" 10). Here, Haweis explicitly related the themes of the novel to unfair, sexist, legislation. In *A Flame of Fire*, the law is shown to be a recourse to the abusive marriage that Aglae is trapped in, via divorce. Hardy's novel offers no such comment, and Haweis clearly felt that it could have been a great deal more overt about its stance on women's rights: "There is not a syllable in "Tess" about the Suffrage…It is merely the story of a girl's virtue bearing up like a rock against an ocean of natural disadvantages" (Haweis, "REVIEW" 10). Perhaps Haweis would have found less to criticise about the novel had it ended similarly to her own, with a justification in the law freeing the heroine from her ties to abusive men. Instead, Tess is carried and placed in a coffin like one already dead in the section of the novel titled 'The Woman Pays'. Another flaw Haweis found with the novel was the characterisation of Tess. Haweis found her to be "a little warped in unexpected places." That she would kill Alec D'Urberville is to Haweis "difficult to believe" as Tess was "so noble a woman" who endured for such a long time with "strength of brain, body and heart" (Haweis, "REVIEW" 10). Hardy's work does not sacrifice poetic prose for political argument and this is a token of Hardy's privilege as a male author, though to be clear some female authors also did this. Female

characters have been martyred in many ways in many novels, and arguably fewer have actually been saved. Think of Violet from Mona Caird's *The Wing of Azrael*, for example, who throws herself from the cliff "thirsting for punishment, yet unrepentant' (303). These female characters do not survive their narrative destiny; their 'punishment' is an extreme reflection of the patriarchal society within which they were trapped. For Haweis, it would have served the cause better to not see the woman pay. Of all of Chaucer's tales, there is one in which the woman certainly does not pay. Alison from "The Miller's Tale" is consciously unpunished, whilst all of the male characters get their comeuppance. In the article, "Chaucer's Characters" Haweis chose three tales to analyse and one of those was "The Miller's Tale", despite it being the only one that did not appear in her published work *Chaucer for Children* two years before. The other two are "The Knight's Tale" and "The Clerk's Tale" which present three quite different portrayals of women characters. Griselda is stereotypically meek, Alison is bold and crude, and Emelye is the passive object upon which two men cast their chivalrous affection.

Victorian medievalism is often thought to have a devotion to the elements of the Middle Ages of Europe, as well as a desire to replicate certain beliefs and practices. In Haweis' works medievalism became a way to compare and contrast the position of women presently with their role years before and served to highlight how little they had progressed in terms of freedoms within society. Thus, in "The Knight's Tale" Haweis explained the two knight's treatment of Emelye to her reader and commented on the way people in the nineteenth century held to similar, misguided, beliefs around politeness and good manners. Victorian women were dependent upon social structures which meant that men ought to be kind to them, but it has been made very clear by historians that this was not the reality. By supposing that good breeding and manners would foster a social contract between men and women, there was little contemporary discussion as to

what happened if it did not. Thus, there were fewer ways to legally punish men for their cruelty towards women. As Echard noted, "however aware Haweis might have been of the aesthetic appeal of the past, she does not view this "glamour" as any kind of corrective to the contemporary life" (132-3). Indeed, of Griselda Haweis was keen to explain that Chaucer meant not for her character to be imitated by wives, but that her patience in the face of adversity be admired and emulated by all. Haweis clarified:

> Griselda is a finely-drawn character, the medieval ideal of womanhood; but her over-submissiveness sometimes suggests cerebral infirmity. Her courage is her finest quality – her quiet dignity in restraining herself before her folk, which prove that her patience sprang from strength, not weakness; and the real moral of the tale is the example she affords of the complete disinterestedness and tenacity of love. ("Chaucer's Characters" 39)

This 'cerebral infirmity' was not to be replicated by women but her 'quiet dignity' became a clear credo for the women that Haweis herself would value and idolise.

It is not Griselda, however, that Haweis is concerned with in this essay. Instead, she focused more on the character of Walter, the husband. Haweis wrote that "Walter's is a more interesting character than is that of his wife, because it is more complex" ("Chaucer's Characters" 34). It is more complex, she noted, because he is "not a bad man" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 34). Haweis wrote that Walter was "like a spoilt child who loves his own way without having naturally bad tendencies" ("Chaucer's Characters" 34). The ways in which Haweis continued to describe Walter are resonant of ways in which her husband, Hugh Reginald, was described by his son in *Spoilt Child: The Story of Hugh Reginald Haweis*. This work

presents an account of his father, which the author claims to be unbiased in that it will present Hugh Reginald's flaws alongside his achievements. Interestingly, both Haweis and her son use the term 'spoilt child' to describe these male figures. Stephen wrote of his father that he "had great merits and virtues, and also many faults and failings which should not be swept behind the door and forgotten." (*Spoilt Child* foreword). When Haweis wrote the following of Walter: "who does not know of men of such a stamp –with a light, frivolous, mischievous side…he had never been in the habit of controlling his impulses" ("Chaucer's Characters" 34), it is no stretch to imagine that she had her own husband in mind. Walter also "loves to astonish people' it makes him feel his power, and tickles his vanity" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 35), just like Hugh Reginald who was thought to be an extravagant and eccentric preacher. In "The Clerk's Tale" it is possible to see, not only echoes of Hugh Reginald, but of Haweis too. Griselda is "stedfast as a wall" and she possesses "the power…to rein in feeling" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 36), so much so that it prompts Walter to try to squeeze "some sign of human feeling from her" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 39). Haweis may well have felt a certain kinship with this character, as she wrote in her diary in 1866, "I lose a little bit of myself in every emotion good or bad. Therefore I always repress it in any form" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book I" 9).

"Chaucer's Characters" focused extensively on "The Miller's Tale" and in particular on one character, Alison. Haweis began, "What a dainty morsel Alison was, Chaucer can scarcely find words to say" ("Chaucer's Characters" 30). In Chaucer's work, Alison is described as 'wylde' and having 'a likerous ye' (a wanton eye), and she certainly behaves far from 'delicately'. Haweis focused upon the similes and metaphors used to describe Alison, noting that "all flowers and fruits are pressed into her service, and country drinks occupations, and country beasts and birds: a whole year's sweet scenes come before the mind" ("Chaucer's Characters"

30). Thus, in Haweis' eye Alison becomes a being of nature and the likening of her to flora and fauna showcases Alison's liberty. This is at odds with traditional readings of her character, which have supposed that animal imagery was used to highlight Alison's lustiness. Chaucer compares Alison to prey animals - she is the proverbial mouse and the male figure, Absolon, the cat. Before her marriage she is a 'joly colt' ready to be tamed by Nicholas. There is a resonance, then, between "The Miller's Tale" and Haweis' *A Flame of Fire* as Haweis employed a similar metaphor when Aglae first meets Quekett, as "his eyes passed over her with a cool scrutiny…it was the kind of examination, inch by inch, one would bestow on a horse" *(Flame* 46). Whilst Aglae conforms to many misogynistic stereotypes of women, Haweis' Alison does not. Haweis praised Alison for her dutiful "double office of hostess and tradeswoman" ("Chaucer's Characters" 31). All of Haweis' condemnation falls upon the husband. Alison has "the excuse of being mated to an old man, jealous, stupid, and weakly fond. His affection was too foolish to command her respect; his jealousy naturally provoked her to break her chains; and his crass ignorance and credulity made her incline naturally to a man who was so much his superior" ("Chaucer's Characters" 31). It is notable that Haweis would defend Alison's actions, especially in an age when the subject of adultery and divorce was central to the 'Marriage Question'. Men had every right, in law, to divorce an adulterous wife but the reverse was not true. As was discussed in chapter one, in order to divorce an adulterous husband the wife had to prove her husband was guilty of adultery combined with an additional aggravating factor, such as cruelty, incest, or desertion. This fact causes Aglae to suffer, and to prompt Mildmay to comment that she is not the first to "complain of the English marriage laws…or to suffer from them…but your sufferings will not reform them" (Haweis, *Flame* 203). Haweis excuses Alisoun's adultery for a number of reasons: firstly her husband was far older than her, secondly, he kept her guarded

covetously, and also he was stupid. In Chaucer's tale the relations between Alison and Nicholas are explicitly sexual: "And prively he caughte hire by the queynte,/ …And heeld hire harde by the haunchebones" (Chaucer 844). Haweis, in typical Victorian fashion, presented their relationship much more metaphorically. The plot to convince her husband that the flood is coming is to "secure a little liberty for Alison" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 33). As Braswell notes, "Haweis's creation of Alison is extraordinary for its time" (60) for she "fits none of the popular Victorian stereotypes for females. She is neither a mother, a spinster, a daughter, nor a woman of fantasy" (60). With Alison, Haweis is free from writing any such restrictions. Her deeds go unpunished; she does not suffer for 'breaking her chains' as women frequently do in Victorian literature. Haweis ends the section of "The Miller's Tale" in this essay decreeing Alison "will never be extinct while naughty girls exists; by no means bad all through, by no means ready to give herself without love" ("Chaucer's Characters" 34).

"While Naughty Girls Exist": Sex and Liberation in "The Story of Alison"

To a male author, writing a tale such as "The Miller's Tale" was achievable. Indeed, the bawdy tale has been read, translated, and studied throughout history as comedic and crude, but nevertheless as literature. But, many Victorians, even men, steered clear of the tricky tale because of its sexual subject matter and, no doubt, also because of its promiscuous heroine. Haweis was not deterred by any of these issues. Haweis' boldness is the most evident in not only her reproduction of this tale, but in her praise of it. Braswell notes that "Haweis's treatment of *The Miller's Tale* is exceptional. Not only had she turned a taboo story into one appropriate for adolescents, but she had also managed to include morals and even reminders of proper manners" (59). Yet for Haweis, as a female author, a re-telling of the tale could not be easily published. It was not included in either of her Chaucer books but remains in the Haweis Family Fonds archive

at the UBC library, studied in depth by only one academic scholar, Braswell. Haweis' treatment of "The Miller's Tale" is a vital piece of the mosaic recovery of the writer herself. Through Alison, it becomes clear that Haweis did not solely endorse traditional traits for women, as could be supposed by her domestic advice manuals. Through Alison, it is possible to see another side to Haweis that, aside from her only novel, is little seen. Indeed, she kept it so well concealed beneath layers of propriety that even her own son described her as sexually frigid. This is simply not true. Victorian England was obsessed with sex, and Haweis is not free from such fascination. The Victorians could find indecency in seemingly innocuous objects and activities. Books forbade explicit sexual language. The act of eating, of indulgence, was so erotic that women starved themselves to be seen as 'pure'. Even the biological study of plants was seen as too indecent for women. The Victorians took pornographic photographs which are astonishingly daring and kinky. *Whores of Yore*, a research project and archive which explores human sexuality throughout history, has claimed that "Perhaps nothing punctures the myth of Victorian prudery more than the pornography they left behind. No fetish left unturned, the images still have a power to shock us today" ("Victorian Erotica"). Instead of enforcing a puritan, prudish, image of the Victorians this inter-disciplinary study of sexuality serves to reinforce the opposite. *Whores of Yore* showcases how fixated Victorians were upon sex and sexual gratification. This is found all over in their novels and poetry, and in a bid to metaphorize the act of sex writers turned to evocative, stimulating language. Writers built erotic tension without explicit mention of genitalia. For instance, in Christina Rosetti's "Goblin Market", when Laura partakes of the Goblin men's fruits the scene is an erotic allusion to oral sex:

> She dropp'd a tear more rare than pearl,
> Then suck'd their fruit globes fair or red:

> Sweeter than honey from the rock,
>
> Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
>
> Clearer than water flow'd that juice;
>
> She never tasted such before,
>
> How should it cloy with length of use?
>
> She suck'd and suck'd and suck'd the more
>
> Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
>
> She suck'd until her lips were sore. (Rossetti 70)

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Harker's journal tells of the time he meets Dracula's brides, with their "voluptuous lips" which he feels a "burning desire" to have kiss him. Harker recalls how he could "see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth" (Stoker 33). The next allusion to the vagina is when the men surround Lucy's coffin, preparing to stake her. Arthur penetrates her with his false-phallus: "his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it." (Stoker 179). Victorians were not as repressed as is commonly assumed and had a great proclivity for sexual expression. It was tempered, as many of the 'naughtier' aspects of Victorian life were tempered, by the need to keep up appearances, and governed by textual conventions, such as the use of suggestive or symbolic language.

Haweis son, Stephen Haweis, commented with frequency on what he perceived to be his parents' Victorian innocence – their lack of sexual education – claiming that "None of us, at any time, were told what are now called 'the facts of life' by either of our parents" (*Spoilt Child* 40). He also wrote extensively about his mother's dislike for the sexual side of marriage and claimed

that “Having no sexual instincts herself, nor any predominant impulses, she was unable to have sympathy with, or to comprehend temptations” (Haweis, *Spoilt Child* 40). Stephen wrote that Haweis was shocked “to learn that people often regarded sex as a means of gratification alone” (*Spoilt Child* 40). This seems unlikely, especially for a woman who read, understood, and laughed at the bawdy “Miller’s Tale”. Stephen wrote that his mother believed that “Infidelity in marital relations put a woman quite beyond the pale of Christian sympathy altogether” (*Spoilt Child* 39). Yet, Haweis excused Alison’s behaviour, and infidelity became a central theme in her own novel. Whilst Aglae does not overtly commit adultery, the heroine walks very closely to the line of it. She escapes with Carrington and even Mildmay, her champion, for a moment believed that she “was further off from him than ever” after being “seduced and deserted” by Carrington (Haweis, *Flame* 183). Later, when it seems that divorce will be impossible Aglae considers fleeing with Mildmay to India. Mildmay and Aglae have, at this point of the narrative, declared their love for one another and the narrator remarks: “The sight of sin has its own fell contagion, like the inhalation of a poisonous disease, and shame lies, not in the loss of other men’s esteem, but in the loss of our own” (Haweis, *Flame* 246). Haweis draws a line between what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of society and asks her reader to consider what is right and what is wrong for the individual, regardless of rules and laws. This seems incompatible with the representation her son gives, of a woman so sexually repressed that she had no sympathy for temptation and thought adultery a ‘hell-sin’. Such an interesting oversight on behalf of her son only serves to highlight the unreliability of the family’s writings about their childhood and parents. It is also further proof that fiction writing enabled a more liberated form of autobiography than most traditional methods. Far from not understanding temptation, Haweis utilised it as a catalyst for the tragic events of her novel showing a deep comprehension of the

lure of sex. When Quekett draws Aglae to him, and she can "feel his heart beating; it seemed to her in the sudden crisis of excited feeling that she felt his whole blood circulate. She was breathless, electrified" (Haweis, *Flame* 67). Quekett awakens dangerous, thrilling arousal in the heroine and suddenly Aglae, who couldn't bring herself to take the initiative and kiss Mildmay, finds herself moving "with automatic action that she could not command" (Haweis, *Flame* 68) to kiss Quekett. This is another instance of infidelity, for at this moment Aglae is engaged to Mildmay and part of the thrill, for Quekett at least, seems to be that her fiancé is nearby. He encourages her, stating "Mildmay can't see you. Do as I tell you…Kiss me" *(*Haweis, *Flame* 67). Then, Haweis re-uses a phrase she used in "Chaucer's Characters" eighteen years earlier to describe Alison. Quekett orders Algae to "go and tell your aunt what a naughty girl you are going to be" (Haweis, *Flame* 68). In the novel, however, Haweis punished her own heroine for the sake of a political message to support the advancements of women's rights.

Alison destabilises gender roles; she is assertive and chooses between two lovers without the consequences of, for instance, Dorigen in "The Franklin's Tale". Dorigen finds that she cannot refuse a man outright and instead agrees that she will become his lover if he removes all the rocks from the coast of Brittany. Alison is far from a passive character, and instead her promiscuity, or 'naughtiness' drives the plot forward. Ultimately, Alison is the only character in the tale whose actions go unpunished. Haweis ended her version of the tale: "thus the carpenter was outwitted, for all his jealous keeping of his wife: and Absolon was outwitted in spite of his dainty ways – and Nicholas was outwitted by the hot iron, which I think he deserved – but Alison seems to have got off scot free. Thus ends the tale" ("The Story of Alison" 14). As Braswell summarises: "she does not mature along the way, she learns nothing…and she will do it again" (60). That Haweis found this particular tale, out of all *The Canterbury Tales*, to be "one of

Chaucer's very best tales" ("The Story of Alison" 15) is a telling insight into her gender values because she enjoys the portrayal of Alison, who is perhaps presented as the opposite of the stereotypical Victorian woman. Indeed, Alison is more masculine, for not only does she have sexual desires, but she also acts upon them.

"The Story of Alison" – as Haweis titled it – appears to be in perfect order for publishing. Indeed, on the loose leaf with the title there is a pencil note asking which periodical would, presumably, fit. Yet, the story never became part of her lauded Chaucer books. Haweis makes clear, in her rendition of the tale, how restricted Alison was by her husband: "he was so jealous of her that he would scarcely let anyone speak to her, and kept her as close as if she were in a cage" ("The Story of Alison" 1). It is clear that Haweis intended this to be a part of her books for children, for she replaced Alison's sexual desire for a desire for "freedom to play and amuse herself with friends of her own age" ("The Story of Alison" 1). Alison becomes a mischievous child, who wants nothing more than to play tricks and laugh, especially at the expensive of the men in the story. Alison's most notorious trick is, of course, the one she plays on Absolon when he asks for a kiss at her window. In Haweis' version, it is not "hir naked ers" (Chaucer 137) that he kisses but instead Alison "opened the lattice a little way and banged a broom into his face" ("The Story of Alison" 11). This proves Haweis' own naughty side, as 'broom' was a Victorian euphemism for female genitalia, and in particular the public hair covering it. In the original, Absolon jumps back, startled at feeling a 'beard': "Abak he stirte, and thoughte it was amys,/Back he jumped, and thought it was amiss,/For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd" (Chaucer 137). Thus, Haweis retains the original joke made by Chaucer whilst keeping the story 'clean' enough to a young audience.

Alison's character may at first appear to be lacking in substance. She has little in the way of motivation in Chaucer's tale, and compared to the male characters she is not as defined. Yet, Haweis presented a character with clear motivation: she longs to be free from her husband who guards her jealously. The chief reason behind this is the age gap between the spouses, which is an intriguing point for Haweis to make. After all, Haweis' Alison is seventeen, "almost a child in years"("The Story of Alison" 1), a similar age to Haweis when she married Hugh Reginald, who was ten years her senior. In her 'Notes by the Way' Haweis explained the moral of this seemingly amoral tale:

> Chaucer has never had any sympathy with old husbands of young wives…the carpenter comes in for not pity…jealousy is a passion so despicable and so impotent that is seems to act as a legitimate spur to actions which would never have occurred, had they not been prompted by resentment. ("The Story of Alison", 15)

Throughout the tale, Haweis showed little to no compassion for the carpenter who she continually referred to as less intelligent that his wife: "the carpenter was a silly old fellow, and ought to have looked more sharp" ("The Story of Alison" 5). Of the trick played upon the carpenter, she asked "can you imagine anyone stupid enough to believe all this? But the carpenter did" ("The Story of Alison" 9). It is not only an age difference, then, but a difference in intellect. Haweis stated outright that the carpenter "was too foolish to command her respect; his jealousy naturally provoked her to break her chains" ("The Story of Alison" 9).

Female characters who succumbed to sexual desire in classical literature are nearly always punished. Firstly they are treated as social pariahs and typically their narrative arc ends

with death. Lucretia was raped, and later stabbed herself to death, in *The Rape of Lucretia.* Medusa, raped in Athena's temple, is punished and transformed into a literal tool for death in *Metamorphoses*. In later literature, female characters are seduced, coerced, or otherwise led into a 'fallen' state. One need only think of Ophelia, Anna Karenina, or Tess Durbeyfield to establish the pattern. Even the female characters of female authors such as Esther of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and Hetty in George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), are not liberated from this narrative. There was an established history uniting sex and death, and literature of the nineteenth century had so internalised this narrative that some have claimed the "inability to explore sex without concurrently exploring morality is the hallmark of Victorian literature" (Barreca 3). Haweis studied women in ancient myth and would have had a firm understanding of the discourse that surrounded the 'fallen woman'. In their work *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature,* Elizabeth Robertson and Christine M. Rose wrote that "The omnipresence of images of rape in Western literature illustrates how the rapable body has been woven into the very foundations of Western poetics" (2). Violence against women pervades Western culture, and this in turn informs how women are treated in the real world. Haweis reflected upon this in her novel:

> The world's view is the poet's view, and it holds earth's "purest treasure," "a spotless reputation." Alas! many a spotless reputation cloaks a very sullied life; and it is possible for a reputation of the worst to cover and clog for ever, through a moment's incautions, the cleanest soul. In spite of Shakespeare, and the time-honoured social custom of always thinking the worst of a woman, moral worth and "reputation" are things not to be confounded. (*Flame* 166)

In Chaucer's works female characters become a point by which men's righteousness was measured. Haweis pointed this out in *Chaucer for Children*:

> Those were rough days, when laws were often feeble, narrow, or ill-enforced. The want of legal organization placed a great refining and enobling power in the hands of woman. Many a Knight, who was coarse or cowardly, was pricked to courteous ways and deeds of courage by his love of some fair woman, when without it he would have sunk lower and lower in vice and degradation. (45)

Chivalry, or courtly love, inspired courageous and righteous deeds such as those performed by the male characters of "The Knight's Tale". There are, however, many instances in *The Canterbury Tales* when the female characters' dependence upon chivalry, which was not proffered, enabled violence against their bodies. Constance is almost raped in "The Man of Law's Tale", the peasant woman *is* raped in "The Wife of Bath's Tale", and Dorigen's physical autonomy is threatened in "The Franklin's Tale" when she considers death rather than giving herself to Aurelius. In her 'Notes by the Way', Haweis commented that through Dorigen "Valour, courtesy, self-control, obedience, were taught by her" ("Chaucer for Children" 91) to the male characters. That the tale was "One of the most interesting illustrations of the singular morality which was the outcome of woman's transition state from a position of slavery to one of equality with man" (Haweis, "Chaucer for Children" 91). Her point, it seems, is that social morality would be improved by giving rights to women, to make then equal with men. Haweis internalised Chaucer's use of the threat of rape as a device by which to measure male valour. In *A Flame of Fire* Aglae is starving and without any money and she agrees to "an appointment" with a strange man to meet him "at the great house outside the walls where he dwelt" (179). It is obvious, not to the heroine but to the reader, what she has agreed to. Here in the narrative she is

very suddenly and fortuitously rescued by Mildmay, who makes no claims on her. Indeed, Mildmay's lack of sexuality is what marks him as her saviour.

Alison is nothing like the stereotypical portrayal of a sexually active female character. She courts neither death nor degradation and ends the tale in the exact same social position as she began it. She is unique in this way, and her freedom of action and speech is lauded by Haweis. Through her freedom to choose, Alison is liberated not only from her jealous husband but from the pervasive narrative of sexual violence committed against female characters in literature. It is no doubt this which marks her as "a woman for all time" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 34).

"A wife always a wee bit servile": Suffering and Selfhood in "The Clerk's Tale"

If Alison is the representation of excess, indulgence and freedom, then Griselda is the reverse. Hers is a story of silent endurance and control. Griselda is *patient*. She is steadfast in the face of adversity. In her article, "The Soft Sex", Haweis addressed the irony of calling women, who have survived suffering throughout the ages, soft. "The way to harden a Brave", Haweis wrote, was to "make him bear the live coal on his flesh, the needle in his cheek; make him smile as the blood runs from the knife-cut" ("Soft Sex" 37). Women, she stated, had been "morally so treated for hundreds of ages" ("Soft Sex" 37) and owing to this constant forbearance in the face of cruelty women had become stronger: "within she was a hardened Brave, covered with honourable scars that must glorify her when they come to the astral condition!" ("Soft Sex" 37). The argument in this article is clear to the reader: women, having suffered, are tough whereas women who have grown up in the new age of the early suffrage have not had to endure as their foremothers have endured. They are in danger of becoming a true 'soft sex'. Haweis herself cites "The Clerk's Tale" in this article, and indeed Griselda is the epitome of bearing a moral beating.

