Representations of the True Woman and the New Woman in Harper's Bazar

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Representations of the True Woman and the New Woman in Harper’s Bazar, 1870-1879 and 1890-1905

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Program of Study Committee:
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF FIGURES

#### iii

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

- Research Questions  
- Methods  
- Limitations  
- Definition of Terms  

#### 1

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

- Women’s Access to Fashion in the Nineteenth Century  
- The Middle-Class Structure  
- True Woman and Separate Spheres  
- New Woman  
- New Woman Activities  
- Working Women  
- Clothing Changes of the New Woman  
- Resistance to the New Woman  
- The Gibson Girl  
- The Steel Engraving Lady compared to the Gibson Girl  
- Victorian Era Women’s Magazines  
- Harper’s Bazar  

#### 12

## CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

- Types of Cover Images  
- True Woman Covers  
- True Woman Articles  
- True Woman Cartoons  
- New Woman Covers  
- New Woman Articles  
- Comparison  

#### 44

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

- Further Research Questions  
- Limitations  

#### 89

## FIGURES

#### 95

## REFERENCES

#### 115

## APPENDIX

#### 121

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

#### 123
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.  *Harper’s Bazar* July 8, 1871

Figure 2.  *Harper’s Bazar* July 24, 1897

Figure 3.  *Harper’s Bazar* April 1, 1899

Figure 4.  *The San Francisco Call* October 11, 1896, pg. 17

Figure 5.  Charles Dana Gibson illustration of the New Woman

Figure 6.  *Harper’s Bazar* April 2, 1870

Figure 7.  *Harper’s Bazar* July 13, 1872

Figure 8.  *Harper’s Bazar* July 4, 1874

Figure 9.  “Native” *Harper’s Bazar* January 17, 1874

Figure 10.  “Real Education” Harper’s Bazar July 20, 1872

Figure 11.  *Harper’s Bazar* April 7, 1900.

Figure 12.  *Harper’s Bazar* January 13, 1900

Figure 13.  *Harper’s Bazar* April 11, 1891

Figure 14.  *Harper’s Bazar* April 18, 1891

Figure 15.  *Harper’s Bazar* April 23, 1892

Figure 16.  “A Successful Catch” *Harper’s Bazar* October 25, 1890

Figure 17.  Example of Women’s clothing change Harper’s Bazar May 5, 1896

Figure 18.  “A Cautious Girl” by W. B. Tilbert.  *Harper’s Bazar* July 3, 1897

Figure 19.  *Ladies Home Journal* January 1895

Figure 20.  *Ladies Home Journal* June 1895

Figure 21.  “In the Near Future” *Harper’s Bazar* July 18, 1896
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to better understand the ways in which American women were portrayed during the periods of the True Woman (1870 to 1879) and the New Woman (1890-1905) in *Harper’s Bazar* magazine.¹ During the late 19th century, the role of women in American society and culture began to noticeably change. Qualities that once embodied the ideal True Woman including modesty, submissiveness, physical weakness, limited education, and complete devotion to husband and home were called into question and threatened by the rise of the New Woman.² Due in large part to advances in education and women’s rights, the New Woman emerged in society. The New Woman was recognized as a young confident woman with advanced education, good health and occasionally physical beauty. Previous notions of separate spheres that suggested women dwell exclusively within the home and men in the world outside of the home were challenged by these New Women who pursued legal and political rights, sports and other physical activities, and work outside of the home.³ Since the idea of separate spheres was deeply rooted in American culture, the disruption and change of such a system was significant to study. Further, this research provides evidence to support the notion that fashion magazines reflected societal ideals for women during the late nineteenth century.

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¹ The terms “True Woman” and “New Woman” were used during the nineteenth century to describe the characteristics of the ideal woman. The terms are also used by secondary scholars such as Martha Patterson, Barbara Harris, Jean Matthews, Martha Vincinus, Victoria Glendinning, and many others to describe the notion of these distinct personalities and changing notion of the ideal woman in the late nineteenth century.
³ The idea of separate spheres greatly restricted women’s possible involvement in social, political, and employment opportunities. Martha H. Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl; Reimagining the American New Woman 1895-1915* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005).
Through construction of fashion images and illustrations, magazines of the late nineteenth century portrayed a desirable lifestyle to their readers.\(^4\) Filled with images, illustrations, articles, advice columns and advertisements, the content of fashion magazines offered vivid imagery which reflected societal norms and expectations.\(^5\) Women’s magazines served a variety of purposes in the late nineteenth century. They kept women informed on current fashion trends, provided sewing and home-making advice, advertised the latest apparel and beauty goods and announced the most recent societal happenings. As one of the oldest consecutive running women’s magazines in the United States, *Harper’s Bazar* provides significant and insightful information on American women’s history and culture.\(^6\)

As woman’s roles changed both at home and in the wider public sphere during the nineteenth century, it is hypothesized that these representations in magazines also changed beyond merely a change in fashion, but to what extent and why?