In *A Flame of Fire*, Haweis presented a similar phenomenon with Algae who was brought up too carefully. Aglae admits:

> I wanted some strong chastisement. Girls do. They don't develop without suffering. They must suffer, to live…But when chastisement came – how bitter! how hopeless! *how long!* And then my training had been too tender, it had done nothing for my moral muscle. I was soft from head to heel. (*Flame* 231)

In terms of moral muscle, Griselda is the gold medallist. She undergoes three trials: her new-born daughter is taken from her, her son is stolen away and explicitly threatened, and lastly she is divorced from her husband who replaces her with a younger woman. Of course, all of these acts are a deceit staged by Walter, but Griselda believes them to be true. Each trial is designed to test Griselda's mettle, though Haweis implied that the desire was for her to express "some sign of human feeling" ("Chaucer's Characters" 39). Griselda is a fine character in Haweis's opinion because of her ability to display an iron-clad restraint. Griselda is dispassionate, almost to the point of being unemotional, and continually moderates her behaviour. It is her self-control that has value to the reader looking for a moral or lesson to be learned from the tale. Griselda has a "quiet dignity in restraining herself before her folk" ("Chaucer's Characters" 39) which is her most admirable trait. Indeed, it is the image which Griselda portrays to the public that is chiefly important to Haweis in her version of the tale. She stressed that Griselda was "Unmoved outwardly" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 36). Griselda arguably resembles the author in more ways than Alison does. Haweis also presented a version of herself to the public that differed from the turmoil and insecurities that she perhaps hid behind her well styled exterior. For instance, it is clear that the bitterness expressed in the letters between Haweis and her husband did not translate into their public image. In *The Woman's*

Herald in November of 1892 a contributor wrote of the couple: “The Rev. Reginald and Mrs Haweis will celebrate their silver wedding on the 30th of this month…The Rev. and Mrs. Haweis are a model couple, equal rights are evenly maintained at Queen House, and the most perfect accord and harmony always reign” (“OUT AND ABOUT” 16). Neither “perfect accord” nor “harmony” actually reigned at Queen’s House. Instead, it seemed that there was a tentative truce, and a divide between husband and wife who kept, as far as possible, separate lives. There are few instances of Haweis’ letters to her husband between 1890 and her death, but it remains clear that these were the most turbulent of their married years. Haweis wrote in 1894: “As for not needing a husband’s protection or advice, I have had to do without both for 5 years” (7MEH/5/3 36b). This admission shows the disparity between public perceptions of the Haweis family and the reality of their relationships. Haweis wrote to her husband that “I will never be wrenched by the bit or moved an inch by belabouring” (7MEH/5/3 36c). Griselda is not incited to any reaction by Walter’s constant ‘attacks’ and instead she “turns the second cheek to the smiter” (Haweis, “Chaucer’s Characters” 37). Many have found Griselda’s lack of a reaction to be symbolic of her repression. She is meek and obedient, the victim of a patriarchal society that dictated passivity. However, in Haweis’ book the reader is offered an alternative analysis.

Griselda is not a victim. Instead, she is “ever “stedfast as a wall” “ (Haweis, “Chaucer’s Characters” 36). An element of Griselda’s self-control certainly stems from her upbringing. Haweis implied that such steadfastness came from living through poverty, stating that “in beauty of mind, Griselda was the fairest maiden under the sun” (*Chaucer for Children* 67.) Selflessness, humility, kindness and temperance are all qualities that Griselda has at the beginning of the tale. Lifted up from her poor beginnings to the status of a noblewoman through marriage, she undergoes a Cinderella-transformation but

Griselda's personality never changes. Her selfhood is never questioned by Haweis, who shows the reader that Griselda is Griselda dressed in rags or in riches. Haweis emphasised Griselda's humble beginnings. In her illustration to the text, the differences between Griselda and Walter are stressed. Walter wears rich colours, his clothing is embroidered and lined with fur. In contrast, Griselda is dressed in simple cloth, with rips and obvious repairs visible, and wears no shoes:

Figure 1: *"Griselda's Marriage."* Illustration of "The Clerk's Tale" in *Chaucer for Children*, p.69. Via Internet Archive Online 27 Sept 2022.

This image contrasts to other representations of Walter's proposal to Griselda by artists at a similar time. For instance, Griselda from *The Clerk's Tale* by Alfred Elmore (c. 1870) or Frederic George Stephens' *The Proposal (The Marquis and Griselda)* (c.1850) depict a modest, but still neat and well dressed, Griselda. Haweis studied historical dress, which will be explored more in depth in chapter five, and made a point in her illustration to use the style of dress that would have been worn in Chaucer's age. Thus, in Haweis' illustration, Griselda's head is covered by a simple white cloth, and Walter can be seen wearing long, tapering, shoes. Walter has his servants bathe and dress Griselda in finery, and it is then that the people recognise her innate beauty and grace. However, Haweis showed that "in vain he dresses her up in costly clothing and places her at the head of his table" because Griselda "eats simple food and follows her old simple ways" ("Chaucer's Characters" 36). Despite being a noblewoman by marriage, Griselda "never lets her hand forget its cunning in sweeping and bed-making" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 36). For Haweis, it is clear that this character retains the qualities that distinguish her from others, especially other nobles. She wrote that Griselda "never can be made to forget that she is of lowly birth" (Haweis, "Chaucer's Characters" 36). Haweis prided herself on her thrift and clever husbandry and openly derided wastefulness: "That snobbishness, which is ashamed of small and honest things and worships profusion and waste, belongs to the very ignorant classes, who set money ahead of thought" (Haweis, *Housekeepin*g 7). These 'ignorant classes' are quite clearly upper middle and above. Whilst Griselda undergoes a class transformation, she does not forget the lessons she learned when she was poor. She does not grow 'ignorant' nor snobbish.

Griselda bears similarities, in this sense, to a character who is remembered for her independence: Jane Eyre. Jane's is also a Cinderella-story. She will be elevated from her own lower social standing through marriage to Rochester. He excitedly tells Jane:

> I will myself put the diamond chain round your neck, and the circlet on your forehead,—which it will become: for nature, at least, has stamped her patent of nobility on this brow, Jane; and I will clasp the bracelets on these fine wrists, and load these fairy-like fingers with rings…I will attire my Jane in satin and lace, and she shall have roses in her hair; and I will cover the head I love best with a priceless veil. (Brontë, *Jane Eyre* 228)

To this she replies, "And then you won't know me, sir; and I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin's jacket—a jay in borrowed plumes" (Brontë, *Jane Eyre* 228). It is such statements that leave a distinct impression of this character and why many remember her as a paragon of autonomy. Haweis identified the same strength in Chaucer's character who, even after having lived in luxury for many years, returns willingly to her rags when Walter casts her out for a (pretend) younger wife. Haweis wrote, "She was nothing abashed at her clothing, though it was rude and coarse, and somewhat torn besides" (*Chaucer for Children* 78). Indeed, in this sense Haweis' Griselda is even stronger than Jane Eyre, who is frequently insecure, and explicitly tells herself to compare her face with that of Blanche Ingram: "draw in chalk your own pictures…write under it, 'Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain…Afterwards, take a piece of smooth ivory…delineate carefully the loveliest face you can imagine…according to the description given by Mrs. Fairfax of Blanche Ingram" (Brontë, *Jane Eyre* 140).

Haweis therefore instilled an agency into Griselda that many translators missed. Her Griselda is shown to be strong, not meek, in both body and spirit. Predating folklore's Cinderella, Griselda works hard and remains good and kind and it is this that Haweis finds laudable. Griselda's finest quality, she writes, is her courage. However, it is by no means a character that Haweis would see wives imitate. Griselda's character is praiseworthy, but Haweis was certain that "if a modern wife cheerfully consented to the murder of her children by her spouse, she would probably be consigned to a maison de santé" (*Chaucer for Children* 82). Thus, Haweis highlighted the parts of Griselda that are unrealistic and which could not be imitated by a Victorian woman. The opposing ideals that find their way frequently into Haweis' writings find a suitable embodiment in the stories of Griselda and Alison, the Madonna and the whore. Reading these characters in tandem echoes the overarching framework of the thesis itself. Instead of focusing upon the obvious binary that exists between Griselda and Alison, this chapter has drawn them together and used the opposing female characters to argue that both are necessary to understand Haweis' views on womanhood. Through such an analysis of this binary, it is possible to suggest that it is more productive to say that these differing ideals coexisted for Haweis. Through Haweis it becomes possible to link Alison and Griselda, two opposing representations of women. This study of Haweis presents a unique opportunity for combination, for a way to restructure the recovery of women writers who have perhaps more often been taken to pieces than presented as a whole. Haweis did not only revive these characters but her writings on Chaucer also revitalised the interpretation of Victorian women writers who are ambiguous. Whilst presenting one face to the public, as evidenced by the choice to translate the more conservative of Chaucer's tales, Haweis privately honed her re-telling of "The Miller's Tale". Through the analysis in this chapter, the Chaucer books exemplify, explicitly, how Haweis was

able to be both a progressive and traditional writer. From Griselda's tale one can learn self-control and compassion; from Alison's tale unconventionality and pleasure. And, perhaps, it is the combination (not segregation) of these different traits united by this work of recovery, that clarify precisely what Haweis considered to be the embodiment of a strong woman and of 'womanhood' itself.

Chapter Four

The Gendered Spaces of *The Art of Decoration* (1881) and *Rus in Urbe* (1886)

"women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so overcharged the capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics" (Woolf, *Room* 75)

Haweis' literary triptych on the household includes *The Art of Decoration* (1881), *Beautiful Houses* (1882), and *Rus in Urbe, or, Flowers that Thrive in London Gardens & Smoky Towns* (1886). Also published by Chatto & Windus, who appear to be the predominant publishers of most of Haweis' books, *The Art of Decoration* is styled similarly to her other '*The Art of…*' advice manuals. Galvanised by the reception of her earlier *Art of* – books, Haweis wrote to her mother, "I have a book coming out soon…all about furniture & house decoration on wh. I am considered an authority" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 48). Haweis is, evidently, proud of her successful writing career and has indeed been remembered as an authority on decoration. In particular, she is considered as one of the earliest champions of individualism, which becomes a central focus in *The Art of Decoration.* The 1880s seemed to have been the period in which the Haweis family struggled most noticeably with money. Haweis' vast literary outpourings are testament to this, along with a remark in a letter in December 1881: "I shall have to invent some new book after the holidays, to bring in filthy lucre" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 50). In 1882, she once again curated articles written for the periodical press into a bound volume. These articles that originally appeared in *Queen* (1880-1) are reprinted as *Beautiful Houses.* This text uses examples of artist's houses and homes to reemphasise the importance of individuality and originality discussed in *The Art of Decoration.* In the foreword to *Beautiful Houses* Haweis

wrote: “I have, therefore, selected for study and admiration the following houses…which are typical of certain minds, and arranged with exquisite feeling, devotion, and knowledge.” 1886 saw the publication of Haweis’ little-known gardening book, *Rus in Urbe.* The book details the ways in which the London garden can be transformed and how in so doing, it is possible to elevate the aesthetic appeal of the city. The book was published by the Leadenhall Press, a division of Field & Tuer. Curiously, this book does not have one of Haweis’ distinctly incorrectly titled ‘forewords’ but it does include Haweis’ characteristic authoritative tone and depth of scholarship. The end of the book has a substantial index of all the plants which will grow in London, for example.

The Art of Decoration included a treatise on the importance of individuality and authenticity of style: “the present ‘aesthetic’ craze, when it does not present individual thought and effort, is as poor and parrot-like as any other craze that has led intelligent creatures astray” (Haweis 9). As discussed previously, Haweis’ political leanings, which are ever present in her texts, were heavily influenced by John Stuart Mill. Mill’s *On Liberty* outlined the importance of individuality, claiming “it is only the cultivation of individuality which produces, or can produce, well-developed human beings” (73). Haweis clearly subscribed to this ideology. Nowhere is this more evident than in the group of texts that handle interior, and exterior, design. The tangible links that existed between the house and the inhabitant in middle-class Victorian society were stronger even than those that existed between women and their wardrobe. Haweis believed that “a home should reflect the individual character of the owner” (*Decoration* 136). Some have gone so far to declare that with the publication of *The Art of Decoration,* “the principle of individuality was in full command of the entire house” (Neiswander 35). In chapter one of the book, *The Art Revolt*, Haweis outlined her intentions in writing it:

> It will be my endeavour to point out in these pages that choice remains, and to warn my readers that beauty and art, like pure water, rely upon the tidal flow of new thoughts; they lie in no stagnant pool. The mind which blindly accepts fashions simply because they are fashionable, without trying to discriminate in what the new is better than the old, may be said to resemble those caged reptilian jaws, champing without discretion flesh, feathers, and blanket at once. (*Decoration*, 3)

Haweis also devoted herself to defending this principle in her work *Beautiful Houses.* In the 'forewords' to the book Haweis wrote the following: "no house, no book, no picture, no piece of music, is interesting or instructive which is the servile copy of something else. Only the individual character which makes itself felt in it, is of value" (*Beautiful Houses* iii). Haweis discussed the homes of many artists, paying particular attention to their distinctive sense of style, in the hopes that this would "rouse the power in us to work in a similar spirit, though not necessarily on the same lines" (*Beautiful Houses* ii). Haweis' third, and final, text in this vein is concerned with the exterior of the home: the garden. *Rus in Urbe* has arguably been overshadowed by both Haweis' own plentiful creative output and the prolific garden literature by other women writers of the nineteenth century. As such, it has received the least scholarly attention of all her works. It was originally published in *The Contemporary Review* as a single article titled "Gardening in London" and a year later appeared in a much more substantial format as a "nice little shilling book" which "appeals to all dwellers in dirty cities to make the best of their scraps of garden" ("Rus in Urbe (Book Review)" 8). The text treads the line between pragmatic and aesthetic prose, and sits comfortably in the context of garden history. For example, it seems very probable that Haweis was well read of such texts as Horace Walpole's

History of the Modern Taste in Gardening from 1780, as she translated his principles and reiterated how to 'restore art to its proper office'. The advent of the *Encyclopedia of Gardening* by Loudon in 1822 and "The Gardener's Magazine" in 1826 certainly solidified the diversion of gardening in the Victorian imagination and Loudon's wife, Jane, demonstrated that it was a remarkably suitable occupation for women. Women were thus afforded the opportunity to step out from the shelter of the private sphere, the home, and into the liminal space of the garden. Yet, both spaces remained inextricably gendered. This chapter will explore the home and garden as metaphorical extensions of the female body, with specific emphasis on Haweis' intimate relationship with the home in Chelsea that she renamed Queen's House, and which formerly belonging to Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rosetti.

Haweis uses the terminology of rebellion and uprising throughout *The Art of Decoration*, pushing the reader towards a political understanding of design and decoration. She therefore unified women's work with revolt far earlier than her articles for the periodical press, which supported the suffrage. Haweis wrote:

> To care for beauty, to nurse our precious freedom to think for ourselves and to do as we like in art-matters, to avoid the fatal sheep-walk which the timid and ignorant so soon beat out, the stereotyped house of the stereotyped art-decorator, to give out individual stamp to our own little *propriété* in the common heritage of the Beautiful; that is what we have to do, this is the way to create a new, a national school of art in England. (*Decoration* 20)

Haweis practiced what she preached. The first home which Haweis was to preside over was 16 Welbeck Street and it epitomised her reluctance to be seen as the stereotypical art-decorator.

Haweis painted the front of the terraced house moss-green with black and red trim, showcasing her own non-conformity to traditional decoration practices. Biographer Bea Howe noted that she was "delighted to be the centre of so much attention" (78). Indeed, this eccentric decision has been seen as notable enough to earn a spot in a 2015 book, overseen by the editor of the Marylebone Journal, *Marylebone Lives: Rogues, Romantics and Rebels: "*It was, therefore, almost with alarm that, in 1873, Londoners came to gawp at the goings on at number 16 Welbeck Street. Mary Haweis, the wife of a local clergyman, had got the madcap notion that she would splash a bit of colour into this drab picture" (Hughes 232). Despite being rather disappointingly remembered in this work as the wife of the clergyman and as one part of "as influential a 'media couple' as one could find in late Victorian London" (Hughes 232), the act of painting the house front clearly succeeded in giving an 'individual stamp' that has not been lost in the mists of time. However, it was not 16 Welbeck Street but 16 Cheyne Walk, which became the truest reflection of the owner. Haweis recorded a curious link to the home formerly lived in by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1869, fifteen years before she was to live there. Haweis recounted a dream of her father: "I thought one of the first things I did was to shew him the Trebizond things, and tell him about Rossetti's house: which he seemed to have seen, & said "I thought nothing of Rossetti's house when I saw it" (7MEH/5/1. "Thought Book II" 15). Spiritual connection or no, Haweis had a significant bond with the home that she renamed Queen's House. It became a meeting point between her personal and political lives and was the physical manifestation of the ideas presented in her decoration and design books.

Art is for the People

Queen's House was a "very favourite rendezvous for celebrities of all kinds" ("CHATS WITH CELEBRITIES" 418), but despite the political nature of the lecturettes and addresses given at

one of Haweis' prominent 'At Homes', eyes would have invariably been on the house itself. In 1894, a section of *The Woman's Signal* is given to recounting the events of an 'At Home' hosted by Haweis on the topic of Suffrage: "Mr. and Mrs. Haweis were at home to their friends on Friday last at their delightful house at Chelsea, to those in particular who were interested in the question of women's suffrage" ("MR. AND MRS. HAWEIS AT HOME" 122). These "friends" included Millicent Fawcett (soon to be the leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies), Leonora Philipps (vice-president of the Scottish Women's Liberal Federation and later the co-founder of the Pioneer Club) and Mrs. Stuart Menteath, who, being from New Zealand was the only enfranchised woman in attendance. It is certainly an impressive activist crowd that Haweis had managed to draw. Haweis opened her home to much political discussion. An interview with Haweis, published in the aptly named *Hearth and Home* periodical, demonstrates the relationship between Haweis and Queen's House: "A visit to Mrs. Haweis' house in Cheyne Walk is in itself a delight to the art lover: it contains so many interesting relics and souvenirs of the past, and is furnished throughout with rare artistic skill, at once pleasant and reposeful. ("CHATS WITH CELEBRITIES" 418). Haweis is first and foremost established to the reader by her relationship to the home, but as the article continues the focus is shifted to the Suffrage. The blend of personal and political, domestic and professional, characterised the gendered space of the home. It has been well documented that "British middle-class identity from the 1830s through the 1870s was clearly architectural" (Tange 6), and this was especially true for women. Their identity was tied to the home, in a way that the man's identity was not for the ideal Victorian home, by necessity, had a woman at its centre. For Haweis, though she lived in three houses during her married years, it would always be at Queen's House that she felt the most at home: "In Queen's House, a very fine specimen of Wren's domestic architecture, where we lived

the last twenty years of her life, she had the full scope for her taste…the rooms in which she sat, studied, slept, and dined were of vital importance to her" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 253). In 1897, the family finances were in such a poor state that after much ado, Queen's House was finally sold. Hugh Reginald wrote: "My dear Lionel, …We are getting into a cheaper house, but even then I don't see how I can pay my way" (7MEH/5/4 48). Haweis complicated and stalled the selling of the house and there are many references to their respective solicitors dealing with the lease purchase of a new, less expensive, house. This new home, in Devonshire Street, never measured up and it is a great pity that Haweis was to end her life away from the home into which she poured a great deal of her artistic talents. Indeed, Hugh Reginald wrote: "when we left Queen's House, on the Thames Embankment, only a year before she died, she made a plan, with careful measurements and infinite detail, so full and accurate that if it were put into the hands of an average builder, a miniature Queen's House could be constructed anywhere" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 256).

Haweis poured all of her considerable expertise in art and decoration into Queen's House, and was inspired and bolstered by the original interior design left behind by Rossetti:

> The bureau at which she worked had belonged to the Queen of Spain…her little iron-bound odds-and-ends box was twelfth century…The casket beside her, on her writing table, was a fifteenth-century reliquary box, which had belonged to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and appears in his famous picture. (Haweis, *Words to Women* 254)

The picture that Hugh Reginald is referring to here is Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Pandora" (1871). Haweis gathered pieces of art around herself, painting herself into the picture. At her bureau, she

was both creating and living Art. In the work *Women and Personal Property in the Victorian Novel,* Deborah Wynne argues persuasively that women in the nineteenth century utilised the object world to claim ownership where they were previously denied legal property rights:

> Victorian women's approbation of things, even if this was only a magpie grouping of odds and ends which was not supported by the law, put them in the position of possessors, able to 'manipulate', 'construct' and 'control' not only their immediate environments, but also their sense of themselves as social beings. (10)

In *The Art of Beauty*, Haweis had begun to explain this phenomenon: "there can be no doubt that people look different in different rooms…There are people who look vulgar in one place and refined in another – so great is the effect of the surroundings on the appearance" (Haweis*, Beauty* 205). This was picked up in some reviews of the book, and Haweis was mocked for suggesting that women should dress to match their wallpaper. These reviews seem to have missed the point. Haweis is in fact urging the reader to adapt their homes to themselves: "our houses, like the fish's shell or the bird's nest, ought to represent our individual tastes and habits" (*Decoration* 24). This phenomenon, Haweis believed, came naturally to women: "Some women instinctively avoid the chair which clashes with their garments – instinctively select the teacup that offers a dainty contrast; not through self-consciousness, but from some inchoate habitual wish to be pleasant" (*Decoration* 269). Haweis used this in her descriptions of Aglae in *A Flame of Fire,* emphasising her beauty against her surroundings: "her gown of some rough stuff, apricot-coloured, with a dark border, defined her shapely figure from head to foot against the bay window wherein she sat" (Haweis, *Flame* 71). Haweis literally frames the heroine as if she is describing a picture or painting.

In the 2014 book *Changing the Victorian Subject* Madeleine Seys examined how the heroine of Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife* refashions herself in the style of the heroines of which she had read. Seys contested that Isabel, and by extension all Romance heroines, are "bound to her narrative fate by the symbolic threads of her dress" (185). Isabel is crafted into an identity outside of her own choosing when she dons her wedding dress, "a sombre brown-silk dress, which has been chosen by George" (Braddon 105). The drab dress foreshadows the drab surroundings: "Isabel stared at the blank white walls, the gaunt shadows of the awkward furniture, with a horrible fascination. It was all so ugly, she thought, and her mind revolted against her husband, as she remembered that he could have changed all this, and yet had left it in its bald hideousness" (Braddon 112). Seys also cited the juxtaposing narrative options exemplified by Victorian dress: the "virginal domestic angel" or the "sexual and sensational 'demon'" (185). This was also symbolic of the conflict between realism and sensationalism, of which Braddon is characteristic. New Woman fiction is often characterised by the way in which there are two female characters who are created to be in opposition. In *A Flame of Fire*, Aglae's counterpart is Miss Joyce Pringle, a rival for the affections of her husband. Haweis demonstrated Miss Pringle's inadequacies by comparing their homes. Miss Pringle's home is "almost exclusively furnished by the knitting-needles – with raw colours and suffocatingly thick wool – and a vast bureau covered with dust and Joyce's papers" (Haweis, *Flame* 135). The narrator then asks, "Who that was used to Aglae's flower-sweet rooms could sit at ease, even to smoke, in this odour of Berlin-wool shop?" (Haweis, *Flame* 135). Clearly, Aglae is the superior and this is proved by her ability to create and manage a beautiful home.

Haweis, by virtue of her extensive research and publications, clearly believed that this phenomenon could be taught. It is curious that Haweis should write of women's "inchoate

habitual wish to be pleasant" when she devoted almost her entire literary life to explaining and encouraging the study of beauty as an art form. During the early 1890s, Victorian society was permeated by the ideals of a Cult of Domesticity (or, the Cult of True Womanhood). In her paper *The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860,* Barbara Welter advanced a term that historians would use to mean the values of the middle to upper classes during the early Victorian period. Published in the 1860s, the paper outlined "The attributes of True Womanhood" which were "divided into four cardinal virtues – piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (Welter 152). The idea that women's knowledge came from an instinctive, or spiritual, place was deeply engrained in Haweis. So much so, that her works have two layers – what they *tell the reader*, and what they *show the reader*. Haweis explicitly tells the reader that "a beautiful woman reclining on a sofa becomes for the time a part of the sofa, and the sofa part of her" (*Decoration* 269) which suggests that she views women as a commodity like furniture – that they are merely ornaments in the home to be admired and pleasing to the eye. However, what Haweis shows the reader is a woman who has devoted her adult years to the study of art history, costume, and dress from the ancient Greeks to the renaissance. Haweis flaunts her knowledge of many design styles including Queen Anne, Gothic, Roman, Pseudo-Classicism, Greek, and Medieval. Hers is not a knowledge coming from some mythical wellspring of female wisdom. The idea that feminine knowledge is inherited, rather than learned as masculine knowledge (science, law, etc) is, strengthens the patriarchal assumption that women's knowledge is primitive and in many ways, inferior. It is perhaps not by what she says, but by what she does that Haweis challenges this idea. *The Art of Decoration* demonstrates that women's knowledge is not otherworldly, but is instead grounded in a cultural study of history. Valerie Sanders has suggested that "the task of the anti-feminist theorist was to make women see their work in the home as a serious scientific

craft of government, a highly skilled job of far greater importance to the country than anything they could do in the outside world" (20) but this continuing idea that one is the death of the other hinders the advancement of feminism, far more than it services it. Sanders teases out the self-contradictory nature of the anti-feminist writers she discusses - Eliza Lynn Linton, Charlotte M. Yonge, Mrs Humphry Ward, and Margaret Oliphant – arguing that whilst they advocate for women's natural place in the home they, as writers, flout the very boundaries that they impose. Again, then, women writers in the nineteenth century led by example. Even as they emphasised duty to the family and home, they are examples of women whose beings were not devoted solely to these ideals. The standards of anti-feminism that Sanders outlines – "I have taken anti-feminism to mean a conviction that women were designed (whether by 'God' or 'Nature') to be first and foremost wives and mothers" (5) – collapses in on itself as any examination of anti-feminist ideas, by necessity, must take the written word as its proof. These women are very clearly not "first and foremost wives and mothers" but a combination of wives, mothers and authors.

Haweis devoted much of *The Art of Decoration* to the principles of individualism. She wrote extensively about how the home could reflect not only the attitude of the nineteenth century, but of the owner themselves. Haweis asserted that "Furniture is a kind of dress, dress is a kind of furniture, which both mirror the mind of their owner, and the temper of the age" (*Decoration* 17). Mill wrote that "Many have let themselves be guided…by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few" (75) which Haweis echoed. She disparaged the current craze – aestheticism – as "poor and parrot-like" (Haweis, *Decoration* 9) when it disregarded the individual. Haweis was a proponent of a do-it-yourself approach to all elements of domestic decoration, including gardening. She disliked the way that consumerism

was increasing, that clothes and other fabrics were being mass produced by machinery and milliners whose goals were to increase sales and revenue. She did not speak kindly of workmen, carpenters and gardeners. In an address recorded in *Words to Women* it is noted that someone in attendance interrupted Haweis to ask how she managed without a carpenter; she replied, "*How* did I? Why, with my own ten claws, of course. Anyone can knock in a nail…screws can be wrestled with if you have sufficient brains" (266). Haweis very clearly believed that the artist worked for the people, and not the other way around. This is a revolutionary way of thinking that many Victorian writers avoided, for the French Revolution still permeated British society with anxiety and fear. Haweis instead embraced a dialogue of reform:

> Changes must emanate from the public, not their servant, the producer: for it is they who pay for it, not any elect body. The painter paints for the Royal Academy, but it is the people who buy his pictures. The musician composes an opera – the people support or condemn it. The poet writes, and the people publish his work if he expresses their thoughts – not without. (*Decoration* 20)

Haweis, along with Hugh Reginald, was a staunch supporter of opening museums on Sundays. In an article for the *Westminster Review*, Hugh Reginald is quoted as saying, in his capacity as an esteemed member of the Church: "it is upon the poor that the burden of the Sabbatical Sunday falls most heavily, and it is their cause I desire to plead" ("ART. II.-SUNDAY IN ENGLAND" 36). In the section, 'Helpers Who Hinder', Haweis spoke about the artists themselves, whose works were unapproachable for the general public. She wrote: "To appreciate art, we must understand it; to understand it, we must have it sufficiently about us, within our reach…But the artists themselves (I am speaking collectively, with noble exceptions in my mind) hinder the public from ever amending, by keeping the best art beyond their reach"

(Haweis, *Decoration* 371). Haweis also rebuked the costly price for a family to visit the Royal Academy. Haweis likened the artist to a priest – a "counsellor in the religion of beauty" (*Decoration* 373) who had neglected to tend his flock. Diana Maltz wrote of The Sunday Society:

> Founded in 1875 as a small, private organization with an overtly aesthetic educational mission, the Sunday Society was an offshoot of the 20-year-old Sunday League…members of the Sunday Society reclaimed and reaffirmed the League's original object: to make art accessible to the people by opening museums and galleries on Sundays. (106)

Maltz distinguishes the Haweis' involvement with the Sunday Society and notes how Hugh Reginald held sermons arguing against Sabbatarian ideals. Haweis uses the publication of *The Art of Decoration* as a platform for the ideas of the society, writing:

> When our museums are thrown open on the only day in the week (Sunday) when the busy working man can regularly visit them – and his visits must be *frequent* to be fruitful…the English artisan may suck in ideas of his own, and when he is a more cultivated individual than at present he will love his work better, and prize his own good name. (399)

Much of this book sounds more like a political manifesto, than an advice text intended for a predominantly middle-class, and female, audience. The principles expressed are the same ones which inform her radical views of women's role in society, and they can, arguably, be seen more clearly in *The Art of Decoration* than in her periodical articles. Rejecting the idea that there should be a singular ruling doctrine, Mill wrote "In this age the mere example of nonconformity,

the mere refusal to bend the knee to custom, is itself a service" (126) and Haweis refused to conform.

Charitable Aestheticism

Diana Maltz' work, *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870–1900: Beauty for the People*, which has been briefly mentioned in the preceding section, cites Haweis and her husband as subscribers to what has been termed 'missionary aestheticism'. Maltz introduces Haweis as the daughter of a painter and lists the works for which she is best known – *The Art of Beauty, The Art of Dress, Beautiful Houses* and *Chaucer for Children.* Curiously, Maltz does not mention either *The Art of Decoration* or *Rus in Urbe,* which are the best placed of Haweis' works to influence and augment the emerging study of class in aestheticism. In *The Art of Decoration* this message is clearly voiced: "each one of us individually may aid the nation by self-culture; may make his own house a standing lesson and protest, by merely caring how his walls are covered, and how his goods are placed in juxtaposition" (Haweis 399). Missionary aestheticism was "a species of philanthropy, employing both the rhetoric of aestheticism and actual manifestations of aesthetic style as remedies for urban degradation" (Maltz 2). Maltz's study differs from those before it, as it takes "a desire to teach the poor an appreciation of beauty" (2) as a more important and valuable aspect of the movement, over the cosmetic improvements of urban spaces. Haweis believed that the working classes should be more exposed to art, and one way to do this was for the middle and upper classes to make their public lives aesthetically pleasing: "*how* is the artist to educate this public whom he so scorns? By giving them his best work, by habituating them to good work in all things great and small till they *like* it, just as the missionary habituates the savage to civilised manners until they become necessary to him" (*Decoration* 372).

It is *Rus in Urbe* which best demonstrates Haweis' knowledge of class-based disparities of understanding art. The book was published in the years between 'amateur' women writers such as Jane Loudon, and others from the 1840s, and the professional gardener, exemplified by Gertrude Jekyll and others writing in the 1890s to early 1900s. It was not until the very last years of the nineteenth century that women fully stepped out from behind their books and into the public garden proper. It was a suitable subject for women to write about, and they were able to participate in the physical labour of gardening in the relative privacy of their own homes, but the professional vocation was barred for them for most of the period. Despite the creation of the Horticultural Society as early as 1804 women were not allowed to attend courses nor take examinations until the turn of the century. But the popularity of women's literature meant that these aspiring gardeners could engage with the practice long before they were officially recognised by the society. Gertrude Jekyll's vast literary output began in earnest in 1899 and she went on to become an influential figure in the Arts & Crafts movement of the early twentieth century. The Edinburgh School of Gardening for Women opened in 1903 and it seems that in the ensuing years women's role changed from one of passive influence to one of active contribution. But before Jekyll and the women of these horticultural colleges there were Victorian women subverting the gender boundaries that confined women in the private sphere. They dug up the weeds and swept the path that led to greater freedoms for women, and amongst these women was Haweis. *Rus in Urbe* is illustrated throughout by Haweis with images of flowers, which have the effect of combining the prose (discussing aesthetic practices) with artistic depictions:

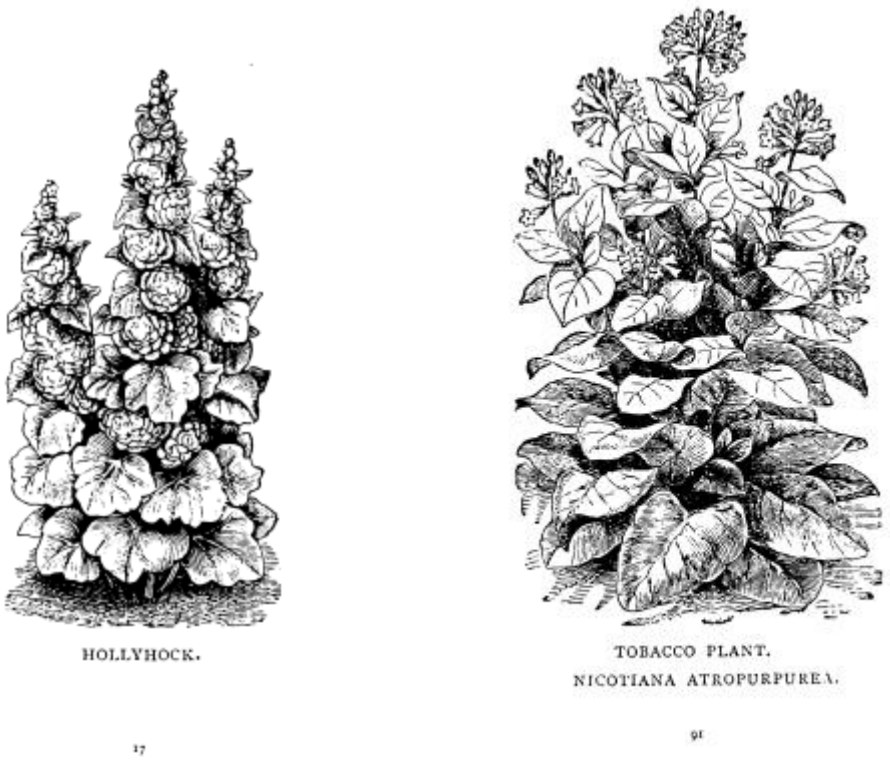

Figure 2: "Hollyhock" and "Tobacco Plant". Illustrations for *Rus in Urbe*, p. 17 and p.91 Via HathiTrust 27 Sept 2022.

Garden literature, as a diversion for Victorian women, was well established when Haweis came to write *Rus in Urbe.* It was thought particularly suitable, owing to Ruskinian principles of the garden which were formulated in the 1864 book *Of Queen's Gardens* (though it ought not to be forgotten that the scientific study of flowers was thought inappropriate for women for much of the period). Ruskin claimed that "well-directed moral training and well-chosen reading lead to the possession of a power over the ill-guided and illiterate, which is, according to the measure of it, in the truest sense, Kingly" (*Queen's Gardens* 1). Already, there is an emphasis on class hierarchies established – the well-read, the aesthete, holds a position of noble authority over the masses. Ruskin continued in this vein and beseeched the reader to consider where women fit into this idea and he turned to what he called "the greatest, the wisest, the purest-hearted of all ages"

(Ruskin, *Queen's Gardens* 5) – namely, Shakespeare, Homer, and Chaucer amongst other prominent male writers. In their works, he sought "the true dignity of woman" (Ruskin, *Queen's Gardens* 5). His conclusion is that women's true power comes from a place of influence: "woman's power is for rule, not for battle" (Ruskin, *Queen's Gardens* 20), a place of passivity instead of action. The act of gardening, however, bridges the Ruskinian ideals of influence versus action: "while gardening may be about appreciating the harmonious operation of Nature it is also about wresting control for oneself" (Bilston 6). Women designed and transformed their garden spaces through physical labour, and it is this which Haweis paid particular attention to in *Rus in Urbe*. Though she may understand, and even sympathise, with the lofty ideals presented by Ruskin, the "importance of beauty as a refining influence" (*Decoration* 3), Haweis also recognised the very real hard work that must go into combatting the ugliness of the city garden.

During the early 1800s, the number of instruction manuals pertaining to horticulture and floriculture written by women seemed to be innumerable. Louisa Johnson's *Every Lady Her Own Flower Gardener* (1840), Jane Loudon's *Gardening for Ladies* (1840), and Elizabeth Watts's *Flowers and The Flower Garden* (1867) are just a handful of examples of the types of books that Haweis was indebted to when she came to write *Rus in Urbe.* Each of these women writers noted the appropriateness of this topic for women. Jane Loudon, whose husband was the well-known horticulturalist John Claudius Loudon, was amongst the first women to popularize gardening manuals. These works were more inclusive, specifically for women who would not have access to specialist and scientific education institutions for much of the period. Loudon dedicates *Gardening for Ladies* to her husband, 'to whom the author of the following pages owes all the knowledge of the subject she possesses.' Loudon was inspired by her experiences of being married to a horticulturalist to translate the information she had learned for the 'amateur' –

"Having been a full-grown pupil myself, I know the wants of others in a similar situation" (Loudon vi). Other earlier women writers also adopted this conciliatory tone, humbly stating their intentions. For instance, Johnson wrote "I have been induced to compile this little work from hearing of my companions regret that no single book contained a sufficiently condensed and general account of the business of a Flower Garden" (1). Watts justifies her "little book" by writing that it is "intended for the many rather than the scientific few'" (preface). The phrases 'little book', 'little work', and other variations crop up repeatedly. As was stated earlier in this chapter, even *Rus in Urbe* was referred to as a 'nice little shilling book'. The amount of experience and expertise that went into these so-called 'little works' is proof that they are not, by any means, inconsequential. They were substantial editions, which explained every, often dirty, aspect of gardening. Dealing with pests and manure is a far cry from the image of the angelic Victorian housewife. As Sarah Bilston has justifiably claimed these works were "Authorizing women to engage in physical labour, aesthetic debate, and technological innovation" and this led to "a new vision of the social arrangement in which *flowers* sanctify and *women* act' (3).

A distinctive theme running through women's garden literature of the nineteenth century is economy. Their works include many references to thrift and expense that their male counterparts lack. Haweis was infamous for her thrifty approach to decoration and dress. She earned herself a spot in *Punch* in 1893:

> HOME, CHEAP HOME!
> "Thine be a cot beside a hill,"
> Hums Mrs. Haweis in our ear;
> "Such cots are in the market still,
> At only thirty pounds a year.

> "Then, as for furnishing the fold,
> Another fifty pounds will do it;
> But mind you stick to what is old,
> Nor carry modern stuff to it!
>
> "Your chairs must all be Chippendale,
> Your tables of the native oak,
> Your sofas" – but of what avail
> To further urge this little joke?
>
> For in this cot the chairs may be
> Much chipped, but hardly Chippendale,
> Unless the lady will agree
> To costs "upon a *hire* scale." ("Punch, or the London Charivari: CIV" 123)

It is clear that many thought Haweis' advice to be impractical – mere fantasy. However, Haweis was adept at making something appear to be worth far more than its true value. Indeed, she had to be in order to keep up middle-class appearances despite the family funds continually dwindling. A lack of funds meant that many women had to go out and do the gardening, often by hand and by themselves. In her preface, Johnson acknowledged that many women "cannot afford a gardener" and wanted to "comprehend the general business of the garden, undisturbed by fear of failure, and at the most economical scale of expense" (1). Thus, women were drawn out of the home and into the liminal space of the garden, which acted as both barrier and connector to the rest of society.

In order to transform the city garden into a utopia that could reform and influence the understanding and perception of art in Britain, the woman gardener had to be industrious. Following Haweis' advice, the housewife could transform her own small city garden space and combat the smog of London. Writers such as Johnson seemed to have reservations regarding this practice. Johnson wrote that the city gardener can only "hope to keep a few consumptive geraniums" (13) This is a preconception that Haweis was keen to disprove. She opened the book with: "the London garden is, I know, a joke with country cousins" (Haweis, *Rus* 1). Haweis replied to such criticisms by asserting that "I have seen many a little London garden outshine the country cousin's in point of colour – ay, and neatness too" as well with a typical cutting remark about the "country cousin, who does not know so very much about gardens although she dwells in the midst of one" (*Rus* 1). For Haweis it was more honorable to work hard, even to suffer, for beauty rather than to come by it naturally. This is a principle that is evident throughout her aesthetic texts, and it applies very literally to the London garden. Denied the ease of the countryside, city gardeners had to be more ingenious and more industrious. Through their effort, city dwellers were no longer deprived from a sense of pastoral serenity. This way of improving and reforming the urban environment with plants was an opportunity to unite art with aid. As Haweis wrote, "the crowded slum receives refreshed air from every tree, creeper, and little window plant that we can introduce" (*Rus* 13). There is a curious absence of ecclesiastical matters in *Rus in Urbe* despite the obvious connection to make between gardening and God. As such it is seemingly a conscious choice on Haweis' part to exclude any reference she might have deftly made. *Rus in Urbe* is therefore much more grounded in contemporary human politics and reform, as opposed to the grander Romantic narrative. One such example of a realistic aim of Haweis' charitable aestheticism is her desire for garden spaces to combat that prolific haunt of

the working classes – the public house. Haweis described the overview of London, disparaging its neglected state:

> passing in the train, we can take stock of the back premises of row after row, where a few beans, marrows, artichokes, and other vegetables (to say nothing of a fruit-tree) might be a treat to the eye…and what meets the indignant eye? Nothing but half-washed clothes drying, broken barrels, broken victuals, broken pipes, and cans…where the humble scarlet-runner and the window garden might soon become a vigorous rival to the public-house. (*Rus* 42)

For Haweis, the unkempt and uncared for London landscape is an unacceptable offence to good taste, but it could be conquered by translating the principles of aestheticism and art onto the garden space. This notion that the city has been orphaned by the middle to upper classes, whose duty it was to beautify it, is also Ruskinian in principle. Ruskin created a metaphor out of the garden where the poor and destitute become wilted flowers, and woman the tender gardener who could restore and revive them with her motherly administrations: "far in the darkness of the terrible streets, – these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems broken" (*Queen's Gardens* 53). It is women upon whom the emotional labour of the nation rests, and Ruskin is hyperbolic in his condemnation of women who have forsaken this 'duty': "There is not a war in the world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered" (*Queen's Gardens* 48).

Haweis recreates a famous tale of a woman in a garden with her retelling and accompanying illustrations of "The Knight's Tale". Here we see 'fair Emelye' in her garden. Traditionally, Emelye has been read as the representation of female confinement, trapped as she

is within the walled Edenic garden. In Haweis' illustration, however, there are no walls behind Emelye and she is free to go about 'romynge to and fro'. The landscape extends to the horizon and the sun rising there shines behind her head, creating a halo of light:

Figure 3: *"Fair Emelye Gathering Flowers."* Illustration of "The Knight's Tale" in *Chaucer for Children*, p37. Via Internet Archive Online 27 Sept 2022.

The garden is invoked to symbolise Emelye's virginity: "fresher than the May with flowers new", "therefore Emelye, remembering/ To pay respect to May, rose speedily:/ Attired she was all fresh and carefully" (Haweis, *Chaucer for Children* 35). In her illustration, Haweis used the colours of virginity and consummation that permeate the scene: "She wandered up and down where she chose./ She gathereth flowers, partly white and red" (*Chaucer for Children* 35). Thus, we see the red of the trees and flowers in contrast to the virginal gown that Emelye wears. On the left, we see the "great tower, so thick and strong, in which these two knights were imprisoned" (Haweis, *Chaucer for Children* 35). The suitors, imprisoned in the phallic tower, press against the "wall of the garden" (Haweis, *Chaucer for Children* 35) where the continually 'fresh' Emelye resides. The garden, from this early representation, is a utopian paradise with a woman at the centre. Through this woman's passive influence, the two knights are provoked to action. This notion that a woman's love had the power to hinder, or even stop completely, man's moral decline is understood and lauded by Haweis. When she wrote, "without it he would have sunk lower and lower in vice and degradation" (Haweis, *Chaucer for Children* 43) she is translating Ruskin when he claimed "Men, by their nature are prone to fight…It is for you to choose their cause" (*Queen's Gardens* 48).

It was not until the 1980s that the term 'emotional labour' was defined by sociologist Arlie Hochschild, but it has roots from the earliest records of human history. Women have historically performed the bulk of this underacknowledged work and none more stringently than the Victorian housewife. The 'Angel in the House' epitomises emotional labour. This will be discussed more in depth in chapter six. The idea that women were naturally designed by God to be able to bear the suffering of others, and to be inclined to soothe away all hurts marks their allegedly instinctive maternal, nurturing, and compassionate nature. Indeed, this maternal bond

can be applied to any number of things that need to be cared for and gardens, in particular flowers, were no exception.

Plant Mothers of the World

An English Rose, Shrinking Violet, Wallflowers…women have been consistently likened to flowers throughout history. Even in the riotous New Woman novel, women did not escape this comparison: Angelica "with her lithe young figure and milk-white skin, made him think of an arum lily" (Grand, *Heavenly Twins* 454). However, the garden also served as a space to challenge the boundaries imposed upon women. A pertinent example of just such a use of the garden space is 'Suffragette's Rest' in Eagle House, Bath. Between 1909 and 1912 the house, belonging to Emily Blathwayt, a member of the Women's Social and Political Union, was used as a refuge for ex-prisoner suffragettes whilst they recovered from the effects of hunger strikes. The women at Eagle House planted a tree to celebrate individual women working for the cause, and in the grounds of Eagle House these became known as 'Annie's Arboretum' (after Annie Kenney) and they included holly and conifers. The spiritual message behind trees over other plants is clear: they were, no doubt, intended to stand as a reminder of the strength, perseverance, and endurance of these women. It is also pertinent to note that holly has a cultural significance, as it was adopted by Christians as a symbol for Christmas. The sharp leaves are said to symbolise the crown of thorns worn by Christ, with the red berries representing his blood. The message of sacrifice is therefore clear. By digging up the earth and planting a tree in commemoration, these women literally altered the British (political) landscape. Eagle House should have stood as a reminder that boundaries can be tested. It should have been a physical reminder of the dedication of the suffragettes. Instead, the garden space was lost. Only a single tree remains. The history of women in the garden is vitally important to prosperity; it is important that gardening manuals are

not trivialised as a small part of a ‘boom’ of consumerist culture in Victorian England, or else we risk losing more culturally crucial spaces in women’s history just as we have lost Eagle House. The following photographs were taken by Linley Blathwayt, and show Suffragettes in the act of gardening:

Figure 4: "Suffragette Annie Kenney planting tree with Mrs Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and Lady Constance Lytton, 1909." Photograph by Col. Linley Blathwayt. Courtesy of *Bath in Time*.

Figure 5: "Suffragettes Annie Kenney, Mary Blathwayt and Emmeline Pankhurst at Eagle House, Batheaston, 1910." Photograph by Col. Linley Blathwayt. Courtesy of *Bath in Time*.

In the article “Mother-Love for Plant Children: Sentimental Pastoralism and Nineteenth-Century Parlour Gardening”, Robin Veder discusses the relationship between the gardener and their anthropomorphized plant children in American horticultural literature. Veder presents the idea that “gardeners and parents should be able to raise their plant or child through inherent empathetic understanding” (Veder 20). Haweis spent a great deal of time in America when she accompanied her husband’s preaching tours. She gave lecturettes and afterwards wrote positively of her experiences with American women. In an address in Chicago in 1893, Haweis said, “I should like to tell you how warmly I, personally, feel towards America and American women” (*Words to Women* 41). It was because of their advancements, in comparison to English women, that Haweis felt so. In American literature, the theme of nature struggling against human

intervention with it has been a prolific one but the theory translates well to English literature and to Haweis' work *Rus in Urbe.* Veder argues, convincingly, that "When labour is represented as effortless leisure in bucolic nature, the labourer has been ' pastoralized': aesthetically erased" (21). This ties back into the idea of women's domestic labour as 'natural' and therefore somehow 'effortless' despite the very real work that went into it. Women, in the garden, are therefore doubly erased. Their labour to create the beautiful garden space is presented as an activity that women are biologically drawn to, and which is then presented as a leisure activity: "Through sentimental pastoralism, the skill, knowledge and effort of gardening - and parenting - were representationally transformed into leisure and love" (Veder 22).

Rus in Urbe at times anthropomorphises plants, displaying what Veder has called 'mother-love' for them. These comparisons are more frequently made inside of the home. The placing of flowers in rooms, or 'parlour gardening', offers more opportunities for them to be seen as human, as if the very act of bringing them inside transforms them from wild to domesticated. Haweis began:

> in setting out flowers and plants in rooms, for which neither time nor trouble should be grudged, and both are required…Flowers in water will take almost any attitude given them – will positively take the mental tone of whoever has the management of them; just like children, whose "manners" are "formed" by their elders." (*Rus* 53)

Haweis undercut the pastoral concept, however, with words of activity rather than influence. However, this is slightly weakened by her earlier sentiment: "The secret of success with flowers in London, indoors and out, is *attention*. Love them, keep them clean, watch them, and they will

repay you with a gratitude almost human" (*Rus* 19). The advice Haweis offered to women is the opposite to that which she gives for flowers. In her novel, Haweis wrote "our girls are too much watched and tended…They are like flowers brought up in a dark room" (*Flame* 11). This is something that she warns against in her gardening advice manual: "Don't bring flowers into a room to stand them out of sight: they are before all things dependent on sun both for their health and their beauty" (Haweis, *Rus* 57). Therefore, daughters are dependent upon autonomy for their health and beauty. Plants are to be monitored, watched, and controlled, but daughters are to be set free.

Haweis directly attributed the attractive arrangement of flowers to women, and stated that men are not able to engage in the activity with any natural flourish. She used Phillis as a stand-in for all women, and Caliban as a stand-in for all men: "Phillis flings blossoms and ferns and grasses loose in a vase (mind, a vase itself beautiful) and they fall into place at once…Caliban tries to do the same thing…Caliban never *feels* how the totter-grass or the maiden-hair must go" (Haweis, *Rus* 54). The names which she chose are conscious choices, also. Haweis was a keen scholar of women in mythology, and would have known that Phillis – spelled Phyllis in the original tale – was a character in Greek mythology. Phyllis hanged herself because of her grief and a broken heart and was transformed into an almond-tree. Her lover returned as she was transformed to embrace the tree and it blossomed. Phyllis therefore represents sacrifice, love and nature. Caliban, of course, has always had negative connotations as the monster from Shakespeare's *The Tempest.* However in the play he is associated with the less desirable and uglier aspects of nature. In Act 2 Scene 2 Caliban speaks of "All the infections that the sun sucks up/From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him/By inch-meal a disease!" (Shakespeare,

Tempest 2.2.1-3). Haweis therefore equates women with a princess from Greek Mythology, and men with a creature associated with decay.

George Elgar Hicks' *Woman's Mission* (1862-3) is a triptych which lays out women's three chief roles. Each painting is title *Guide to Childhood*, *Companion of Manhood*, and *Comfort of Old Age* in order. Though the pictures move through life stages, the woman remains the same. She is unchanging and youthful in each. She is also never looking outside the frame of the picture but always at the person in her care and this emphasises the notion of emotional labour performed by women. Haweis' own mission differed from Hicks' as she progressed through her literary career. Though Haweis did express a desire to be the 'helpmeet' of her husband, she lacked the maternal instincts of the first image and the familial responsibilities of the third. Her own mission was knowledge and she expressed it in *Rus in Urbe* through a series of succinct metaphors. The image conjured in the mind of a Victorian woman in nature is one similar to Hicks' first image. She is young, often dressed in white, and surrounded by an abundance of fresh lively green colours. For Haweis, her own 'Mother Nature' differed greatly. Instead of Spring, Haweis turned to Autumn: "perhaps the red berry would no more desire to return to the pink blossom than a really healthy mind, crowned with silver and laurel, would give up sixty years of struggle and attainment to recover the lithe limbs, the golden hair, and the empty head of sixteen" (*Rus* 78). The personification of Autumn is presented as a champion – it is crowned victorious by the metaphorical laurel wreath, which is, in turn, associated with greying hair and thus age. Haweis created an image of women and nature that is defined by experience and knowledge rather than youthfulness and naivety. Her mission therefore differs from the pursuits laid out by domestic artists such as Hicks.

Haweis equated flowers, seeds, and berries with women's clothing and jewellery in *Rus in Urbe* in a way that she does not do in her novel. The pastoral, often Romantic, language in the gardening advice manual is not present in her fictional work. This is another way in which Haweis tests the bounds of literary genres. Her novel, though at heart a romance, does not need the capital R. Comparing two descriptions of nature, one from *A Flame of Fire* and the other from *Rus in Urbe* illustrates this point. In the novel, "the large walled-in grounds were prettily cultivated, for Bangor is fertile; and across and between green leaves and healthy tree-stems glimmered the pale blue waters of the Menai Straits" (Haweis, *Flame* 16). Though this is descriptive language it does not have the same whispering sibilance of a turn of phrase from the gardening manual: "catkins hang in grey-green clusters and breaking pods throw forth magical veils and plumes, that stream like little opal clouds about the neighbouring boughs, soft as silk and fine as lace, mixed with sapphire berries" (Haweis, *Rus* 76). The binary between amateur and professional has been seen to influence the writing style of the gardening manuals produced in the nineteenth century: "the earlier garden texts tend to be pragmatic advice to the middle-class woman; later Victorian garden writing is indebted to New Woman and aesthetic prose" (Bilston 1). Haweis treads a line between pragmatic and aesthetic prose, alternating between modes at intervals. In the introduction to the work *Modern Genre Theory*, it is supposed that genre theory has seen traditional notions of genre as restrictive and oppressive: "the term seems almost by definition to deny the autonomy of the author, deny the uniqueness of the text, deny spontaneity, originality and self-expression" (Duff 1). In contrast, modern notions of genre branch away from rigid structures and rules, thanks in part to the rise of Modernism and the influx of the 'meta' into pop culture. Haweis was writing at a time when genre distinctions were important. There were clear genre hierarchies, with those that fell into the realm of women often

deemed less valuable (short stories, novels, etc). The mixture of different styles of writing in *Rus in Urbe* gives it longevity as it can break the confines of genre. It is also another way in which Haweis' works can be seen to resist categorisation, a key framework for the thesis as a whole. *Rus in Urbe* thus appeals to literary study for the metaphorical descriptions contained within it such as the following of a pomegranate: "a cleft pomegranate is one of the loveliest ornaments, a rugged brown rind enclosing uncut rubies in a nest of white velvet" (76). The text can also appeal to the pragmatic with its extensive appendices of factual advice from botanical names to an inexhaustible list of 'what will grow'.

The history of the home and the garden is, unlike the Victorian woman's favourited plant, the fern, distinctly gendered. The home quickly becomes a space through which it was possible to comprehend women's place in the world. If, in order to write, women must have 'a room of one's own' then it is clear that the room itself is significant. Hugh Reginald devoted a section in *Words to Women* to explain Haweis' connection to her home:

> The rooms in which she sat, studied, slept, and dined, were of vital importance to her. Some rooms 'made her ill,' she said. It was no affectation, she could not help it…Every minute thing about her was right, and to some extent decorative, down to her delicate scissors with arabesque birds and flowers for handles, her inlaid ivory toilet boxes and chases silver brushes…I never knew anyone with so powerful a mind so dependent on her surroundings, and so miserable without them. (253)

By gathering these decorations about herself, Haweis marked ownership over the space. She stamped herself into the rooms in which she lived and in which she worked. She did not struggle

to write as many women struggle in a busy household nor did she seem to become distracted by family concerns. Haweis had a clear room of her own, and liked it that way. In a letter to her mother, she wrote that she did not want her sister, Edith, to come and stay with her and Hugh Reginald, stating "I could not possibly have anyone to stay with me…our time is very differently occupied to that of most people…our evenings at home are engaged in work & silence (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 41). The home was tied to women's identity in nineteenth-century Britain in a powerful, specific, way. Haweis is an excellent example of this relationship, which ought not to be lost in perceptions of homemaking as a 'less serious' aspect of women's lives. Haweis' texts on the house and the garden provide one more crucial piece of the mosaic recovery of this writer. Through this analysis of *The Art of Decoration* and *Rus in Urbe,* which has demonstrated how these gendered spaces impacted women's lives, connections can be made between Haweis' domestic writing and her activist writing. To conclude, to remember women, and their relationship to the home, is to celebrate their uniqueness, colourfulness and individuality.

Chapter Five

Dressed to Protest with *The Art of Beauty* (1878) and *The Art of Dress* (1879)

"taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison" (Wollstonecraft, *Vindication* 43)

In part, Haweis existed in a state of rebellion, or protest, in the world in which she lived. She was certainly unafraid to speak her mind, and undaunted by how this might ostracise people. There is nowhere in her works that this is more clear than in *The Art of Beauty* (1878) and *The Art of Dress* (1879). In these books, she voices, very strongly, her view on the absolute importance and power of beauty. Outward appearance was a contentious issue in the writing of many women. Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, felt that there was a difference between the beauty of a healthy body versus the attractive body. There is a distinction between mind and body in women's writing that perhaps stems from notions of vanity and social concepts of feminine attractiveness. The dichotomy between mind and body also pervades feminist pedagogy and early texts, now considered feminist canon, have taught of the importance of women's minds. In doing so, these texts present an argument that pursuits of the mind – chiefly education – are not solely the domain of men. Such texts have, as a consequence, suggested that the focus on the physical body limits women's progress. From the Victorian era, the body has been commercialised and made into a commodity which women are taught to hate and to love. It is not just patriarchal discourses throughout history, however, that have taught this; it is feminism itself. In a bid to be taken as seriously as their male counterparts, many women writers stressed a shift in the narrative, away from adorning the body. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* argued that what a male-dominated society dictated as beautiful actually created artificial delicacy in women. Wollstonecraft felt that the body should be cared for and

kept healthy, certainly, and advocated strongly for the need for women to exercise, go outdoors and be active. But she did not present, as Haweis did, an aesthetic understanding of beauty and the realistic role that it played in women's lives. Haweis was less of a visionary than Wollstonecraft. In fact, it may be more accurate to say that Haweis was firmly a pragmatist. She understood the need for advancements for women, but she also understood that it would be idealistic to write about a world where beauty did not matter. Therefore, *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* do not overtly criticise the importance that is placed on outward appearance, but rather offered candid practical advice. Haweis made use of fashion, which had been deemed a suitable topic for women writers, to protest against a number of societal expectations of women. Given the premise that beauty does matter in the world in which she lived, Haweis set out to twist it to her own advantage.

The best known of all of Haweis' aesthetic advice manuals, *The Art of Beauty*, published in 1878, originally appeared as a series of articles for *St. Paul's Magazine*. The subject matter is replicated, to a certain extent, in the next instalment, *The Art of Dress*. Haweis wrote: "I have to write & draw as hard as I can to add to the income" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 41) which offers insight into why these texts were reproduced from her earlier articles. Haweis was cleverly rebranding her works for a different, more middle-class, audience by publishing in this form as well as making more money from the same works. This is similar to the way in which Haweis capitalised on her first Chaucer book. Of all of Haweis' literary works, these are the texts which have received the most scholarly attention. In *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, Talia Schaffer attributes this to Haweis being the "most early aesthetic fashion writer" going so far as to suggest that "Haweis may be said to have founded the field of aesthetic fashion reform…her texts marked the first and most influential attempt to apply the newest art theories to fashion" (108).

The same principles of individuality and authenticity that Haweis later applied to the home and garden had already been applied to dress. Haweis' fashion writing received the same depth of research and attention to detail as any of her works, and whilst on a surface level these two books seem to enforce gender stereotypes they are themselves 'dressed' in a disguise. They appear as simple advice manuals for women, yet concealed within the pages is a breadth of knowledge of the history of dress culture. In these works, Haweis protested firstly against the commercialization of the fashion industry and the resulting loss of female individuality. In the same vein, she objected to tight-lacing and other forms of dress that physically injured women. She was a member of the Rational Dress Society for a number of years and clearly influenced their policies. Secondly, she rejected the belief that there were high-brow and low-brow vocations for women, reasoning that outer beauty in no way hindered intellectual progress, and contended that the study of fashion should be taken seriously and considered worthwhile. Lastly, by the very nature of the work, Haweis protested against dominant patriarchal discourses by creating an alternative language coded in fashion and beauty, and intended exclusively for women readers. She wrote a different kind of history book from that which has been dominantly used, as was discussed in chapter four. Instead of political history, more often focusing upon violence and acts of war – the domain of men – Haweis was engaged in writing studies of cultural history.

When *The Art of Beauty* is read, not in isolation from Haweis' other works and life, but in tandem with it, the message of protest becomes clearer. Read as a single manifesto on the importance of beauty, however, these texts can appear to be too conventional. Thus, there were instances where Haweis' contemporary women writers, notable for their contributions to the Suffrage, were unable to see the feminist messages in Haweis' aesthetic prose. In the article "The

Little Health of Ladies" published in *The Contemporary Review* in 1878, Frances Power Cobbe wrote about *The Art of Beauty* calling it "very noteworthy" (285). Cobbe listed what she believed to be the purpose of dress in the article before she mentioned Haweis' work, and the footnote, where she gives her full views on *The Art of Beauty*, acknowledges this:

> The preceding pages on what I conceive to be the *raisons d'étre* of dress were written before I had seen this exceedingly clever, brilliant, and learned little book. While giving the authoress thanks for her most sensible reprobation of many senseless fashions, and not presuming for a moment to question her judgement in matters of taste, on which she speaks with authority, I must here enter my humble but earnest protest against the over-importance which, I think, she is inclined to attach to the art of dress. (285)

Cobbe's three purposes for dress are health, decency, and beauty. Cobbe also noted the importance of individuality and liberty of action that Haweis' work highlights. Whilst their views on the purpose of dress are largely similar, Cobbe's review of *The Art of Beauty* draws attention to the differences in their opinions. Cobbe acknowledges Haweis' supremacy on the topic, but objected resolutely to Haweis' promotion of false hair, stating that the use of false hair is "both morally, and even aesthetically wrong" (285). From the letters that were exchanged, and from Haweis' own writing, it is evident that these women admired each other's work. It is also clear from Cobbe's comment, however, that Haweis' brand of what we would retrospectively call feminism was different to her own. Cobbe's chief concern was with the over-importance Haweis gave to dress, and this is a sentiment which was echoed in a piece from *The Saturday Review* a year before Cobbe's article. The review, which was published in 1877, claimed "women whose aim in life soars a little above that of attracting public admiration and enchanting lovers will

hesitate to profit by Mrs. Haweis' advice to lavish the same care on the fascinations of their personal adornment as they now do upon higher things" ("THE ART OF BEAUTY" 722). Haweis knew that such criticism would be levelled at her, demonstrating an understanding of how her book could be misconstrued within the very pages: "I am prepared for a scream from the strong-minded, who are superior to marriage, and think that a single life is the higher aspiration for the girl of the period, as in it she has more scope for the development of the *ego*" (*Beauty* 264). To which, the reviewer responded that women "will most certainly endeavour to scream down a book which they may not unnaturally be permitted to consider vulgar in tone, false in principle, and immoral from an art point of view" ("THE ART OF BEAUTY" 722). Such strong criticism of Haweis' fashion aestheticism is no doubt exacerbated by the haughty tone she adopts throughout the book. Haweis pronounced that "an immense number of ill-tempered ugly women are ill-tempered because they are ugly" (*Beauty* 256). She also tells the 'ugly' woman: "you have no right to inflict your misfortune on everybody – it is an unpardonable offence against good taste" (Haweis, *Beauty* 198). It should be noted, however, that Haweis merely voiced – more directly – what Cobbe also mentioned in her article when she wrote that one of the purposes of dress was the "Concealment, when possible, of any disgusting personal defect" (Cobbe 283). Haweis' strong opinions, whilst potentially ostracising, showcase a writer who was far from conciliatory. In her writings on beauty, Haweis is unambiguous and she speaks with certainty and, arguably, with power.

According to Hugh Reginald, this was one of her less likeable qualities. In *Words to Women*, he wrote an 'In Memoriam' chapter, in which he stated the following:

> She was never anxious to please everyone, troubled herself little with people's prejudices, was not always guarded in her expression of her views, and was quite

> immovable in her own opinions; and she showed perhaps too little respect for people who differed with her. Mrs. Haweis thus sometimes laid herself open to unfriendly criticism, and is said, unfortunately, to have made enemies as well as devoted friends. (xvi)

Yet, Haweis's desire not to please everyone is an admirable trait for it shows conviction and assurance of self. Haweis was herself conscious of this, writing in her diary in 1866: "Better lose all your acquaintance by acidity and indifference than gain one by wearing a mask…We need not truckle and sneak for want of self-reliance and industry…I will not fear my fellow-man. I will not sneak and fawn and bribe" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book I" 26). These are qualities less commonly associated with Victorian women, though Haweis is proof that they undoubtedly possessed them. It is also too simplistic to say that Haweis did not possess any insecurities and whilst Haweis' tone is certainly indicative of strong opinions, it should not be supposed that she was unconcerned with her public image. Not only is her husband an obvious unreliable source of information, but in a letter to her mother in 1884 the reverse is suggested. Haweis wrote that she "saw a notice in some paper saying "Mrs. Haweis is the queen of a clever set"" and that she was "glad the public see I am someone" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 56). She also wrote in her private diary how she should like to be "successful, & beloved" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book 1" 16). Whilst she presented herself as a stoic individual, there is an underlying insecurity in her personal writings that suggested she had depended upon being recognised and praised for her writing since she was, at least, eighteen years old. After all, it played a significant part in her attraction to Hugh Reginald.

The overarching message of *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* does seem to be that women should spend a significant amount of their energy in the pursuit of a husband, and so

such reviews as those in the *Saturday Review* are not unexpected. Haweis did write that "wife and mother is a crowned queen" (*Beauty* 261) and thus it is easy to understand why the reviewer would mockingly write that Haweis wanted to rescue women "from that deepest of all sorrows – an unwedded life" ("THE ART OF BEAUTY" 722). Such statements as, "a woman's natural quality is to attract, and having attracted, to enchain" (Haweis, *Beauty* 3) and "most mothers hold out marriage as the chief aim of a girl's existence. They are right – it is so" (Haweis, *Beauty* 261) appear with frequency in the work, denoting that this is one of Haweis' more conservative texts. But, it is also one of her earliest written works, as it originally appeared as articles years before being re-published in the bound format. It is significant that Haweis produced this text around the time that she was settling into her own newly married life. The freedom she found in her marital home, specifically to write, can be seen to influence the way she writes about women's role in society just as much as her later experiences with Hugh Reginald's infidelity, and the subsequent siphoning away of the household earnings, impacted her novel and periodical press writing. It has already been shown in the preceding chapters how Haweis expressed anxieties throughout her works about fluctuating female identity and perhaps she saw fashion and beauty as stabilising. She told the reader that "the greatest mistake a wife can make is to neglect her appearance; it is a direct surrender of a magic wand" (Haweis, *Beauty* 115). By committing to the idea that beauty has always mattered and will continue to matter, Haweis is able to ground female identity in the distinctly historical female preoccupation of fashion.

The Commercialization of Female Identity

Haweis saw the rapid commercialization of fashion as one of the most damaging new trends of the period for women. The nineteenth century saw the beginnings of the modern fashion industry and in *Dress and Identity in British Literary Culture, 1870-1914* Rosy Aindow suggested that

this "transformed the way in which the British population conceptualised dress" (21). Many fashion historians have focused upon the ways in which fashionable dress became cheaper to buy in this period, and how when it became available to lower classes it threatened the sartorial identity of the bourgeoisie. What is an integral element of this is the erosion of distinctive styles of dress and, by extension, the identity of the wearer. If clothing could be mass produced, then people everywhere could be dressed the same. It is not only the threat to class hierarchies that concerns Haweis, however, but the threat to uniqueness. Women, she feared, had become "most blind and thoughtless followers of fashions still imposed upon them, Heaven only knows wherefore and by whom" (Haweis, *Beauty* 87). If dress lay "at the margins of the body" marking the "boundary between self and other" (Entwistle 327) then the efforts of the fashion industry can be seen as an attack on individuality. Thus, the issue of dress becomes increasingly political. What appears to be a desire to influence women to take more pains with their appearance, can instead be viewed as Haweis taking a stance against conformity. In these books, Haweis enacts many micro acts of rebellion. She clearly wanted to redistribute power to women through her own understanding of aesthetics. In fact, Haweis encouraged her readers to distrust most forms of authority, and this did extend to herself. Haweis is very clear that her books outline general rules which the reader can tailor to suit themselves. She therefore tells the reader: "I can lay claim to neither a fixed scheme nor a scientific method" (Haweis, *Beauty* foreword) but it is her hope that her guidelines will inspire her readers to "resist the tendency of polite society to run in a groove" (Haweis, *Beauty* 298).

In these texts, Haweis' dislike for the "milliners' 'taste'" (*Beauty*, 15) is similar to her aversion towards gardeners, whom she considered "pitifully ignorant, not to say prejudiced" (*Rus* 26) and workmen whom she entirely dismisses as taking "three times as long as a woman in

knocking in a nail" (*Words to Women* 266). In every aspect, be it fashion or furnishing, Haweis was firmly in favour of the do-it-yourself approach as was discussed in chapter four. The overall advice is "in every department of art – regardless of derision, censure, and 'advice' – we must do as we like" (Haweis, *Beauty* 224). This last phrase is a kind of shibboleth, which was recognised in the nineteenth century as a call to action. It is an idiom distinctly associated with champions of women's rights. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, for example, Dorothea says "I used to despise women a little for not shaping their lives more, and doing better things. I was very fond of doing as I liked" (576). This defiant character invigorates this phrase – *doing as one likes* – with rebellious meaning. This phrase therefore serves to ally Haweis to the fight for women's rights.

To allow individuality to shine is to 'do as one likes' in such art matters as styling a gown. Women's bodies could become self-governed by treating fashion as a device to showcase their different tastes and styles. Haweis' readers are therefore encouraged to "use the information she gives them to uncover a natural sense of taste that may have been distorted by the external influences of fashion" (Psomiades 152). Fashion thereby becomes an obstacle to be overcome in the quest for the unique self. Haweis was a champion of the individualist approach throughout her career and her later venture into pro-suffrage writing was driven by her conviction that the law was quashing women's individualism. She urged her readers, around a decade before the periodical writing, to "shake off the lethargy which immolates us to a Juggernaut of ignorant opinion, and let us assert our individuality, if we have any, in dress as in other things" in the name of "art and nature both" (Haweis, *Beauty* 17). Haweis' choice of language is worth unpicking. She suggested that inaction had seen women's individuality sacrificed to society's decrees. The physical differences between women are given noticeable attention in these texts, and are used by Haweis to demonstrate the hopelessness of a conceptualization of a singular

image of ‘Beauty.’ Though, of course, in order to commercialise beauty there had to be a definitive example of it. The reader is told that it is “absurd to suppose that every variety of short and tall, grave and gay, young and old, must be dressed in one style” (Haweis, *Beauty* 16). Rather than fashion being used to hide non-conforming physical differences, Haweis advocated for the nurturing of such distinctions. Fashions that smothered such distinctions are said to be discriminatory, and Haweis complained how “difficult it is for a woman to be really well dressed, under the existing prejudice that everybody must be dressed like everybody else!” (*Beauty* 15). In the 1928 novel, *Orlando,* Virginia Woolf wrote: “Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than to merely keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us” (132). Haweis wrote similarly: “we no longer look upon a gown as a shield against wintry cold, or a modest veil drawn between ourselves and the outer world. We expect it to be a work of art” (*Beauty*, 12). When Woolf wrote about clothing in *Orlando* it became a vehicle to question gender identity. Haweis’ work, which was published well over forty years beforehand, does not address the same issues presented by Woolf, namely that gender and sex, while not mutually exclusive, have historically been seen as interchangeable. It does, however, bear similarities in the way that it perceived dress as an indicator of the self which is a tie between feminist discourses, and one that tethers Haweis to the concept. Scholarly work on sartorial themes in Victorian literature tends to focus on aesthetic novels, such as the works of Oscar Wilde, and rarely searches for the same themes in works deemed outside of the traditional canon. Advice manuals for women should certainly part of the study of dress and identity, though Haweis’ have only been studied in light of her contribution to the aestheticism movement. But, it is possible to unpick the written word of these manuals in order to unearth the complexities.

Haweis is undeniably harsh towards women who, in her opinion, have let themselves be conditioned into following fashion blindly. She berated their lack of independent views: "they think too little, or rather they don't think at all. If they thought a little more about dress, they would waste less time, and probably spend less money" (Haweis, *Beauty* 39). This last part is crucial as spending less money was a keynote in Haweis' literary works and also in her life. Haweis enjoyed fooling her peers when she styled herself to appear expensively dressed, but was in fact cleverly reusing parts of her costume. She boasted to her mother in a letter from 1881 that she had been "to some very grand parties lately, the Archbishop of Canterbury's & others" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 48) where the grey beads in her hair were mistaken for pearls. She also wrote to her mother that she attended a party hosted by Countess Stanhope where she wore "a cheap brown plush with petticoat of foreign stuff that Lady Murray gave papa: & Mrs. James will lend me her fine diamonds. And everybody thinks my dress worth £50" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 49). Chapter five of *The Art of Dress* is subtitled "Cheap Dress", and Haweis wrote, "For my part, I do not think that expensive dress is necessarily good dress: and the reverse of course holds true" (*Dress* 48). Dress had become an element of consumer culture, and a tool to facilitate profit for capitalism, but Haweis wrote extensively about 'economy' in dress. This is a curious choice for a woman who had to write in order to earn money. "Cheap Dress" undermined capitalist ideals and promoted, indirectly, liberation from social structures intended to entrap and make demands upon consumers. Haweis asked: "Who Turns the Wheel?" (*Dress* 61), inviting the reader to question why they were being led to believe that they should spend and what they can do with their power as a consumer to effect social change:

> ladies should remember that by trusting to the milliner's 'taste' (?) they are merely playing into the hands of various tradesmen whose interest it is to sell their

> goods, be they good or bad. The manufacturer's mill must be kept going, *therefore* the fashions must change; the milliner loves her perquisites, therefore she encourages every fashion which is of a kind to deceive the eye as to quantity of material. (*Beauty* 15)

Haweis advocated for a recycle and reuse approach to fashion. This differs from many assumptions made about members of the Victorian middle-class. Haweis called this 'conscious economy', in which dresses could be reused with simple and clever alterations. In "Cheap Dress" Haweis wrote about a woman who did just so: "she had worn that dress for five years on every conceivable occasion, with and without crafty appliances to make it sometimes an evening dress and sometimes an afternoon one, she unearthed five years' savings, which brought her a second: and then she enjoyed a best and second best velvet gown" (*Dress* 50). This woman seems remarkably similar to the author herself, as Haweis was familiar with having to economise by necessity. She needed to keep up appearances with, or more frequent *without*, a stable income. Money was something which Haweis and her husband frequently spoke of in their letters and a point of some clear contention. In 1895, Hugh Reginald wrote: "When I return I will do what I can to put money matters in order. Had the house been disposed of, the carriage suspended and a flat used for a year, as I suggested, things might have been easier, but you would not have enjoyed the advantages (not been exposed to the anxieties) you have had in my absence" (7/meh/5/3 77). It has already been discussed in chapter four how Haweis reacted to the necessity of leaving Queen's House, which was as integral to her identity as the clothes that she wore. It is clear that Haweis, who kept extensive account books and who wrote a housekeeping advice manual, in which she had worked out every expenditure necessary for keeping house, was not being lavish in her choice to remain there. Rather, this letter can be seen as a way in which Hugh

Reginald attempted to shift the blame for their money troubles onto Haweis', who kept Queen's House stylishly and continued to host her literary 'At Homes,' whilst Hugh Reginald travelled abroad to preach. Though, as has been established, Haweis contested her husband's claims that she was wasting money on the house and her ability to economise, evidenced in her published works, certainly supports this view.

Thus, Haweis offered her readers insight into her own philosophy of dress. She detailed crafty, innovative methods, such as using "a few new scraps of antique lace…rooted out of old pawn-shops" (*Dress* 51) to spruce up a dress. These methods challenge the commercialisation of clothing, which had been so integral to female identity throughout history. Haweis flipped the narrative, so that it was not prevailing fashion that dictated the identity of the wearer, so that it was not clothes that wore women but women who chose, cared for, and manipulated clothing. She advised women to control their clothing as each garment could be "cut, re-joined, dispersed, united" (Haweis, *Dress* 54) at their will. For Haweis, beauty and dress were art forms and it was her belief that "it is the People that must originate, that must discriminate, that must encourage Art" (*Beauty* 224). In her 1880 article for the important nineteenth-century magazine *The Art Journal*, Haweis wrote that there was "a diabolic charm in defying prejudices!" (Haweis, "AESTHETICS OF DRESS" 99). Dress was therefore one place in which Haweis recognised the potential for rebellion.

Mind, Body, and (Anti)Feminism

There is a hierarchy between mind and body that stems from the hierarchy that exists between masculine and feminine. The female body, seen only as the object of male sexual gratification, has been continuously misunderstood and disregarded. Female anatomy is therefore entrenched in a history of misinformation. From the wandering womb to the belief that female genital

mutilation would retain women's purity and modesty or that menstruation blood is dirty and by extension taboo, women's bodies have been continuously subject to discrimination. In Victorian England, the female body was being literally policed. With the passing of the Contagious Diseases Act in 1864, police officers could arrest women they suspected of being prostitutes and force them to comply with checks for venereal disease. If a woman was declared infected, she was incarcerated. It was only women sex workers who were subjected to an examination and later imprisonment whereas men could continue to take part in prostitution with impunity. This blatant inequality was protested by Josephine Butler who called the examination process steel rape. Women, of course, were not allowed to join the National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, despite the offense being on their bodies, and so Butler had to make her own. Whilst discussions surrounding women's bodies have been central to the liberation movement, there remains an inclination to trivialise them both in Haweis' lifetime and now. As Haweis wrote, "We have begun to think of the mind almost to the exclusion of the body" (*Beauty* 3). Women have been taken to pieces for generations. In her work *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf suggested that "culture stereotypes women to fit the myth by flattening the feminine into beauty-without-intelligence or intelligence-without-beauty; women are allowed a mind or a body but not both" (59). She then goes on to list a staggering number of examples of this binary opposition in writing by women, referencing *Emma*, *Middlemarch*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Northanger Abbey* to name just a few. Each novel presents two women that conform to the beauty myth's beauty-without-intelligence or intelligence-without-beauty dichotomy. It seems that this idea is ingrained into the cultural consciousness though in Haweis' *A Flame of Fire* it is less obvious. Aglae's foil Joyce Pringle is described as neither ugly or beautiful, clever or stupid. The narrator does not pit the two women against each other, but rather portrays both women in a

pitiable light. It is repeatedly stressed that Quekett "turns every one round his finger" (Haweis, *Flame* 132) which includes both Joyce and Aglae. The narrator reminds the reader of the two women's similarities, referencing the moment when Aglae was described as a small bird in a vice as Mrs. Dorriforth thinks of Joyce: "She is just one of the doomed birds" (Haweis, *Flame* 144).

Haweis' works, therefore, do not segment women into more palatable pieces. Instead, they present each woman as a picture with dress a way to finish the portrait. *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* encouraged women to have both beauty and intelligence. What Naomi Wolf suggests as a possible liberation from the beauty myth, Haweis was stating in her advice manuals years prior. In *The Beauty Myth*, Wolf writes that "Women will be free of the beauty myth when we can choose to use our faces and clothes and bodies as simply one form of self-expression out of a full range of others. We can dress up for our pleasure, but we must speak up for our rights" (274). Haweis presented a similar theory: "Dress bears the same relation to the body as speech does to the brain; and therefore dress many be called speech of the body" (*Beauty* 17). In light of this, it is arguable that Haweis is justified in placing importance on dress because she views it as an extension of free speech. She advised that dress should not take time away from other duties, which included "serious study, exercise, &c" (Haweis, *Dress* 10) but that women who wish "to climb at all, climb gracefully" (Haweis, *Beauty* 265). Her works are, however, restricted by the conflicts that arose in a period in which "an acceleration in the progress of feminism and its attendant imageries" was set against "representations of extravagant femininity in the highly decorative and seductive arena of high fashion" (Buckley and Fawcett 16). Thus, Haweis had to manage competing priorities: the need to sell verses her own beliefs.

As new practices began to create greater opportunities for women there seemed to be a pervading sense that Victorian womanhood would need to be sacrificed. Haweis sought to protect this gender norm by unifying it with new ideas about women and their roles outside the home: "it is perhaps, time to notice that the new views, whilst pointing to one truth, are in danger of eclipsing another…However important the mind may be in fitting woman for her place in the world, either individually or as the companion of a man, the body is hardly less important" (*Beauty* 4). Haweis' texts rarely polarise, and she does not advocate for one thing at the expense of another and therefore mind and body are equally as important to care for. This erosion of feminine cultural identity sparked a backlash from women writers such as Eliza Lynn Linton, whom Haweis referenced in these texts. In a section which seems to side with Linton's point of view, Haweis wrote "women are likely to spend money and time over their dress to the end of the chapter, the sternest censor may well join in the hope that not the girl of the period, but the woman of the future, will produce greater results" (*Beauty* 40). "The Girl of the Period" is described by Linton thusly:

> The Girl of the Period is a creature who dyes her hair and paints her face, as the first articles of her personal religion—a creature whose sole idea of life is fun; whose sole aim is unbounded luxury; and whose dress is the chief object of such thought and intellect as she possesses. Her main endeavour is to outvie her neighbours in the extravagance of fashion. No matter if, in the time of crinolines, she sacrifices decency; in the time of trains, cleanliness; in the time of tied-back skirts, modesty; no matter either, if she makes herself a nuisance and an inconvenience to every one she meets;—the Girl of the Period has done away

> with such moral muffishness as consideration for others, or regard for counsel and rebuke. (3)

Haweis advised against a number of these ideas and she also encouraged women to not be blind to fashion and nor to follow it without thought. However, she also contradicted Linton's derision. Rather than see a problem with painting the face, *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* actually advocated for it, along with a number of other cosmetic procedures. Haweis understood the assumptions society made about women with painted faces: "Possibly because paint is considered to be a characteristic of a certain showy vulgarity which we cannot wish to imitate, an unnecessary amount of contempt and contumely has been cast on cosmetics" (*Beauty* 196). She advised women to make use of cosmetics to even out complexions and to cover red spots and scars. She also mused on how dying the hair unnatural colours could be beautiful: "No one, as far as we can find out, has been bold enough since the old Saxon time to appear with blue or green hair. Yet it would probably be a pretty fashion, and to many faces becoming" (Haweis, *Beauty* 178). This is a view certainly ahead of her time. By contrasting Haweis with Linton it becomes clear that Wagner was correct to write in the book *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel* that "Victorian authors are vastly different, versatile, complicated, and often self-contradictory" (9). Whilst it may seem that Haweis is allying herself with Linton by referencing "The Girl of the Period" in her book, her views on cosmetics differed from those of Linton, and, as mentioned earlier, even from those of Cobbe. However, this is not to say that Victorian women did not use cosmetics as they surely did. First, the natural style of cosmetics was achieved by home-made recipes for the desired pale complexion. Domestic manuals provided recommendations such as "a concoction of bitter almonds, oxymurite of quicksilver and sal ammoniac to remove suntan" and "pimpernel water to blanch the complexion" (Marsh 21).The

other type was ‘painted’ and it was this that was associated with prostitution. The obvious use of make-up was provocative and considered indecent, but Haweis felt this to be a prejudiced assumption to make of any woman wearing make-up: “It seems to me an inexpressibly absurd and inconsistent ‘crack’ of modern middle-class society, that if an honest girl is known to use a *soupçon* of colour or tinted powder, she is sneered at and laughed at by her virtuous female friends” (*Beauty* 197). Haweis recognised that dress was a performance and in a society that equated inner goodness and morality with outer beauty, she stands out for her promotion of using cosmetics and styles to enhance beauty.

The hypocrisy that outer appearance reflected inner virtue is picked up famously by Braddon in the novel *Lady Audley’s Secret*. Victorian heroines had previously been displayed as good and kind through a description of their outer grace and beauty, but Braddon twists this expectation. Thus, Lady Audley was “loved, admired, and praised” because of her beauty. Her “soft and melting blue eyes; the graceful beauty of that slender throat and drooping head, with its wealth of showering flaxen curls” (Braddon 9) concealed an inner ugliness that Victorian readers were wholly unprepared for. It was blasphemous to propose that such child-like loveliness could hide a villainess from view. Braddon’s text can be seen to unearth nineteenth-century anxieties surrounding women’s appearance. Women who used make-up were likened to prostitutes, because their use of cosmetics to alter and change their faces destabilized patriarchal control over women. Make-up became a tool to challenge the male gaze, for it reinstated creative, beautifying, power to women. Thus, it was frequently portrayed to be the tool of the ‘fallen’ woman so that middle-class women would feel discouraged from using it. Haweis, conversely, endorsed the use of cosmetics to improve appearance. She told her readers “cosmetics have their use as well as their abuse (Haweis, *Beauty* 196), and then listed some examples of ‘proper use’

including applying rouge or white powder to even complexion, padding the dress to enhance the figure, replacing lost teeth, wearing false hair if one has thin hair, and plucking the eyebrows. She noted that her advice may be seen as somewhat radical, but called out society for the "contempt" that it had placed on the use of cosmetics. By using such methods women could enhance their appearance, and whilst this can also be seen as conforming to the standards of beauty set for women, it does perhaps suggest a way to rebel against the patriarchal assumption that outer beauty indicated inner beauty.

Tyrannical Dress: Corsets, Crinolines and Victorian Body Politics

Haweis' "Three Rules in Dress" section reads almost like a manifesto on women's liberty:

> Clothing having thus been elevated into a fine art, and called 'Dress,' three general rules must be observed in all good dress – 1.That it shall not contradict the natural lines of the body. 2. That the proportions of the dress shall obey the proportions of the body. 3. That the dress shall reasonably express the character of the wearer. The first rule implies comfort and health, which are indispensable to beauty; the second implies a sense of what proportion means; and the third appropriateness to habits and seasons, both also indispensable to beauty. Any costumes which impair or contradict the natural lines of the human frame are to be rejected as ugly, or injurious, or both; for they are the abuse of dress, not its proper use. (*Dress* 32)

Women protested against stringent rules imposed upon them in a multitude of ways (indeed, in any way that was available to them) and in Victorian England there was an emergence of political groups such as The Rational Dress Society who attempted to make the private censures

imposed on women's bodies cause for public concern. Haweis is often listed as a key member of the society, and her own policies laid out in *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* clearly inform the society's own set of dress rules. Laid out in *The Rational Dress Society's Gazette* these were:

> the introduction of any fashion in dress that either deforms the figure, impedes the movements of the body, or in any way tends to injure the health…the wearing of tightly-fitting corsets, of high-heeled or narrow-toed boots and shoes: of heavily-weighted skirts… of all tied-down cloaks or other garments impeding the movements of the arms. (1)

Dress reform was a pioneering movement which, in rejecting restrictive clothing, advocated for larger social freedoms for women. As Ledbetter wrote, those involved in dress reform were working towards "images of beauty that corresponded to the new freedoms" (134). As more women stepped away from the life that had been dictated as their duty, their clothing needed to reflect this. Clothing which was exploited by a fashion industry dictated by patriarchal demands was transformed into a tool of domination and by wearing what was deemed 'fashionable' women were physically impeded. Art has long been used to disrupt systems of oppression and to create opportunities for subversion. Historically, art has also had a role to play in resistance movements. This is obvious from the attempts by numerous authoritarian regimes to quash the dissemination of art. Restrictive, and often damaging, articles of clothing such as corsets, crinolines, and stays literally changed the natural structure of women's bodies and kept them inactive. These articles of clothing also enforced an image of beauty that kept women working towards a single goal – fitting in – in both a literal and metaphorical sense. Women forced themselves to work towards what was deemed attractive at the time, which for Victorian women

was a set of very specific standards, but they also squashed their bodies to fit into too-small garments and shoes all in the hope that they would fit into society and not be seen as 'other' and ostracised. Diet culture was, and still very much is, a tool for social control. Victorian women were expected to be modest, in both the physical and intellectual space that they occupied, but they were also expected to have a becoming plumpness in the right places. By preoccupying women with the goal of attaining this impossible figure, their bodies and their ideals were kept small. The 'beauty myth' is therefore "not about women at all. It is about men's institutions and institutional power" (Wolf 13). Falling below or above the dictated image of female perfection, be it too thin or too fat, too dark or too pale, was an extreme that signalled resistance to the status quo and it seems that this is what Haweis wanted to incite with her books. All women are invited by Haweis to "make a new stand in the face of fashion, that bugbear of the sex, and institute a new era!" (*Beauty* 91) and this stand must be against what Haweis named the 'abuse of dress'.

Haweis asked questions such as: "why, if fate has made one grow stouter than it is permitted to be, must she squeeze herself into the tightest of costumes because it is the fashion?" (*Beauty* 281), "Why this deadly dear of being conspicuous?" (*Beauty* 16) and "Why is one's individuality, so clear within, to be so confused without?" (*Beauty* 16). The answers to these questions are as complex as the questions themselves, though it can be generally supposed that generations of patriarchal rule have inflicted censures upon women's bodies. Tight-lacing and corsetry were a manifestation of patriarchal control, and one which Haweis called "a machine that, pretending to be a servant is, in fact, a tyrant" (*Beauty* 48). The way in which she described the corset is intriguing for she says that it is pretending to be of aid, that in "aspiring to embrace, hugs like a bear – crushing the ribs, injuring the lungs and heart, the stomach, and many other internal organs" (Haweis, *Beauty* 48). Haweis wrote about corsets and stays in a way that

suggests they have become spoiled and misused – that though they have the potential to be useful in terms of support they have become twisted to another purpose. The language she used exemplified her knowledge as a woman with first-hand experience of wearing corsets as she spoke of supporting the female form rather than controlling it. Haweis therefore does not deny "the necessity for some close-fitting garment as a support to the body" (*Beauty* 48) but not at the cost of health and liberty. Corsets and stays, as they were being advertised and used in her lifetime, were "to blame for the first and greatest defect of modern appearance – the grotesque outline of the body – and many a dire disease (Haweis, *Beauty* 48).

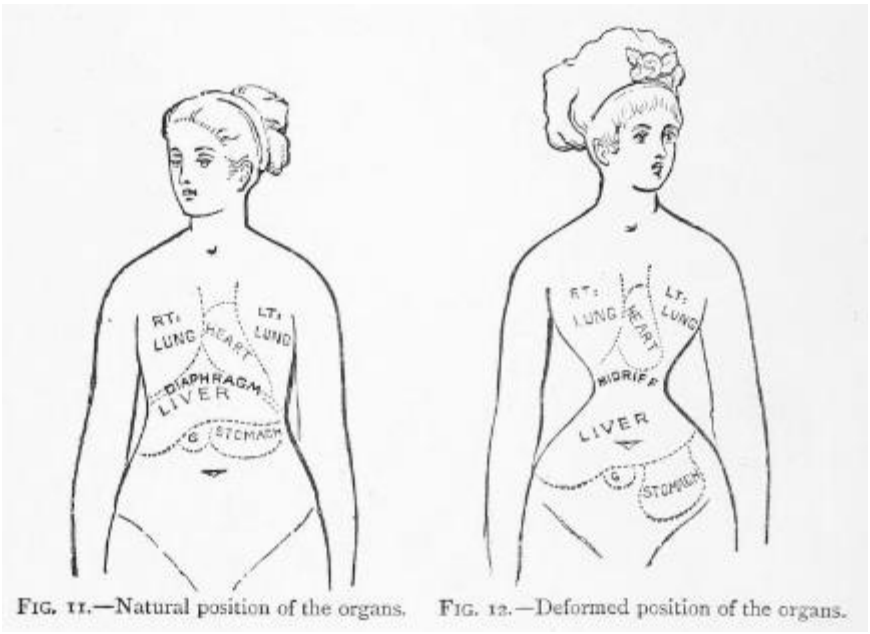

FIG. 11.—Natural position of the organs. FIG. 12.—Deformed position of the organs.

Figure 6: "What Stays Cost Us." Illustration for *The Art of Beauty*, p. 50. Via Internet Archive Online 27 Sept 2022.

In this way, Haweis' text is reminiscent of another book with beauty in the title, and published just the year before - *Black Beauty*. There are corresponding links between Haweis' text with the novel that highlighted one of the numerous ways that women's rights and animal rights were entwined in the Victorian age. Many notable campaigners for women's rights were

also animal right's activists, and alongside publishing articles for the advancement of their sex also sought fairer treatment for animals. Women, like animals, had long been treated as inferior by men and suffered under this inequality. Haweis herself was opposed to vivisection, stating that it was a "hideous cruelty" and that animals should be seen as "fellow creatures" ("Anti-Vivisection" 244). In a section of "Current News" in the *Women's Penny Paper* in 1891 Haweis' stance on the mistreatment of horses is also clear. She is said to have placed a placard on the gates of her home requesting that bearing reins be loosened on tied horses. It was also reported that she wished to see "the huge and heavy bits and bearing reins now in fashion be discontinued altogether" ("Current News" 620). Sewell proposed that her novel was the "autobiography of a horse", but it has been more frequently read as a feminist text with strong resemblances between the confining fashions inflicted upon horses and those imposed upon Victorian women. There is also a link to slavery in *Black Beauty* which further supports the argument presented in chapter one, where Haweis' novel, informed by both Wollstonecraft and Mill, presents marriage as a form of slavery. In her essay on the novel, "Horses and Corsets: 'Black Beauty,' Dress Reform, and the Fashioning of the Victorian Woman", Dorré asserts that "Beauty's breaking in…resembles the induction of a girl into womanhood, complete with a code of postures, manners, and appropriate accoutrement" (170). There is a particular linking between the horse's bridle and bit and crinolines and stays in the novel. Beauty is forced to wear the "great piece of cold hard steel" that is "held fast there by straps" *(*Sewell 14). Historically, there are examples of the equating of women with animals - the scold's bridle, which Haweis herself mentions, was literally an instrument of torture specifically designed for use on women, for example. The parallels between the experience of women who were taught from a young age to wear their corsets, and later crinolines or stays is clear. Sewell entreated her readers to sympathize with the

ill-effect this paraphernalia has on horses and Haweis entreated her readers to comprehend how detrimental tight lacing was to the female body. Both are aware of bad taste in fashion. Sewell proposed “fashion is one of the wickedest things in the world” (36) condemning the bearing-reins because they served no purpose except for appearance. Haweis also despised frivolous fashions that served no use: “anything that looks useful and is useless is bad, and the more obviously artificial a thing is, the worst it must always be” (*Beauty* 30). Thus, the unnatural or artificial shape achieved through tight-lacing and stays is scorned, for they were “vicious habits which are sapping the comfort of the present generation and the mental and physical wellbeing of the next one” (Haweis, *Dress* 34). Haweis explicitly criticized women who conformed to hazardous fashions: “women have no right to injure their health in order to enhance their beauty” (*Beauty* 199). She had no compassion for such women, stating plainly that “a girl who starves herself in order to acquire a ‘genteel’ pallor, or who goes in for being delicate, deserves the ill health she courts” (Haweis, *Beauty* 199). Haweis irrefutably believed that beauty had power and that these damaging practices created ugliness which she clearly associated with an unfortunate, perhaps even contemptible, lack of power. By working towards her goal, of turning clothing into a fine art, dress could become weaponized in the same way that other arts such as literature or music had been to combat the violence being enacted upon women’s bodies.

Gendered Texts, Fashion History

Socrates’ answer to the question of the value that should be put on the body is a simple one: “cares of the body” such as “fine clothes and shoes and the other personal adornments” are negligible. Indeed, he goes so far as to say, “I think the true philosopher would despise them” ("Plato") but the philosophical ideal of transcending the physical body is a display of male privilege. By dismissing worldliness the philosopher can achieve a higher state of being and

become more closely allied with the purity of the mind and soul. Disdaining material matters, the so-called "personal adornments", is far easier for middle-class men who have been historically categorised by their clothing to a lesser degree. Fashion is derided for its intimate connection with the body. Not concerning oneself with fashion, or claiming not to, is a privilege because clothing is what frequently identifies a person as part of a distinct social group, or in a distinct position. Male philosophers may deem a preoccupation with dress as trivial, but they are also less likely to have their social status, or identity, questioned. Women continue to dress a certain way so that they are perceived in a certain way. It is unrealistic to suggest that one ought not to worry about outward appearances, at least in Haweis' opinion: "the old-fashioned notion that a woman's first duty is to be beautiful, is one that is justifiable by the utter impossibility of stamping it out" (*Beauty* 4). Wollstonecraft wrote of women, "instead of hardening their minds by the severer principles of reason and philosophy, we breed them to useless arts, which terminate in vanity and sensuality" (*Vindication* 6). A comparison between the terms 'useless arts' and 'the art of beauty' unearths distinctions between these two women writers who appear, at first glance, to share the same ideas and goals. Haweis was certainly a student of Wollstonecraft, echoing her writings in *A Flame of Fire*, and going so far as to employ Wollstonecraft's language in the forewords to the novel. Yet, in their writing about fashion, beauty, and dress they seem to have differed. Haweis believed that in England there existed "a fossilised prejudice against 'vanity'" (*Beauty* 257). For Haweis, vanity meant "A certain innocent wish to look one's best" and was "another name for self-respect" (*Beauty* 257). Naomi Wolf suggested that "women's desperation for beauty is derided as narcissism" even though they are expected and encouraged to pursue it and continued to suggest that women are "desperate to hold on to a sexual centre that no one threatens to take away from men" (259). Men's gender

identity is less tied to their desirability, and is therefore less in danger of being stripped from them when they age, or are seen as ugly. This hypocrisy affected women of Haweis' time and continues into the present day. It was Haweis' hope that "the day will soon come when it will no longer be a slur on a good woman, old or young, to say 'She thinks a great deal of dress; she attaches enormous importance to aesthetics'" (*Dress* 125). For Haweis, vanity was not a dirty word. The arguments swirling around fashion are as unstable and changeable as fashion itself. Dress rejects the notion of a single enduring truth because it evolves with the passing of time. The opposing views of these two female writers exemplify the arguments within feminism itself which alternate between seeing fashion as enslaving and seeing it as liberating. Fashion was, and continues to be, restrictive - for Victorian women in the forms of heavy skirts, high heels and corsets - yet paradoxically it can also be used to set free self-expression.

That Haweis liked aspects of corsetry and disliked other aspects is not the first, nor the last, contrary view expressed in her advice manuals. Such contrasting notions are often present in women's writing for the periodical press, and it must be remembered that, specifically, *The Art of Beauty* is a reproduction of articles which originally appeared in *St. Paul's Magazine*. This was a space of literary liberation certainly, but the periodical was mandated by the adherence to domestic ideals. These ideals had been perpetuated for years through the ideology of separate spheres. Women's entry into the profession was authorized by their ability to subscribe to a certain type of writing deemed appropriate for their sex. Ledbetter suggests that periodical writing inevitably gave rise to such contradictions as "women became intelligently engaged in politics…without wanting to disturb their roles as wife and mother" (135). By creating a space for themselves in the periodical press they were challenging the prescribed roles Victorian society gave women, yet they were not completely free from the private sphere as they brought it

with them into their public lives. The topics women writers were justified in discussing, and advising on, were mandated by patriarchal society. In this sense, such women writers were hardly breaking new ground. However, this distinct form of feminine discourse meant that women could reach out to each other through their writing. It fostered a community, a private space where women could converse and where men were excluded. Kortsch called these types of works 'gendered texts', and *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* certainly offered a "type of feminine knowledge in Victorian social practice" that was "utilized as an alternative to mainstream, patriarchal discourse" (4). Published again in an expensively bound form, the original articles that constitute *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* found the distinctive readership of female middle-class readers. The feminine content in Haweis' instruction manuals excluded the male reader and the focus is instead turned to shared female experience.

Haweis was keen to uncover and write about the unique history of women. This is clearly evidenced in the fragmentary writings kept in the Haweis Family Fonds archive. There are drafts and notes on women in myth as well as women and Christianity, alongside "fragments on the plight of the modern woman". The substantial manuscript "The History of Woman", which was discussed in chapter two, has five chapters titled 'Platriarchate and Patriarchate', 'Operation of a Matriarchate', 'Women in the Human Sacrifices', 'The Ancient Matriarchate', and 'Christianity vs. Christ'. As shown in chapter two, ancient history certainly informed Haweis' own views on the suffrage. She later produced a number of article-length pieces on royal women in a clear attempt to preserve the achievements of notable women of the day. She wrote about the Empress Frederick (this piece, it seems, was commissioned by her editor), the Queen of Italy (whom she had met personally), the Princess Christian, the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg, and the Duchess of Albany. These women were clearly examples of what Haweis considered to be perfect

womanhood. They were all intelligent, well dressed, and actively involved in charitable work. The Duchess of Albany was the co-founder of the Deptford Fund; the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg opened an establishment for those with mental illnesses; the Princess Christian was one of the founding members of the British Red Cross; Empress Frederick was a member of an association founded to improve women's education and the Queen of Italy was a benefactor of hospitals and founded the first library for the blind in Florence. Of these women she wrote similar praises. The Empress Frederick was described as "a woman with the strongest powers of endurance, of affection felt and inspired, a spiritually minded woman" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 171). Queen Margherita of Savoy "found new avenues for women's labour and women's safety throughout the benedetta terra…revived the lost and lovely art of lace-making…restored the embroidery-trade, in all its delicate branches; founded asylums for poor little waifs and strays" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 188). Princess Helena is praised for her contributions to "literary and charitable pursuits" and being "chiefly associated with the Royal School of Needlework (Haweis, *Words to Women* 199). The Duchess of Saxe-Coburg's "domestic affections and occupations, and her kindness to the poor in Coburg, have made her there thoroughly loved" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 221). Lastly, Princess Helen is "something far nearer to the old-fashioned ideal of girlhood – bright, happy, contented…She was highly and carefully educated" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 226). Haweis detailed the lives and works of these exemplary women so that they "may afford to many with wavering feet, who have never before thought about responsibility, a revelation of duties perceived and performed; and to many still 'weaker vessels' as example of godly life" (*Words to Women* 234).

Haweis' writing on female history focused upon aspects of traditional womanhood that were combined with an education afforded to the few, and not the many, in the nineteenth

century. Exemplary women are those who were intelligent and empathetic. They were involved in charity work, and also remembered and upheld historically significant pastimes for women – embroidery and needlework being listed specifically. Haweis implied that women have lost part of this cultural identity, and that the surrender of this has led to their current disenfranchised state. Korte presented the view that "magazines in which women's interests are the "the basis for production" constitute a "feminised space" also for the presentation of history" (425). Haweis certainly used the sanctioned space of the periodical to discuss her historical findings. She focused on cultural history, referencing the dress of the past. She produced an article for *The Contemporary Review* in 1883 titled "Colours and Cloths of the Middle Ages" for example. In *The Art of Beauty*, Haweis analysed costumes and fashions of the past to show what could, and should, be imitated. She referenced Anglo-Saxon, Greek, Roman and Elizabethan clothing and illustrated the chapter with the style of dress worn in each century.

Haweis held the dress of the Middle Ages in the highest esteem, particularly the High Middle Ages from the eleventh century onwards, deeming it "very graceful and appropriate" (*Beauty* 78). Haweis referenced the Middle Ages to prove the point that beauty equalled power at one point in human history. Women wielded a mystical, spiritual, power over men: "the part which beauty played in the Middle Ages was a very real one. Woman, whose loveliness so swayed men, was at one time treated with something like divine honours, mistress as she was of the chief civilizing influence of the time (Haweis, *Beauty* 6). The 'civilizing influence' is what Haweis found so praiseworthy about the 'Royal Women' whom she wrote about. Through the analysis of Haweis' memoranda across this thesis, her personal life has been shown to be tumultuous. The promotion for peaceful, oftentimes passive, feminine influence in *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* is therefore in conflict with the life that the writer herself lived.

Consider the way that she addressed her son: “I hear indirectly of your looking slovenly and unshorn in the street – dirty collar etc. This must not be. You cannot go on living at Q House if you are not careful about appearances” (7MEH/5/4 85). Haweis wrote that a man is the “warlike breadwinner” who could “only fight in battle, or wring treasure by force” (*Beauty* 6). But again, she is a study in contradictions because Haweis frequently referred to herself in militaristic ways, signing off letters as “Your affectionate Mother and Soldier” (7MEH/5/4 86). She wrote of herself: “I always wear chain armour under my coat so to speak, & then people cannot tell when such unaccountable things wound me” (7MEH/5/1, “Thought Book I” 24), and “I am the heroine of this family you know, and nurse a secret revolver of my own” (7MEH/5/4 29). This militaristic language conflicts with Haweis’ fondness for the genteel female figure in medieval history, and will be discussed further in chapter six.

Haweis contended that beauty was celebrated by the Greeks who “considered beauty so essentially a divine boon, that the mother prayed to Zeus that her child might be before all things beautiful” (*Beauty* 5). Haweis used history to demonstrate the progress, or lack thereof, that women of her own time had made since. In a text about how to dress, history becomes a way for her to write more than just fashion advice, but a way to reflect on the position women occupied in society. Korte has noted that often women writers would let their readers “observe how women…had dressed and styled themselves differently – and often far less modestly – in the past” in order to showcase “historically different conceptions and performances of the gendered body” (429). By pointing out how women lived in certain periods of history Haweis’s works showcase just how little advancement had been made. Women had been weakened, she asserted, and had forgotten that “knowledge is power; beauty and knowledge combined are well-nigh all-powerful” and that “both belonged to woman” (Haweis, *Beauty* 7). Haweis focused upon the

morality of dress for the Greek woman versus the Victorian woman, drawing a parallel between the two. Greek dress, she claimed, was the epitome of style, the "finest costume ever worn" (Haweis, *Beauty* 45). Haweis studied Greek dress at the British Museum and sketched from marble statues kept there for her books:

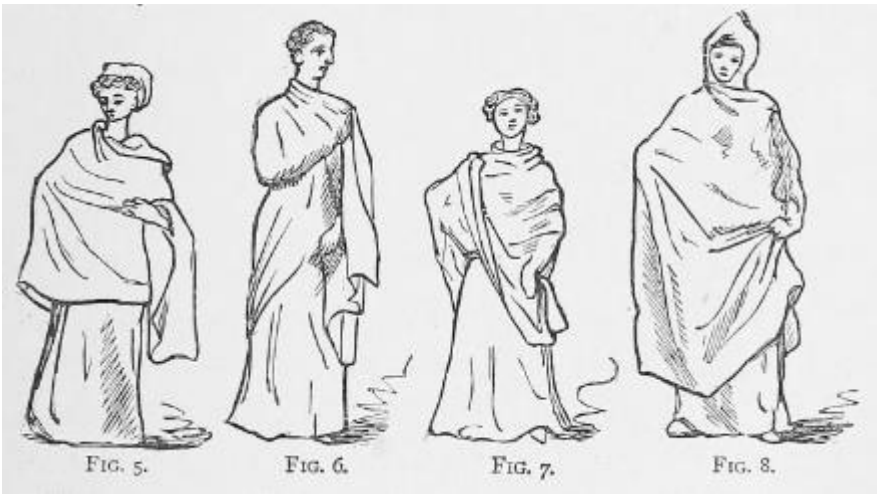

Figure 7: "Clay figures in the British Museum." Illustration for *The Art of Beauty*, p.47. Via Internet Archive Online 27 Sept 2022.

She wrote that the Greeks were "proud of their beautiful bodies…and the sexes mingled in free and honest companionship, clad only in a thin stola" (Haweis, *Beauty* 26) but that this would be "impossible in nations who have lost to a great extent the simple instinct of natural beauty, whilst they have grown abnormally self-conscious and reflective" (Haweis, *Beauty* 26). Her own society she criticized for the associations they had, falsely in her opinion, attributed to the naked form. Her texts therefore challenge the notions of Victorian propriety: "our own fashions are open to juster criticism, when they seem to admit an impropriety by displaying a part only, just enough to hint at the rest, as though conscious of something wrong" (Haweis, *Beauty* 26). The censoring of the female form is another of the restrictions that women were forced to comply

with that Haweis protested in a text that was thought to be written with the sole intention of explaining to a woman how to get a husband. Certainly, Haweis offered this advice but to reduce these intelligent, well researched, books to this one goal is too simplistic and hinders a comprehensive recovery of this marginalised writer.

To conclude this chapter, *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* are some of Haweis' best-known texts, both in her lifetime and now, and have hallmarked her as one of the first female aesthetic writers of the period. They are used frequently, though anecdotally, in many books about Victorian dress and aesthetics. Indeed, it is quite difficult to read a work about Victorian dress without finding a reference to Haweis' *The Art of Beauty*. What these texts do inordinately well is challenge the assumptions one might make about a book of beauty and clothing advice for women of the nineteenth century. *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Dress* take aesthetic practices, typically assigned to those of an acclaimed, masculine artistic background and teach everyday middle-class women to use them to dress themselves. They foster independent thought and the freedom to choose whilst subtly questioning and challenging practices that are harmful to the advancement of women's rights. Haweis' feminist mission is more overt in the modes of writing geared towards activism but this chapter has unpicked the threads of progressive ideals perhaps obscured by the details of bustles, hats and shoes to showcase how Haweis continued to object to practices which suppressed women's autonomy even in her domestic writing. These two advice manuals protest against tight-lacing and advocate for progressive ideals, such as the use of cosmetics and manipulating clothing to enhance the visible identity of the wearer. As Tamara Wagner has stressed, the way forwards from a focus on feminism versus anti-feminism is to "look for broader and more diverse histories to complicate and revise the now outmoded binary" (33). In listing the number of ways these texts protest

oppressive fashions and practices it would be remiss to exclude a summary of the more conservative ideas that have arisen in the chapter. Indeed, Haweis' views on ugliness and her commitment to the institution of marriage in these texts sit outside this argument and are difficult to reconcile with. Nevertheless, they are important aspects of the texts and they certainly aid in complicating and diversifying both this account of Haweis' aesthetic writing and, by extension, women's writing. Haweis's beauty and dress advice manuals offer the opportunity to expand the parameters of this thesis, and are necessary to the framework which questions how useful categories are when recovering the work of Victorian women writers. Haweis' aesthetic texts complicate binaries and present an example of her range as a writer. In the first pages of *The Art of Dress* Haweis stated that "fashion is no phantasy of idle minds, no random despot, but a tendency worth study" (13) and then she proceeded to show her reader precisely how to use it.

Chapter Six

Women's Work and *The Art of Housekeeping* (1889)

"Few tasks are more similar to the torment of Sisyphus than those of the housewife" (Beauvoir 487)

The Victorian housewife, as an historic figure, has been studied, scrutinised and pitied extensively in scholarship but there is a new focus emerging which views this figure not in a pitiable or critical light. Instead, this new approach seeks to let the everyday woman, "a figure traditionally on the periphery of history and criticism, but now reclaimed as a multi-faceted and powerful index of the complexities of Victorian articulations of class and gender identity" (Boardman 150), speak. The housewife, whose work was the managing of the family home, is as relevant today as she was in the nineteenth century and debates surrounding the perceptions of women's work continues. Women's work is associated with stereotypical jobs that have traditionally belonged to the female sex and it is set up in direct opposition to 'men's work'. The latter has been seen as more valuable, and crucially more visible. Men work where others can see them; in public offices and roles, their work is confrontational and noticeable. Women's work, whilst typically not being included in official statistics on labour, happens behind closed doors. It is quiet and invisible. Women's work is also, significantly, unpaid. For Haweis, it was as significant as the public work of men. This chapter will utilise *The Art of Housekeeping* to understand Haweis' position on the figure of the housewife. Through a reading of this text it is possible to discern, more explicitly than in the other manuals, how domestic life was viewed by Haweis. The invisible work undertaken by the majority of women at the time of the books' writing and publication will be examined, and the reality of the housewife's contribution to society, which arguably Haweis' manual sought to vindicate, is demonstrated. Housekeeping is

an intrinsic piece of the mosaic which makes up the picture of Haweis presented in this thesis. She was fastidious about keeping her own house. The importance of Queen's House to this writer was established in chapter four, but this chapter will continue to showcase the important bond Haweis had to the home. Her role as housewife, or household manager, is a key component of her identity and this book, which has been largely overlooked, is therefore essential to this work of recovery.

Any discussion of Victorian domestic manuals concerning the household cannot exclude the most famous of works from this period. *Mrs Beeton'*s *Book of Household Management* (1861) sold sixty-thousand copies in its first year, highlighting the contemporary demand for these types of books. It was followed by numerous books in a similar vein, but has retained the chief position in scholarship as emblematic of Victorian etiquette and domestic advice manuals. Beeton's book created a tradition for women writers, which popularised a form of literature in which they were automatically authorities. Published in 1861, when Haweis was thirteen, Beeton's work is one which she would have undoubtedly grown up reading and then, later, turned her own hand at writing. Despite the popularity of these sorts of advice manuals, evidenced by Beeton's success, *The Art of Housekeeping* does not seem to have sold very well. In a letter to her son in April 1894, Haweis asked:

> I wonder whether you could do anything about my "Art of Housekeeping" a useful book in which I am being shamefully diddled, the publishers not advertising it at all, and consequently sales nearly nil and no money coming in. She then suggested, "If you have libraries or booksellers and could get them to take a fewscore copies I could send them out and pay the bookseller a fair percentage. (7MEH/5/4 115)

This suggestion highlights Haweis' business acumen, an element which will be returned to later in this chapter. Beeton begins her book by listing the numerous qualities that the housewife must possess. She must be an early riser, frugal, good tempered, well and suitably dressed, charitable, and benevolent towards servants. In chapter one, Beeton lists forty-five essential responsibilities of the mistress of the house, from writing letters to hosting a dinner and ball. "Of all those acquirements, which more particularly belong to the feminine character, there are none which take a higher rank, in our estimation, than such as enter into a knowledge of household duties" (1) wrote Beeton, before quoting from *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). This novel was widely read by the Victorians, and suitably focused upon themes of family, social class, and religion. The novel adheres strictly to traditional gender norms of the eighteenth century, many of which continued into the nineteenth, and Beeton informed the reader that "we are borne out by the author…who says: –"The modest virgin, the prudent wife, and the careful matron are much more serviceable in life than petticoated philosophers, blustering heroines, or virago queans" (1). By referencing this work Beeton calls attention to her own traditional views of femininity. The image of the housewife that writers such as Beeton created in their works is stalwart as opposed to vulnerable. Most interestingly, they are, as Goldsmith claimed, serviceable. Yet, the housewife's service to family and home are at best dismissed by society as trivial, or at worst used to condemn her to the realm of the anti-feminist. Domesticity has been seen as the province of the nineteenth-century anti-feminist, largely as a result of studies on Eliza Lynn Linton, Margaret Oliphant, and similar anti-suffragist writers in the nineteenth century. These 'anti-feminist' writers have been neglected in favour of more subversive female figures, which is in fact an unrepresentative approach that silences women's voices. The work that is being done to recover women, particularly women writers, who do not fit this category pushes the boundaries

of feminism, which women writers tend to be placed within, wider. For example, Broomfield's article "Much More Than An Antifeminist: Eliza Lynn Linton's Contribution to the Rise of Victorian Popular Journalism" (2001) is a convincing account of Linton that works to break her free of the category of anti-feminist: "Confinement of Linton to this one paradigm unfortunately obscures the importance of the role she played in the development of popular journalism at mid-century" (267). Research into women's work and domestic literature therefore enriches the study of women's writing, as is evidenced by the contribution that *The Art of Housekeeping* makes to this work of recovery.

Nina Auberbach wrote that "Victorian womanhood is most delectable as a victim, but the victim consecrates herself into a queen with disturbing alacrity" (35) which explains the phenomenon that has occurred when viewing the housewife figure. She is often thought of as soft, idle, and pampered as a direct result of the social sphere in which she is trapped. However, housekeeping advice manuals disprove this theory as they conversely present a woman who must be extremely hard working, determined and thrifty. Thus, she "consecrates herself into a queen" because understanding 'women's work' changes the image of the trapped wife into an active household manager. The reality of housekeeping could not be further from the image of the angelic figure presiding over the Victorian hearth, which is something that Haweis acknowledges. "Most," she wrote "recognise the value of the angel in the house, who is not too angelic to know what goes on in the kitchen, down to the very drains" (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 5). Drains are, in fact, given their own section in the book. It is advised that women, "understand the drainage of your own house yourself" (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 15). Alongside the information about drains is a number of sections devoted to aiding the female reader to understand many unsavoury elements of domesticity which, conveniently, did not make it into Coventry Patmore's

famous poem. Haweis devotes almost ten pages to pests and vermin, citing ways to be rid of black beetles, fleas, flies, ants and rats. She wrote in detail, advising extensive cleaning practices and stated that “no mistress can be considered a fit house-keeper who permits one cockroach in her kitchen” (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 44). Thus, there is a vast disparity between the ideal, the so-called Angel in the house, and the reality of keeping said house. This reality is one which, arguably, men in the nineteenth century were kept closeted from. In fact, *The Art of Housekeeping* confirms prevailing thought that separate spheres ideology did not serve to pamper women, but men. The home, viewed in nineteenth-century terms, was a place of peace for men but how women created this space was deliberately overlooked. The private sphere was not created as a place of protection for women, but rather as a space of blissful ignorance for men who should not have to know “the seamy side of domesticity” (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 34).

Feminist literary theory has often taken a cue from Virginia Woolf, who famously wrote “Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer” (Bradshaw 142). The Angel had to be killed, Woolf argued, because she inhibited freedom of thought. Woolf found that women could not write if they were tied to the angel, to a passive ideal of womanhood, but the housekeeping manuals of the late nineteenth century showed that women writers could dispel the associations of passivity and subservience that plagued the angel in the house. After she has metaphorically killed the angel, Woolf continued, “The Angel was dead; what then remained? You may say that what remained was a simple and common object--a young woman in a bedroom with an inkpot. In other words, now that she had rid herself of falsehood, that young woman had only to be herself” (Bradshaw 142) and then she posits the question “Ah, but what is "herself"?” (Bradshaw 142). Woolf’s point is, of course, that having rid herself of the false notions of femininity she then had to discover her own true identity as a

woman. Woolf's advice is apt, but not necessarily applicable to all women. For example, if a woman identifies herself by a tie to the home, if she is both a housewife and a writer, can she identify herself having killed the angel? Especially if, as it is possible to observe from Haweis' comment about the reality of housekeeping, the angel was in fact multifaceted. In order to rediscover Haweis as a woman writer this question of what it is to be a woman has been revisited continually throughout the thesis, and it is clear that Haweis identified herself through her connection to the home and traditionally feminine vocations. As it was with Griselda, so it is with the angel who is too important a figure to kill. Instead, she can be used as a tool to aid in the understanding, and analysis, of Haweis as a woman and as a writer.

The Art of Housekeeping is a book in which Haweis draws together her twenty years of experience in housekeeping to advise, and to warn, the younger generation of wives. The book is crucial because it was published on the cusp of the tension that came to a head between Haweis and Hugh Reginald in the 1890s. In a letter to his son, Hugh Reginald complained that he had "no home, no warm corner in one's own house, no soul there who is not hostile or contemptuous" and that "this hits me hard because people have always liked me…I care really for no one and nothing when the household gods are broken" (7MEH/5/4 181). Thus, the advice which Haweis offered in her book to keep a "pleasant, and pretty sanctum, for both husband and wife" (*Housekeeping* 34) is at odds with her own living situation. Frequently, women writers of the nineteenth century say one thing, but do another. Clearly, the unity presented in the book between husband and wife was missing from the Haweis home. Haweis thus creates an idealised, perfect home which she maintains is possible through the practices which she lists in the book and by a healthy relationship between members of the household. Hugh Reginald wrote that the "household gods are broken" and no doubt took this phrasing from Ruskin, whom he read and

whose books he had, many years before, recommended to Haweis. Ruskin's *Sesame And Lilies* claimed that "wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her" (75) and asserted that the home was a place of shelter and peace. Ruskin stated, "in so far as it is not this, it is not home…But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods" (*Sesame* 91) then it is a true home. Whilst Haweis may not have been keeping to this Ruskinian ideal of the home which her husband plainly desired, she still very much saw herself at the centre of the home and its management. Hugh Reginald wrote that he felt ostracised from the home, but Haweis continued to write of the home as she always had done. She does not criticise the role of the housewife, despite the high possibility that she had already written *A Flame of Fire* and was, therefore, under no illusions about matrimony. She still viewed women's work as exceptionally important.

The Art of Housekeeping is dedicated to 'Mrs. Brown' and the quotation marks denote that this is a fictional character, and is therefore most plausibly the character from Dickens' *Dombey and Son*. Mrs Brown is the antithesis of a good housekeeper and her slovenly home is described by Dickens as "a shabby little house, as closely shut up as a house that was full of cracks and crevices could be…there was a great heap of rags of different colours lying on the floor, a heap of bones, and a heap of sifted dust or cinders" (Dickens, *Dombey* 51). Mrs Brown is a greedy woman, who tricks and steals from the heroine Florence. Haweis thus humorously devotes her book to the worst housekeeper she can reference signifying that this is an educational work intended to transform even the most hopeless of housekeepers into artists. Perhaps one of the most remarkable features of this work, in comparison to her other advice manuals, is that Haweis acknowledges her own fallibility. Whereas *The Art of Beauty* or *The Art of Decoration* are written from Haweis' knowledge of art and aestheticism which she had gained from a very

young age, *The Art of Housekeeping* is a response to her own naivety and the mistakes that she made when first keeping her own household. In April 1868, Haweis wrote an entry to her diary for the first time since her marriage to Hugh Reginald:

> I have been engaged, and am married…In the first weeks there was much doubt and distress, disappointment almost discontent. I suppose there is always much to forgive when a being bred in a bottle is first married. But it is forgiven now, it was real sorrow, but I will not write it down, because it will never quite lose its sting unwritten and recorded it might grow painful again. (7MEH/5/4 4)

Haweis, therefore, does not write in her 'Though Book' about the difficulties that she faced as a new bride but would later come to write *The Art of Housekeeping* where she detailed a number of ways to avoid the "doubt and distress" she herself encountered. Therefore, she told her reader that she hoped they would "test (and improve upon) my experience" (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 11) so that they could become the rulers of their own households. Haweis repeated the words written in her diary, which in *The Art of Housekeeping* she called the "two other D's" or the "dismay and distress a little later on, when the man finds that his idol does not know how to use his money or supervise his comfort" (*Housekeeping* 3). This was a phrase which Haweis seemed to be fond of, having written an article for *Temple Bar* titled "The Two D's; or, Decoration and Dress" (1883). Much as *A Flame of Fire* can be read as autobiographical fiction, allowing Haweis to voice her marital frustrations in a less personal manner so too can *The Art of Housekeeping* be read as a way for Haweis to voice the "doubt and distress" she encountered shortly after, and as a direct result of, her marriage.

The Art of Housekeeping begins "My dear child. – This book is not intended for young ladies who marry for money, or who think it ridiculous to do anything for the home provided for them by an injudicious admirer, and vote it quite a disgrace to look at every sixpence before flinging it into the gutter" (Haweis 1). From the outset, Haweis is clear that *The Art of Housekeeping* should be taken seriously. She does not, as she did with her earlier manuals, begin with a treatise on art and aestheticism but rather a stern explanation as to how the book should be used. She lists three types of young ladies for whom the book is written, including: "a sensible and right-minded girl…marrying from a respectable home perchance before she has had time to assimilate all her mother's lessons", "the girl who may be removed by early marriage far, very far away, from the ready helping hand that might strengthen her if nearer", and "the girl who has been suddenly flung at the head of a house without any preparation at all" (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 1). The book therefore becomes a communal space for shared experience, passed down from one woman, Haweis, to her female readers. Haweis presents herself as a mother figure for her readers, even titling the introductory section of the book 'to my daughter'. This type of shared knowledge can be seen being passed down from mother to daughter in the letters between Haweis and her own mother. In October 1868 Haweis wrote to her mother for housekeeping advice, presumably from the address of her first home in Welbeck street, asking about the prices of silks and "How long ought a house flannel to last?" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 1). Perhaps denied the ability to pass down her own knowledge due to the strained relationship that she had with Hugolin, Haweis instead produced this manual and dedicated the knowledge contained within to her daughter. Haweis, it seems, was never able to instil in her daughter the importance that she herself placed on the affairs of women. Hugolin was arguably thought of as spoilt by Haweis, who accuses Hugh Reginald of overindulging their daughter.

From the accounts of the family, Hugolin appeared to be a social, active person who did not like being confined to the home. Haweis ended the introduction: “Now, if you are in a sufficiently serious state of mind, we can proceed at once to business, remembering that in the following pages I am not descending to jokes and theories, nor are my remarks intended for silly scatterbrains” (*Housekeeping* 11). Housekeeping she explicitly states is ‘business’ thus immediately rejecting the idea that keeping house is a leisure activity. In this way, *The Art of Housekeeping* can be linked to *Rus in Urbe* as gardening is also presented by Haweis as a vigorous activity and not as a part of an innate ‘womanly’ proclivity which can therefore be dismissed and erased. It soon becomes evident that this is not a book which idealises running a house. Nor is it a book which spends any time on romantic notions. Haweis almost immediately teaches the reader how to calculate their income, and the logical and analytical language employed sets the tone for the rest of the book. “Regulate your style of living from the smallest average you can obtain of the income at your disposal, and live well within that” (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 7), she informed her reader before laying out an example of such a calculation based on an income of 500 pounds.

For Haweis, keeping house was undeniably an art. It could also be artful by concealing a struggling income beneath a facade of middle-class finery. Housekeeping manuals provide fertile ground to understand the logical minds that many Victorian women possessed but were not given credit for. They frequently discussed ways to stretch the husband’s income to the best advantage. Indeed, the housewife was almost entirely responsible for upholding class values, even when the income was not sufficient to meet them. Haweis devoted much of *The Art of Housekeeping* to economising; a whole section of the book is titled ‘Costs and Quantities’ and in it Haweis explained cheaper options for lighting, household provisions, washing and more. Haweis claimed

that this book would pay attention to the minutia of keeping house and this was not hyperbolic. “Domestic management resembles a picture in mosaic – line upon line, precept upon precept”, she wrote before advising the reader “do not be disheartened by the slowness of your progress, or disdain the smallness of the pieces” (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 6). She advised that measurements be taken of all household provisions, to avoid waste or profusion, but goes as far as to write that “when scales are scarce, twenty-eight teaspoons of tea are equal to a quarter of a pound. Thirty two moderate sized lumps of sugar about ¾ inch square, are equal to half a pound. One teacup full of rice does to a pudding” (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 114) and so on. To list these alternative ways to weigh common household items showcases Haweis’ fastidious need to research, intensely, whatever topic she was writing on. “The secret of good housekeeping”, she tells the reader, “is to have no waste” (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 121). This intense attention to detail is not synonymous with the reclining, feeble-minded housewife of popular imagining. In fact, it is much more militant. Housekeeping manuals frequently make use of militaristic language. The first line of chapter one of Mrs Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* is such an analogy: “As with the Commander of an army, or the leader of any enterprise, so is it with the mistress of a house.” (7) This is a sentiment echoed by Haweis in the lines, “on the principle that the best soldier works upwards from the ranks, I shall draw your attention to the lowest details of elementary housekeeping” (*Housekeeping* 2). The readers are the soldiers, but one would argue Haweis sees herself as the leader. In her own words, “the knowledge of housekeeping is the training of a queen” (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 2) and she had quite literally written the book.

Many studies intending to ‘rescue’ women writers from obscurity choose to focus upon precisely what makes that particular woman writer exceptional or unique. There has been relatively little scholarship which examines what make a certain woman writer ordinary or

typical. There are many facets to Haweis' works and personality which are distinctive, and which challenge the status quo, but there is equally a side to her writing that is more mundane. Nowhere is this more evident than in *The Art of Housekeeping.* In comparison to her novel, *A Flame of Fire,* this housekeeping manual could almost be thought of as uncomfortably conventional. Yet, *The Art of Housekeeping* is far more representative of the average middle-class woman's life. Many more women would have been housewives, or running households for other male relatives, than would have been seeking divorce, for example. It is for this reason that the text is so vital to a comprehensive study of Haweis and, by extension, to the critical field of recovery of obscure women writers. In the work *Silent Sisterhood,* Patricia Branca suggests that the Victorian woman is "reflected in a distorted mirror" (5) by the vast majority of studies and that the reason for this is because social history has focused solely upon eminent women and made them representative of their sex, rather than the exception. Branca continued, "One reason for these pejorative images is that too often Victorian culture and Victorian family life have been written about by its critics. And the Victorian woman has either received the brunt of the criticism or has been the object of a patronizing sympathy" (6). Reading Haweis' *The Art of Housekeeping* as closely as her novel or articles for the periodical press is one way to ensure that this study does not become the distorted mirror in which this marginalised writer is reflected.

In keeping with the pragmatism shown in her other works, Haweis continued to uphold her rational approach to women's roles in society in this book, writing:

> Many will say that such knowledge is of the first importance for those women at least who look forward to marriage as their proper sphere…But sooner or later, married or single, most women have to keep house; if not for husband or son, then for brother or father: the educated and the uneducated, willing and unwilling, all

> women have this prospect before them, and it is certain that the highest mental culture will not prevent heartburnings at home…High Greek will not atone for the want of common sense, nor a B.Sc. degree replace ability to regulate the week's bills." (*Housekeeping* 5)

Haweis' advice manual is grounded in reality, and it lacks the themes of discontent found in women's writing that is viewed as political and disruptive. The lack of discontent is noteworthy, because the vast majority of studies on Victorian women's writing have this theme in common. As Branca wrote, "It is the generally accepted position that more and more women, bored with their life of genteel uselessness, sought more meaningful roles outside the home. In other words, the feminist movement was a reaction against boredom" (10). Haweis was largely content with her role in the home and whilst she did step outside of the private sphere to write for the periodical press and to attend and host lectures and talks, she never spurned it nor declared it to be an inadequate role for women to undertake. Even when her own marriage was under pressure, and her relationship with her husband and children strained, Haweis continued to write about keeping the house. In fact, it is almost as if Haweis viewed her duties to her household as separate from those as a wife and a mother. It has already been made evident that Haweis had an important bond with her home, Queen's House, and that it was vital to her identity. Haweis arguably never felt secure in her role as a mother, but the same cannot be said of her role as household manager and whilst she struggled in the beginning, Haweis clearly became an expert account keeper. By examining women's writing that does not present as discontent or disruptive, it becomes possible to expand upon the presentation of the Victorian woman. If it was Haweis' mission to create the perfect Victorian 'everywoman' then the elevated knowledge of housekeeping that she aimed to provide was critical not only because it was the standard for so

many women but because it could enhance their current position - elevating them from housewife to metaphorical Queen. Haweis saw herself as equal to the task of empowering women through the knowledge she shared.

It is clear from the memoranda that, as the queen of her house, Haweis would not stand for members of her family usurping her place, behaving inappropriately, or staking a claim to what she had worked tirelessly to build. Hugh Reginald wrote to Haweis in 1898, when the deed of gift had been made. Hugh Reginald had signed over the ownership of property which legally belonged to the husband but which, in reality, was only ever maintained by Haweis. It appears that he did not really understand what he was signing as he wrote: "Farmer has now explained to me the full meaning of the document I signed. He says I have signed away all my rights in the lease, and all my property in the house (except plate chest) unreservedly" (7MEH/5/4 98). Hugh Reginald had squandered much of the household income, which had to be subsidised by Haweis' earnings. Her solicitor, Farmer, had attempted to review his financial affairs prompting Hugh Reginald to accuse Haweis of "supreme impertinence" (7MEH/5/4 110) to request such information. Haweis had written back, stating that he was "not the only solicitor who has told me that as a wife I have an interest in the large sums of money you have squandered, and right to know where it has gone…I have a further right because you have spread it abroad that it has gone through my expensive house-keeping" (7MEH/5/3 112). The letters between Haweis and her husband during these years illuminate not only the couple's failing marriage but also that Victorian women were not merely dispensing their husband's incomes to give balls or host dinners. They were actively managing the money, and had a vested interest in where it was being spent. As Haweis wrote, "in equity a wife has an interest in property jointly amassed" (7MEH/5/4 112). The role of the housewife was vitally important, as it directly contributed, and

arguably preserved, the class structure that the nineteenth century is so remembered for. Housewives kept the middle and upper classes thriving through their rigorous, but invisible, work.

For the Victorian 'Everywoman' marriage was also a fact of life. Whilst the number of unwed women was being seen as an increasing problem towards the middle, and end, of the Victorian period, marriage remained the norm for women for many more years to come, and particularly for those in the middle class for whom *The Art of Housekeeping* was written. Much like *A Flame of Fire*, this housekeeping manual has marriage as a major theme throughout. It is however in direct opposition to the novel. Whereas *A Flame of Fire* recounts the pitfalls of a marriage entered without much thought this manual explains how marriage could be used to the benefit of women. As Joan Perkin noted, "for most women marriage means a release from a childlike and humiliating dependence on the parental home, the possibility of sharing on however unequal terms the creation of a home and family of their own and…a greater freedom to go about and make separate friends" (3). This was very clearly the case for Haweis, who recounted feeling "not satisfied passion: not glee" but "relief" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 43) at being asked by Hugh Reginald to marry him. Haweis felt like a "captive" who "did not know what to make of my liberty" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 43). Many other women writers of advice manuals in the nineteenth century commented upon the home as a place where women were in control. In *The Women of England* (1839) the author stated that "The sphere of woman's happiest and most beneficial influence is a domestic one" (Ellis 40) and in a similar vein the author of *The Ladies Book of Etiquette and Manual of Politeness* stated, "Every one of the sex ought to know how to sew, and knit, and mend, and cook, and superintend a household. In every situation of life, high or low, this sort of knowledge is of great advantage" (Hartley

300). Whilst both of these authors were far from political – Florence Hartley wrote mainly etiquette and needlework books and Sarah Stickney Ellis was a Quaker known for her writing about women's religious duties as wives and mothers – their choice to promote the domestic sphere is nevertheless an important one. It draws attention to the fact that a number of women were writing not from a space of dissatisfaction, but that household management was a way in which these women could situate themselves and find security in a middle-class society which frequently attempted to push them to the fringes. Marriage was almost a prerequisite to liberty, because through it women could become the centre of their own, however small and perhaps confined, worlds.

In the introductory pages to *The Art of Housekeeping*, Haweis wrote the following of marriage:

> To some girls, and to many a mother, the idea of early marriage, which often means for a woman, in spite of the new Acts, making over life, liberty and property before her own opinions are formed, to an inexperienced young man for ever, is terrible enough! The well-guarded and tenderly nurtured girl seems practically handed over to somebody outside all the family traditions to do as he likes with, and however it turns out, she cannot get away from him. Viewed in this (or indeed in any other) light, marriage is too solemn to be entered without consideration, but few can doubt that entered and continued in the right spirit, marriage is the highest as it is incomparably the happiest state. (2)

Marriage, she asserts, continued in the *right spirit* was a favourable, beneficial state for women to exist in. This is not to say that Haweis glossed over the unsavoury elements of Victorian

marriage, because she very clearly opposed the inequities in the law and the unjust sanctions of violence that were enacted upon women by their husbands in her periodical writing and her novel. This advice manual, however, is not written from a place of discontent. It is this which makes it unique, not just in Haweis' corpus of works but also in the field of women's writing. There was an outpouring of etiquette and advice manuals written by women for women in the nineteenth century which could, on one hand, be viewed as marital propaganda. Works such as those discussed above by Hartley and Ellis certainly present the traditional domestic ideal in a favourable light. But such works should not be thought of as merely anti-feminist propaganda espousing domestic doctrine and colluding with patriarchal ideals, as women writers like Haweis and her contemporaries expressed in other forms of writing their dissatisfaction with women's roles and rights in society. Thus it is possible to see figures such as Harriet Martineau, thought of now as one of the first female sociologists and remembered for her critique of women's education, publishing *Household Education* in 1849. The manual was unconventional for Martineau in that it *was* conventional. The subject matter and the style of the text were decidedly acceptable for a woman writer. Martineau added to established dialogue which saw women, or more specifically mothers, taking on the burden of imparting moral values to their children through their space in the home. This line of argument is very similar to that of Ellis in *The Women of England*. And yet, contained in this traditional view of the home Martineau adds the following comment of the state of women's education: "Every woman ought to have that justice done to her faculties that she may possess herself in all strength and clearness of an exercised and enlightened mind, and may have at command, for her subsistence, as much intellectual power and as many resources as education can furnish her with" (Martineau 244). Thus, the household is an increasingly difficult place to establish as either restrictive or freeing but what is

clear is that it was an aspect of life for the middle-class Victorian woman no matter if she were of a more traditional bent, like the pious Ellis, or if she were more progressive like Martineau. As Haweis rightly asserted, "all women have this prospect before them" and each must grapple with their own understanding of what it meant to be the household manager.

The proverb 'a woman's work is never done' which stems from an unknown author's rhyming couplet encapsulates this notion that has transcended time. Women's work involves child care, housework, and other domestic tasks deemed the duties of wives and mothers. This kind of work during the nineteenth century, and continuing today, involved tasks that required both time and effort as well as draining the opportunities that women could take outside of the home. In chapter two, it was shown how Haweis believed women should be able to find vocations, or hobbies, outside of the family and home in the article "The Revolt of the Daughters" (1894). Women's work continues to strip women of time that they might have devoted to themselves, their interests, and even paid work. This is something that Haweis acknowledged for both her readers and for herself. It is a somewhat ironic moniker, as 'women's work' is certainly not seen as *real* work by the standards of capitalist, patriarchal society. Work, such standards dictate, is paid and women's domestic labours are distinctly unpaid: "With 'work' increasingly defined as labour power that could be sold for a wage, work done without payment came to be regarded as not proper work" (Burman 10). As such, official statistics of labour frequently exclude women's contributions and this in turn serves to make such work invisible. Historians have struggled to research women's work due to the lack of sources available. Branca has argued that the "real lack of autobiographical data describing the life history of the 'typical' middle-class female has caused many studies to rely heavily upon the fiction of the day" (11) which has resulted in the image of the "completely leisured, ornamental, helpless and dependent

female with no other function in society besides inspiring admiration and bearing children" (11). Fictional representations of women, particularly in the Victorian period, certainly could have led to the assumption that women were far less productive than they were in truth. Indeed, there are few examples in canonical fiction of female characters engaged in the sort of physically, and mentally, demanding tasks required to keep house. Even Haweis, with her vast knowledge of housekeeping, and belief that it was a significant and serious undertaking, does not show her characters engaged in cleaning drains nor ridding the house of pests. Fiction, therefore, is not the most effective tool to fill in the gaps in knowledge surrounding women's work. Instead, the study of household and domestic advice manuals can plug this gap. Works like Haweis' *The Art of Housekeeping* make women's invisible work visible again.

Haweis was firm in her opinion that domestic duties were labour, and her writing clearly sought to make her readers understand this. Thus, she set a serious tone to discuss matters of the household and stated: "There is no doubt that "housekeeping," which the unthinking may deride, means, on the woman's side, much vigilance, much mental strain, much self-sacrifice, with very little to show for it – till she leaves off" (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 5). The vigilance that Haweis picks out is a key feature in debates regarding the invisible labour women undertake, which sees them take responsibility not explicitly for the domestic chores but for the *management* of them. The term 'the mental load', sometimes called 'cognitive labour', was explicitly created to name the distinct gender gap that exists in relation to the overseeing of housework and childcare. Haweis' book is a manual that overtly instructs her women readers to take responsibility for the mental load and is, in this sense, less than an ideal representation of an early feminist writer. However, *The Art of Housekeeping* enables an awareness of this phenomenon from the perspective of a woman alive during the time when the mental load was not understood as a

discriminatory practice. It should also be noted that Haweis herself does not view this domestic responsibility as 'effortless' and therefore not worthy of praise. In fact, Haweis commented that "Some men who find the wheels run smooth, they know not how, forget to give the "weaker vessel" credit for all she knows and does" (*Housekeeping* 5), clearly implying that this credit ought to be given.

It is evident that dispensing the husband's income was one of the main functions of the Victorian housewife despite 'separate spheres' ideology that saw women removed from financial matters. It was because of this responsibility that many wives had a good understanding of economy and finance. Haweis herself kept detailed account books, listing the expenditures of the household and the income. Women were therefore fundamental to the development of consumerism as "unpaid domestic work by women has been essential for the development of the capitalist wage system" (Burman 13). Separate spheres ideology is a flawed paradigm to view Victorians through, especially in terms of the economic role of husbands and wives. According to this ideology "man should be able financially to support his wife and children" and "women should not have to deal with financial matters" (Gordon and Nair 791). *The Art of Housekeeping* immediately refutes this philosophy stating that "Financially considered, housekeeping represents the art of making a given income go as far as possible in providing a family with the means of comfortable subsistence" (6). Thus, Haweis expressly stated that the household manager, the wife, stretched the husband's wage; she was therefore never removed from financial matters. Whilst there has, in recent years, been research into the economic role of women in the nineteenth century this research largely focuses upon working class women who had to engage in waged labour. There has also been much research into the middle-class woman's economic involvement in the public sphere with studies revealing "how many of them

battled to enter the public arena, for example, in education, medicine and politics" (Gordon and Nair 792). Alongside this is a developing understanding of women who were working in family businesses or as assistants to their husbands and whose efforts were never formally recorded in any censuses. There is arguably less scholarship which focuses upon women's skills in managing personal financial in the 'private sphere'.

Haweis' philosophy when it came to money was one of frugality. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Haweis' wealth at death far exceeded that of her husband. Haweis had £2920 17s whereas Hugh Reginal is recorded as having less than half that sum, only £1302. Considering that Haweis added to the household income by her writing, managed the expenses, and finally legally took over the rights to the property, she was certainly not as removed from the burden of financial matters as separate spheres ideology would have one believe. Money is brought up frequently in Haweis' books and in her personal letters and memoranda. In one example, she wrote to her son Lionel in 1895 that she was "economising in every way at home" and that "I must consider I have reduced expenditures to a fine art now if I never did before" (7MEH/5/4 133). The Haweis family seem to have always struggled with money; Hugh Reginald's affairs have been cited by some, including biographer by Bea Howe, as the main drain on much of the household income. Hugh Reginald certainly wasted money on his extramarital affairs, but it seems that he was also genuinely poor at managing money. In this, and arguably many other things, he was entirely inferior to his wife, who claimed to keep extensive financial records with "almost every shilling accounted for" (7MEH/5/4 113). Hugh Reginald asserted in his letters that his "humble role is to provide the money as well as I can" so that Haweis could, "occupy the influential and independent position that you seem fitted for" (7MEH/5/3 36a). In another letter, written by Haweis to Lionel, the reverse seems true as it is

clear that Hugh Reginald did not financially support Haweis' position in society. He sent cheques to Haweis, which could not be cashed as the money was not in the bank. This led Haweis to approach the bank herself and put up "plate as security" (7MEH/5/4 134) which was accepted. Haweis wrote to her son that the experience was "very degrading" (7MEH/5/4 134). Certainly, Haweis would have felt it to be so. She prided herself on being able to fool society that she lived on far more money than she actually had, and this public admission that her husband's cheques could not be cashed would have no doubt been humiliating. Hugh Reginald's excuse for this seems to have been "I don't know how Bank can be overdrawn…Special xtmas collections too which I count on for making up deficit, I suppose have ended in nothing" (7MEH/5/3 38). In this letter he almost immediately shifts the focus away from his failure to provide financially to guilting Haweis for speaking of money in the first place: "I wish you had spared one general word for love over above the money" (7MEH/5/3 38). It is clear from Haweis' reply, which is written on a copy of his letter and which it is not possible to confirm was sent, that she could no longer write loving letters. There is a distinct difference in tone between the spouses' letters in these later years. Whilst Hugh Reginald continued to write in a pseudo-affectionate way, which reads more as cajoling, Haweis is much more sober in her letters. In any case, it is clear from these letters that money was a contentious issue between husband and wife and that Haweis was often dealing with the fallout of her husband's poor management of it. With this context, the line "Money is of small worth without the brains to know what to do with it" (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 2) takes on new meaning.

Haweis' children certainly felt the effects of her penny-pinching, and it must also be remembered that Haweis may have had a public reputation for this as emphasised in the earlier chapter when quoting from the mocking piece written about Haweis' *The Art of Decoration* in

Punch. *The Art of Housekeeping*, however, makes clear that this approach is not to be confused with being miserly. Haweis advised her reader "Do not despise this granular structure…nor neglect a penny as trivial and sordid, because it is only a penny" (*Housekeeping* 7). Haweis called this approach to money 'mosaic work' and advised, "if you find thoughtless associates who sneer at your mosaic work, you may tell them, on the Highest Authority, that the infinitely little may be the infinitely great" (*Housekeeping* 7). In *Four To Fourteen*, Haweis' daughter Hugolin reflected on how she and her siblings were paid by Haweis for doing chores: "We have to earn money too. Matthy picks up all the branches in the garden and makes faggots for cook to burn and we clean the chickens and throw the dirt on to the flower beds to make the flowers grow (26). This seems to be an accurate memory, as in *The Art of Housekeeping* Haweis reminisced about when she would encourage her children to earn their pocket money:

> When you were a wee child, penny by penny you asked for little pleasures, which it was a pleasure to give you; but in view of these new lessons, which would become necessary to you later, remember I encouraged you as far as possible to earn penny by penny, that you might not grow up fancying that pennies fell down from the clouds or sprouted from trees, but early arrive at some notion of the value and origin of money. (6)

Money was important to Haweis for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it afforded her the lifestyle that she had always dreamt of, evidenced from her earlier entries shortly after her marriage. Haweis also manipulated the literary marketplace, writing what she hoped would be popular enough to sell copies, perhaps even to the extent that she herself was not proud of elements of her writing during the 1880s. Haweis wrote, "I shall have to invent some new book after the holidays, to bring in filthy lucre" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 50). This use of the slang term "filthy

lucre" suggests that she may have felt that her earnings from the advice manuals during the 1880s were shameful in some way. Of course, it could also be the casual use of popular slang. Still, it is noteworthy considering Haweis' next lines in the letter: "I had a long letter from Blanche Branston the other day asking about schools for her children. I am supposed to be an authority, perhaps, having written a school book" (7MEH/5/1, "Letters to her Ma" 50). The school book she referenced can only be *Chaucer for Schools* (1881). This suggests that Haweis may have felt, in some ways, a phony. Her authoritative tone is at odds here with a feeling of self-doubt or embarrassment. Considering the image presented of Haweis by obituaries as self-assured, this text offers an alternative presentation of Haweis which is more in line with the precepts of this thesis which unearths the complexities in both the author and her works. Regardless, it is clear that this manipulation was an act of female economic agency in an age that has long been thought of as quashing women's economic freedoms. Marriage explicitly stripped women of their rights over any property or money they owned beforehand, and this was later amended by the Married Women's Property Act in 1882. But, that is not to say that before this act was passed all women in England had no economic agency. In their work *Women and Their Money 1700-1950,* the editors summarised that "Perhaps the most important story told by the studies in this book is that, despite the different legal regimes under which women lived, women took control of their affairs within existing constraints which usually permitted little financial independence for married women" (Laurence, et al 2). What is clear from this work is that women have had an active role in managing accounts throughout history. Haweis, who devoted much of her time to understanding, and attempting to write about, women's history, would have undoubtedly known this. The attention which she pays to the importance of money in *The Art of*

Housekeeping therefore becomes a tool to tie this book, which, at first glance, appears to be an anomaly in her corpus of works, to themes which do weave their way throughout.

Haweis engaged with many of the contemporary debates of the day and the topic of servants was no exception. Much of *The Art of Housekeeping* is spent discussing how to manage servants, because "In wrestling with domestic dangers and difficulties, it is impossible long to escape the vexed question of the day…and that is – servants!" (6). Haweis showed an empathy for domestic servants in this book, which is also borne out in the final article she ever wrote. In 1898, Haweis was extremely unwell and spent much of her time bed-bound. Her organs had begun to fail, and she would die on 24 November 1898. Hugh Reginald recounted how "High up in her beautiful room at Bath, overlooking the city beneath, where she spent the last days of her life, her mind was incessantly brooding over all the work she had to do" (*Words to Women* 304). One piece of unfinished work – alongside "two Encyclopaedia, Articles, three Society Papers, Articles for the 'Lady's Realm,' the 'Humanitarian,' and last, not least, a Chaucer Lecture" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 305) – was an article for *The Contemporary Review* on the topic of servants. Proof of her indefatigable desire to write, the article was completed from her sick room where she apparently dictated much of it to her husband who put her words to paper: "She dictated it to me as she lay in bed, or sat dozing at intervals in her chair" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 308). Owing to this, Hugh Reginald wrote that the "article on Servants must ever possess for me an interest full of haunting memories and indescribable pain" (*Words to Women* 304). The article was published posthumously in *The Contemporary Review* in April 1899. The knowledge to manage domestic servants was crucial to middle-class women who would always have at least one servant in their employ. That it should be the last article written by Haweis proves, as her husband wrote, her "vigorous sympathy in the interests and practical affairs of women, which

she retained down to the very end" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 316). The first aspect of note in both *The Art of Housekeeping* and "Servants and Served" is the deference that Haweis paid to servants. Indeed, she stated herself that she had "the utmost respect for domestic servants as a class" (Haweis, *Housekeeping* 65). The prevailing view of the relationship between mistress and servant has often been influenced by literature which suggests that servants were considered to be invisible in the middle-class home. However, in *A Flame of Fire* it is Aglae's maid Simpson who confirms to the reader that Aglae's husband beats her. Rather than being the unseen observer, whose view is unimportant, this servant has a pivotal part in the plot. Haweis wrote respectfully about servants, claiming that they were "never so competent and so refined as now" (*Housekeeping* 61) and she also stressed how the middle classes were reliant upon them. It is possible she even meant to imply that the middle-classes would be helpless without them. "We are practically at the mercy of our servants" she wrote, stating "You hurt yourself – you ring the bell; you upset the lamp, you feel ill…you lose your purse, you break something…the bell, always the bell!" (Haweis, "Servants and Served" 505). This acknowledgement of a servant's work is uncommon, as many of these types of manuals spoke of servants in less than human terms. Haweis, instead, makes direct mention to the similarities between the mistress of the house and their servants and reminds the reader that ""Everybody is a servant. We all serve one another, for no class is independent of the rest; and we shall do this best by planting no stigma upon any one kind of service" (*Housekeeping* 62).

In the article "'Every family might be its own Economical Housekeeping Company (Limited)': managing the middle-class home in nineteenth-century England" Caroline Lieffers argues that industrialisation created an intense focus on the supervision of workers, and that this process extended to the home. Housekeeping manuals used industrial language, with Beeton and

other similar writers creating what Lieffers calls the 'home as machine' metaphor: "as the mechanical factory environment invited a dehumanization of the worker's body, so too did the 'home as machine' metaphor encompass a dehumanization of the servant's body" (450). Lieffers notes that the word machine and other factory language is used in the works of Beeton and similar writers such as Sarah Stickney Ellis, to refer to the work of servants and that this transforms them from human beings into a cog in the larger 'machine' of the home. Interestingly, then, the word machine is not used at all in *The Art of Housekeeping*. Haweis even reprimanded those that viewed servants in this way, advising her reader not to "expect from them a perfection we do not expect to find anywhere else" ("Servants and Served" 506). Lieffers also convincingly argues that there was a mind/body binary permeating the relationship of mistress and servant and "by reducing the servant to the essence of domestic machinery, the mistress assumed a middle-class managerial role" (450). Haweis, conversely, does not reduce servants to "domestic machinery" and this is evidenced by her references to the personal lives of servants and their enjoyments outside of their work. Haweis advocated firmly for access to museums and galleries for all classes, as was discussed in chapter four, and continued to do so in her article for *The Contemporary Review*. The enjoyment of art is, arguably, the antithesis to the industrial machine allegory. Haweis wanted to convince her reader that servants required "the same improvement in recreations and general liberty which ladies themselves have come to possess" (Housekeeping 6). The better treatment of the servant class was, to Haweis, a natural extension of her work towards Suffrage and women's equality. She promoted the same freedom she sought for women: "Perhaps the chief thing to remember is that what servants (or we might as well say human nature) value most is freedom" (Haweis, *Words to Women* 329). Haweis was firm in her belief that, providing the servant had completed their contractual work, they were to be left to

themselves as far as was proper by the mistress of the house. Haweis was also aware that many women worked as domestic servants, claiming "There is no feminine employment so easy, so safe, so completely cared for, and so free from anxiety" (*Housekeeping* 61). Therefore, Haweis' writing about servants is a further way in which her works make 'women's work' more visible.

The Art of Housekeeping affords a view of the domestic reality which many middle-class women could not escape. It is an intensely pragmatic text, centred upon the practical concerns of women. Instead of the domestic 'private sphere' being presented as restrictive, Haweis is able to continue to provide a more multifaceted relationship between women and the home. Keeping house, in many ways, was akin to supervising a workplace. Haweis even listed contractual information pertaining to wages, holiday allowance and giving notice:

> After the first month, a month's warning, or its equivalent in a month's wages, from the servant before quitting her place…within the first month, the contract can be dissolved by either party…What legally entitles a servant to leave without notice are: (1) Immoral conduct of the house; (2) really insufficient food; (3) desperately comfortless or ingested accommodation…(4) personal ill-treatment. (*Housekeeping* 72)

From disproving the notion of the purity of the 'angel' who presides over the house, to the financial savvy she wrote of and which is evidenced by her own character, Haweis' work challenges the assumptions of the housewife's place in nineteenth-century England and in history at large. *The Art of Housekeeping* augments the current field of research into the figure of the domestic woman, which is steadily moving away from perceiving her in a critical light. This text, which is staunchly traditional in its subject matter and which preaches a commitment to the

ideology of the home that is entirely ‘Victorian’, showcases Haweis’ conservative beliefs and yet it is still challenging and, in some ways, bold. *The Art of Housekeeping* is a book which explains the intricacies of life as the mistress of a middle-class household and demonstrates that the perception of the domestic woman must be reconsidered. Through a comparison of the text to Haweis’ experiences as a household manager it is obvious that the notion of the pampered, passive woman trapped within the ‘private’ sphere does not hold up to scrutiny. Women were actively managing money, writing and dictating work to servants, and upholding the values upon which the middle classes depended. Yet, their work has been overshadowed by statistics from which they were, and continue to be, excluded. Haweis’ *The Art of Housekeeping* shines a light on the work undertaken by women in the home, reinforcing the value of this ‘women’s work’ to society as a whole.

Conclusion

"When we speak, we know not where our words will fall…Once sent forth, you can do no more for them…their ghosts will revive & haunt you, & whisper the truth to the winds"

(Mary Eliza Haweis, 1866)

This thesis began as a study intended to draw Mary Eliza Haweis out of obscurity and aimed to do so through a feminist reading of her works, with specific emphasis on the reading of her only novel, *A Flame of Fire* (1897). Indeed, the research questions themselves were geared towards the assumption that the novel was the most subversive of her works and therefore the culmination of her literary career. This study therefore began in a way that has been, in recent years, criticised by scholars of neglected women writers. Talia Shaffer wrote that "Any literary critic knows how enormously tempting it is to call a neglected woman writer "subversive," since that is the accepted way to demonstrate her worth" (11). Schaffer continued to state that this need to prove obscure women writers as 'subversive', or 'feminist', was damaging to future reader's perceptions of them and the time period in which they wrote. My original research questions were: One: can the novel be considered a 'New Woman' text? Two: is Haweis's unmistakably feminist campaigning more influential than her earlier works? And three: is it possible to contest that the novel is an inevitable climax of Haweis's views regarding female experience in nineteenth-century Britain? Certainly, the novel is integral to this recovery, and there have been no studies on *A Flame of Fire* outside of this thesis and the parts of chapter one which were published in *For Better, For Worse: Marriage in Victorian Novels by Women* (2018). This thesis is therefore the first study which is able to combine the novel with the other published works and Haweis' personal papers, and the conclusions drawn are thus unique additions to the current scholarly understanding of this author. However, writing the thesis caused me to interrogate the

premise of the research questions themselves. In answer to the second research question, it is the hope that through reading this thesis the answer is a resounding *no*. Indeed, Haweis' works have purposefully been brought together by this thesis, instead of being separated into the binary oppositions of feminist and anti-feminist. It also became clear that *A Flame of Fire,* whilst certainly 'New Woman', was not the pinnacle of Haweis' writing, nor the most influential. It is instead more productively seen as a way to interrogate and to understand her other works. It is by linking the novel to the other texts, and, indeed, these texts to one another, that this thesis is able to recover Haweis in a comprehensive fashion. The reading of Haweis' published and unpublished writing in tandem was also integral to the thesis. This study has therefore argued that the seemingly disparate works of Mary Eliza Haweis coexist with each other, and that numerous links can be found between them. It has been demonstrated that reading Haweis' full oeuvre showcases the ways in which her works challenge binary oppositions, resist categorisation, and ultimately call into question the construct of feminism. This study has shown that the novel is not the climax of Haweis' mission, but a significant element of it.

Haweis' novel was shown to challenge the expected identity for women. Aglae is not a typical fictional woman, she is a character that rejects the stereotypical traits of a Victorian heroine and yet, at the same time, she is emblematic of the legislative struggles faced by all women. This thesis has argued that the constructs of femininity, the roles of virgin, wife, and mother, are too simplistic to adequately encapsulate the complexities of female identity. The two seemingly irreconcilable sides to Haweis have also been showcased. For example, as a writer for the periodical press, Haweis advocated for the political combination of women whereas Haweis was in fact a woman who was unable to foster close relationships with other women, including her sisters-in-law and daughter. Whilst she struggled to connect with her own female relations,

Haweis was still able to write in support of her fellow woman and for the Suffrage. This indicated that these opposing notions actually coexisted in the works of women writers in the nineteenth century. The Chaucer texts were perhaps the most overtly used to examine the deftness with which Haweis was able to circumvent binaries. Comparing and contrasting Griselda and Alison has shown that Haweis' Chaucer texts were able to unite opposing ideals under the umbrella of womanhood, as the qualities of both are shown to exemplify what it meant to Haweis to be a strong woman. Contrary to the image presented by separate spheres ideology, this thesis explored the relationship between women and the home to conclude that the home allowed women to physically manifest their own identities. The garden, in particular, was shown to be a vital space for transgressing boundaries. The binaries of mind and body were confronted with Haweis' aesthetic advice manuals and therefore the construct of anti-feminism, as a reaction to and the antithesis to feminism, was called into question. Through an analysis of Haweis' beauty and dress manuals, these opposing notions were shown to be an ineffectual and reductive way of analysing Haweis' works. Lastly, this thesis has demonstrated the contradictions between the image of the languid 'Angel in the house' and the hard work of the housewife, which Haweis' text aimed to vindicate.

The threat to female identity has been found across Haweis' texts. This thesis has shown that Haweis protested against a number of oppressive practices which were ubiquitous in the nineteenth century. Haweis' works critiqued legislation that meant married women's legal rights were subsumed by her husband, forcing wives to become a *feme covert*. The issues surrounding consent, or the lack thereof, and coverture were established as essential elements of the novel, linking it to the genre of New Woman fiction which has as one of its core thematic components the marriage question. Marriage, like the Gothic mansions of earlier fiction, was likened to a

prison with the antagonist of the novel, the husband, transformed to the metaphorical leech consuming the heroine's independent identity. It was also shown how Haweis' aesthetic advice manuals politicised clothing. Fashion and the increasing commercialization of clothing which began in the nineteenth century were direct threats to female identity. The mass production of garments led to conformity which Haweis' works protested against. Haweis' solution to the threat fashion posed to the female identity was demonstrated to be mastery over clothes. She encouraged her female reader to manipulate clothing, to cut it up and to restyle it, to make the identity of the wearer visible. In calling attention to the ways in which Haweis' works protested institutions such as marriage and the more private censures enacted upon the female body, this thesis has highlighted a vital element of Haweis' mission across different modes of writing.

There are many answers to the question posited by Virginia Woolf of what it means to be a woman. This question remains as relevant today as it did when Woolf posed it in "Professions for Women" (1931). Countless women writers' interpretations of the elusive notion of 'womanhood' have been used in studies in an attempt to uncover a meaning. From Gaskell's concept of her multiple identities to Woolf's metaphor of the looking-glass, it is evident that each writer uniquely understands womanhood. The conclusion that is drawn from Haweis in this thesis is that to be a woman is to defy categorisation. *The Laugh of Medusa* famously claimed that "it is impossible to define a feminine practice of writing" and that it can only be understood by researching "subjects who are breakers of automatisms" (Cixous 883). The blurring of boundaries and protests against conformity and subjugation in Haweis' works demonstrate the importance this work of recovery has to the understanding of women's writing. The answer that is drawn from this study of Haweis, that to be a woman is to be multifaceted and resist definition, has been demonstrated throughout. The ways in which Haweis was able to walk the line between

dichotomies has been evidenced. Haweis' understanding of womanhood was shown to break boundaries as her revival of Chaucer's female characters rejected the traditional dichotomy of Madonna and whore. Thus, Haweis' interpretation of what it meant to be a woman is another integral piece of the picture.

This thesis has showed that Haweis was averse to artificiality. Individuality and authenticity are keynotes of her aestheticism, and a crucial piece of the mosaic. Haweis derided aestheticism which imitated or mirrored expected gender performances and called these 'parrot-like'. However, it has also been established that her works do present femininity as a performance. Haweis advised women to paint themselves into the picture of their homes and stamp their personality into their clothing. She also encouraged the use of make-up and sought to explain how women could deceive others by using clothing in new and artistic ways. The physical manifestation of femininity has been discussed as a contentious issue. It was argued that it is difficult to define femininity as either natural or artificial. The aesthetic works, particularly *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Decoration,* have been used to show how Haweis navigated this contradiction. Haweis' texts present an appreciation of beauty that included, and promoted, diversity and uniqueness. When women were able to 'do as they liked' with their outward appearance they were actually challenging patriarchal gender norms. Haweis' membership to the Rational Dress Society and her rules on dress were shown to be ways in which she protested against less obvious conventions which threatened individuality. Corsets, crinolines and tight-lacing were explicitly discussed as ways in which women's physical bodies were restricted and harmed by Victorian social standards. These articles of clothing were likened to tyrants, and this comparison furthered the politicising of domestic matters present throughout Haweis' works.

Whilst the marriage question was topical in the Victorian age, with many writers including Haweis adding to the dialogue, the critique on women's clothing could be just as pioneering.

This thesis has challenged what is understood by the term feminism and has sought to broaden this construct to include atypical attributes which Haweis possesses. Feminism is often thought of as a sisterhood but this thesis has contended that there can be a woman writer who has a recognisably feminist mission who shows a significant lack of kinship with other women. Haweis' works show that she felt a rivalry with other women but it has been argued that the traits exhibited by Haweis, such as her competitiveness as well as her outspokenness and unapologetic candour, which are more traditionally seen as masculine traits, subvert expectations. Haweis, it has been shown, was a woman who wrote mainly on domestic concerns but who exhibited a self-assurance and authority usually associated with men's writing. Haweis' criticisms of her fellow women range across her works. She rebuked women who did not support the Suffrage in her articles for the periodical press, stating that they were standing in the way of progress. Women's ignorance is a key feature across her modes of writing, and this thesis has illustrated that an important element of her mission was the educating of her women readers. In her novel, her articles, and her domestic manuals Haweis has been shown to be instructing women to utilise whatever was available to them, be it marriage, or a house, or a dress, to stake their claim in the world. Additionally, this thesis has taken as its subject a woman who was intrinsically pragmatic. It has been established that Haweis was largely content to live within many of the parameters for Victorian women. Thus, beauty and housekeeping were inevitable facts of a woman's life. This is another of Haweis' contradictions, for although she struggled to develop kinship with other women her works nevertheless aimed to teach and support women readers.

Contribution to Scholarship

The current critical understanding of Haweis is narrowed by the limited sources available. Outside of *Arbiter of Elegance* (1967) and *The Forgotten Chaucer Scholarship of Mary Eliza Haweis* (2016) this thesis is the only other substantial study that is centred solely upon Haweis and her works. As the former was written over fifty years ago, and the latter is focused upon one type of her published works, the Chaucer books, the literature on this writer requires more substantive contributions. The aim of this thesis is to provide such a contribution, and to begin to plug the gaps in the current knowledge of this marginalised woman writer. This thesis has demonstrated the significance of a recovery of Haweis, citing what makes her works distinct and interesting enough for such substantial study. The first contribution that this thesis makes to literature is the extensive work that has been carried out to weave together the scattered source material. This thesis brings together, for the first time, memoranda held at the LSE archive, fragmented fiction and correspondences from the UBC archive, material collated by Haweis' son at Columbia University, and Haweis' daughter's book from the British Library. Whilst some studies have made use of Haweis' extensive memoranda and manuscripts - Braswell, for example, makes use of letters written by Haweis to her family members when they concerned the Chaucer texts - there are no studies which have collated the data from across each separate archive and combined this research into one study in the way that this thesis has done. The approach taken in this thesis, to seek the connections that existed between Haweis' works and establish the mission that can be seen throughout, is unique. It is the first time that Haweis had been studied in this way, and it was only possible to do so through the use of biographical information read alongside the published texts. Haweis' life is integral to the arguments

presented in this thesis, and by bringing together the various archival material and the published texts this thesis has been able to create a locus for the varying threads of this writer's career.

This thesis contributes to the academic study of Victorian women writers, specifically the recovery of marginalised or obscure writers. Firstly, the analysis of *A Flame of Fire* directly augments the study of the writing of the *Fin de siècle.* It is well established that the end of nineteenth century provoked anxieties around what would come next. This led to the outpouring of artistic practices, including literature, which were disruptive. Chief amongst these was the emergence of New Woman fiction. The importance of this genre of literature to feminist literary theory is now well established, and the works of key novelists such as Olive Schreiner, Sarah Grand, Mona Caird and George Egerton have been studied and explored. However, the sense of crisis at the turn of the century provoked copious novels and there were numerous women writing in a similar vein to Grand and the other recognised 'New Women'. This thesis has shown how one such forgotten novel, *A Flame of Fire*, can be situated within this important genre and aims to include Haweis amongst her contemporary writers, whom this thesis has shown she knew professionally. In studying Haweis, this thesis has unearthed names of her contemporary women writers who are also understudied, and whose novels exhibit the themes of New Woman literature. The literary ladies dinner which Haweis attended boasted sixty women writers of the age who came together to collaborate and network. *The Women's Penny Paper*, in June 1890, praised the literary dinner "for it helped women to meet, to know, respect, and love each other, and it taught them the most important of all rules, that women must have the courage to stand up for each other in public ("A DARING DINNER" 392). Any number of the women writers at the same dinner as Haweis could perhaps provide invaluable contributions to the scholarly field. To detail just one example, sitting at the head of the table with Haweis was a Miss B Whitby.

Beatrice Whitby was an English author and even a cursory glance across her novels suggests an opportunity for further study. In particular, Whitby's novel *Part of the Property* published in 1890 is seemingly a commentary upon women's role within the private sphere. The very title of the work is undoubtedly a commentary on the relationship between women and the home. In the novel, Whitby's free-spirited heroine, brought up in the comfort of a feminine home, upon turning nineteen is sent away to her grandfather's estate to manage it. The conflict between the heroine, who was brought up liberally and able to read as she wanted, and the new role that she must play in her grandfather's home could no doubt provide fruitful contributions to the field of 'New Woman' writers.

My research challenged what I understood about recovering obscure women writers, and Haweis and her works became a way for me to take forward the suggestion in Shaffer's work for a more complete approach to recovery. When we stop searching for writers and works which fit neatly into feminist categories, we are instead able to uncover genres of literature which have, as Shaffer notes been "erased so completely that readers may not even know they are missing" (11). It is only by conducting more research in an unbiased way that the knowledge will become ready enough to be disseminated, and these neglected women writers seen and read more widely. Making the picture of literary history more complete enables us to spread this knowledge further, and so the circle grows wider and encompasses more. As Marshall notes, "The 'canon' of Victorian novels and novelists, growing bigger though it is, still represents only the tiniest fraction of the fiction that the Victorian period produced" (3). This thesis therefore demands still newer ways of reading women writers, which include not only the most "politically pleasing" of their works, but a fuller spectrum.

The quotation taken from the periodical *The Woman's Signal* in 1899, which was used as an epigraph to the introduction chapter, anticipates the account of Haweis presented in this thesis. It claimed that Haweis' activities were *numerous and diverse,* which are apt descriptors of this writer. The preceding chapters have captured Haweis' diversity in order to produce a full, rich study of this under-researched author. When Haweis' works thwart categorisation, they are in fact challenging the societal constraints in which Victorian women lived. Thus, this thesis has produced an account of Haweis which indicates how adept Victorian women writers could be at outmanoeuvring limitations and bounds they were supposedly trapped within. This builds upon the work of Anne Heilmann and Valerie Sanders in "The rebel, the lady and the 'anti': Femininity, anti-feminism, and the Victorian woman writer" (2006) which questions how useful the categories of feminist or anti-feminist are to Victorian women's writing. This study of Haweis has demonstrated the notion presented in their work that "feminism and anti-feminism were not stable positions, and could be embraced by one and the same writer simultaneously or successively in different textual outlets" (Heilmann and Sanders 298). Haweis, it has been shown, is a test case for asking what feminism means at a given moment in history and the conclusions that have been drawn provide an intervention into the current critical field which is steadily moving away from viewing women's writing in a reductive, binary, way. This thesis posits that only when the methodology is investigated and questioned is it possible to improve upon these constructs for future research. It is the aim that this thesis has shown the importance of recovering neglected women writers' works which are seen as conventional or domestic. Indeed, to neglect to do so is merely limiting women writers in an alternate way. Haweis wrote for women who wanted to use their intellect and seek work outside of the home, but she also

wrote for women who wanted to be beautiful and find a husband. To favour one aspect of her writing over the other would be to limit Haweis' authorial voice.

In the introduction to *Writing Women of the Find de Siècle: Authors of Change*, it is suggested by "placing women writers of opposing views in juxtaposition that a more complex picture of their place in, and their contribution to, *fin-de-siècle* culture starts to emerge" (Gavin and Oulton, 6) and this thesis has taken this call further and used the case study of a single woman writer to ultimately show that these 'opposing views' actually coexist, and not only within the genre but within a single writer's corpus of works themselves. To return to the question originally posed in the introduction chapter, these outwardly opposed works have been connected in this thesis by the overarching themes found throughout Haweis' literary career. Thus, the 'novel with a purpose' *A Flame of Fire* (1897) and the domestic advice manual *The Art of Housekeeping* (1889) are united as both contend that marriage should be entered into with the serious consideration of how it can be used to benefit women. *Rus in Urbe* (1886) is connected to *Chaucer for Children* (1877) through the boundless space of the garden which Haweis displayed in the illustration of Emelye outside without walls. *The Art of Beauty* and Haweis' articles in support of the Suffrage both advise independent thought; women are encouraged to overthrow tyrannical corsets and laws that subjugated them. The compromises between outwardly warring notions and ideologies which this study has found in Haweis' works mark her as a significant case study for the recovery of neglected women writers. These chapters are the pieces which, in the context of the thesis more broadly, have been arranged like a mosaic to produce one coherent picture of Haweis and her works.

Future Research

This thesis has just begun to uncover the significance of Haweis and her works, and there is more

research that can be conducted as a consequence. There is, for example, a fragmentary manuscript which appears to be a work about cooking located in the Haweis Family Fonds archive. Further study could also include examination of the vast quantities of correspondence held across the three archives in London, Canada, and New York. This thesis has paid particular attention to the letters between the Haweis family members, as well as the incoming correspondence from other women writers. There are, as a result, many letters sent to Haweis which were not read but which could, undoubtedly, enhance the understanding of this author. As this thesis focused upon Haweis as a woman writer, the incoming correspondence sent to Haweis from notable male figures of the day has yet to be fully unearthed. There are letters in The Haweis Family Fonds from Walter Besant, Charles Eastlake, Walter Crane, and George du Maurier to identify but a few names of interest to future study. Haweis' personal and professional relationships with men could prove a rich area for study. These men are established in the field of art history, yet their contemporaries, who happen to be women, are not so well-known. Art historians have been seeking to make the artistic work of women more visible in recent years with works such as *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics* (2012) and *Broad Strokes: 15 Women Who Made Art and Made History (in That Order)* (2017). The network, which evidently existed by the correspondence between Haweis and these male painters, offers a way to criticise the exclusion of women like Haweis from art history. In addition, it has been established in this thesis that Haweis worked on proofing Hugh Reginald's works but she also illustrated his books, most notably *Pet, Or, Pastimes and Penalties* (1874).There were fifty of Haweis' illustrations included in the children's story book. Whilst a comparison of Haweis and Hugh Reginald, and indeed Haweis and the aforementioned male artists, is outside the scope of this thesis, as the focus was upon the woman writer, this could be

fertile ground for the field of both literary and artistic collaboration between men and women in the nineteenth century. This thesis has therefore just begun to scratch the surface of Haweis' collaborations with male figures. More work can be done with *Beautiful Houses* (1882), which was touched on in chapter four. In the book, Haweis describes the houses of male artists including Frederic Leighton, William Burges, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, George Henry Boughton, Alfred Morrison, William Stanley Haseltine and John James Stevenson. The book pays particular attention to architectural elements of these houses, which Haweis has chosen as examples of individual style and artistic knowledge. Lastly, in Haweis' memoranda she spoke often of her friend 'Mr. Deutsch', the German Jewish scholar Immanuel Oscar Menahem Deutsch. Deutsch was a close family friend, though Haweis' son Stephen implies that there might have been a deeper love between the scholar and his mother. Certainly, Haweis felt deeply for Deutsch and upon his death in 1873 her diary entry read:

> It is so useless weeping for you now, my dear kind faithful friend, only I cant help it; it is like a limb gone. I wd have given any life for yours but one: made a bonfire of everybody for your one life…Oh my Dutchman I hope you knew that I loved you dearly…I hope you believed up to the end that you came only next to R in my heart. (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 40)

Haweis' feelings for Deutsch were so deep that she had intended to name her daughter after him. However, the baby would be named for her father and Haweis wrote in her diary, "I am sorry R does not like to have the baby called Emanuela…I daresay there would be scandal. It is such a dirty world" (7MEH/5/1, "Thought Book II" 46). To name the child for her male friend, whom she had a close personal relationship with, would have undoubtedly roused suspicions on the child's paternity. That the child is named for Hugh Reginald is perhaps an overcompensation,

though this cannot of course be proved definitively. In any case, Deutsch's work on the Talmud at the British Museum no doubt contributed to the discussion of Judaism that is present in Haweis' manuscript "The History of Woman" and would be beneficial for further study.

Another area of possible value to further studies could be Haweis' 'At Homes'. Haweis and Hugh Reginald hosted a number of such events, inviting many interesting figures to give lectures at Queen's House. This thesis has discussed one 'At Home' in 1894, which saw women's rights activists speak on the Suffrage, but there are many more interesting events hosted by Haweis. In 1891, for example, *The Women's Penny Paper* reported on an 'At Home' where Jane Cobden, who had been elected to the London City Council in 1889, was the keynote speaker. Haweis' 'At Homes' also boasted an African native choir and a lecture by one of the founders of the Salvation Army.

Further study could also be conducted into Haweis' legacy. Of particular interest is the impact that she had upon her son, Stephen. In her article, "Uncovering the Influence of Mary Eliza Haweis in Mina Loy's "Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose": "Consider your mother-in-law's stays" (2020) Whalen has connected Haweis to Mina Loy, the artist and modernist writer, who married Stephen in 1903. Whalen explores Loy's poem and demonstrates, convincingly, how Haweis is present in Loy's poem which looks into the childhood homes of her husbands. Haweis, Whalen contends, is satirised by Loy despite the overlap in their beliefs. Whalen's article is a recent example of the way in which further research into Haweis can impact future studies. Stephen would, after his mother's death, move to Paris to attend an art school and become a painter and photographer in the avant-garde style. His relationship with Haweis has been touched on in this thesis and is certainly distinct enough to warrant further study. Stephen grew up very close to his mother and ostracised from his father. Haweis was the chief source of income and

support when he was growing up, and it was Haweis herself who paid for his schooling. The money that she left to Stephen in her will undoubtedly funded his first travels and he would spend much of his life travelling to finally settle in Dominica. That he should become an artist, following the tradition of his mother and grandfather before him, certainly warrants further examination. The Stephen Haweis papers at Columbia University, which include a memoir, fiction writing, poetry and art, will therefore be a valuable resource for scholars of modernist art.

Final Word

This thesis has bolstered the recovery of marginalised women writers as it has suggested that different approaches to the advancements of gender equality, be they visionary like Wollstonecraft or pragmatic like Haweis, are nevertheless significant contributions to the field. By using Haweis and her works to destabilise the construct of feminism, this thesis can be used as a case study for future research. It is the aim that further research on obscure women writers will not dismiss a subject because they chose to write about the choice of flower to adorn a drawing room, or the importance of a beautiful dress. Instead, this thesis has emphasised the importance of drawing together literature from across a writer's body of works. By arranging the pieces together and situating the more obscure works such as *Rus in Urbe* (1886), *A Flame of Fire* (1897), and the unpublished fragments of fiction alongside Haweis' better-known texts, this thesis has created a mosaic picture which has argued that Haweis was not a vacillating writer. Instead, this study emphasises the importance of questioning assumptions about what it means to be a woman writer in the nineteenth century and contends that the mission of Mary Eliza Haweis is only visible across the full range of her works.

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