This study examined the idea of the True Woman and the New Woman portrayed in the cover images of *Harper’s Bazar* magazine. The internal content of *Harper’s Bazar* was also examined to provide additional primary evidence for this study. I systematically examined the cover images and internal content of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879 and 1890 to 1905 to address the following research questions:

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\(^4\) Hillary Fraser, S. Green, and J. Johnson, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

\(^5\) This information provides otherwise difficult information to obtain and provides an ideal opportunity for scholars to use for study. Fraser, Green, and Johnson, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*.

\(^6\) *Harper’s Bazar* remains in print and popular to this day. Although the magazine is commonly recognized by its’ modern spelling, I use the original, contemporaneous to this study spelling: *Harper’s Bazar*. 
Research Questions

1. In what ways was the True Woman portrayed on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar*? Is there a pattern in the ways in which the cover images and internal content portray this image of women? If there is a pattern, does it reflect a promotion of the True Woman ideal?

2. In what ways was the New Woman portrayed on the covers *Harper’s Bazar*? Is there a recurring pattern in the ways in which the cover images and internal content portray this image of women? If there is a pattern does it reflect a promotion\(^7\) of the New Woman ideal in American society?

3. Does the frequency of the True Woman and the New Woman portrayals through cover images and written content in *Harper’s Bazar* provide evidence of this shifting ideology regarding women in American society?

Methods

This study explored whether the ideals of the True Woman and New Woman were reflected on the cover images of *Harper’s Bazar*. In general, the study found representation of the True Woman and the New Woman in both decades which is discussed further in chapter three. Internal content of the magazines provided additional primary data to support this study. Content analysis was utilized on original *Harper’s Bazar* magazine covers to collect, analyze, and interpret the historical data. Secondary sources written by scholars such as Jean Matthews, Barbara Harris, Martha Patterson, Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green, Judith

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\(^7\) This study defines the promotion of the New Woman as numerous positive images of women participating or acting in a way which was defined at the time and by modern secondary sources as New Woman traits or activities. Editorials which “promote” the New Woman can refer to the term New Woman, the changing role of women, or the women’s movement in general in a positive light, without depicting to its readers a tone of mockery, condescending or disapproval.
Johnson, Marjorie Fergusston and Martha Vicinus directed the search for additional primary data and provided literature review. An analysis of Harper’s Bazar covers and internal content from 1870-1879 was used to gather information on the “True Woman.” Analysis of the New Woman in Harper’s Bazaar from 1890-1905 provided insight into the possible portrayal of the changing values and ideology of American society. I also searched Ladies Home Journal magazine 1895-1897 and Godey’s Lady’s Book 1870-1871 to provide additional evidence of the portrayal of the True Woman and the New Woman in American periodicals.

Grounded theory was utilized for analyzing editorial content within the magazines. Grounded theory refers to the formation of themes from data symmetrically obtained from research. Categories were developed after the initial examination of data, and the various amounts of evidence which emerged from the categories were used to lend support or refute research questions. Constructing a particular theory from data meant “that most hypotheses and concepts are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research.” The data collected from internal editorial content was grouped together according to themes and topics.

Content analysis refers to the procedure of gathering quantitative and sometimes qualitative data from both verbal and non-verbal communication, such as inanimate objects. Content analysis is used in situations where documentary evidence and data is the principle source for studies in which researchers seek to derive meaning from communication. The method of content analysis provides researchers an objective, systematic, and unbiased

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8 Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.*

manner in which to analyze large quantities of evidence.\textsuperscript{10} In this study, content analysis was used to analyze both written communication and imagery. Information was collected on each cover, counted and compared to the alternative decade. Information categories were adjusted to include unforeseen information as it presented itself in the research. Since the two time frames for the study of cover images of Harper’s Bazar created a large amount of information, content analysis provided an effective and appropriate method of analysis.

Two periods of Harper’s Bazar covers, 1870 to 1879 and 1890 to 1905, were systematically examined and recorded using content analysis. Qualitative analysis of internal content of Harper’s Bazar was “synthesized into a meaningful pattern of reconstructed truth, an interpretation, using both imaginative insight and scholarly objectivity.”\textsuperscript{11} Data recorded for each cover image included the date, caption, and type of image (i.e., illustration, painting). The categories were created to effectively record as much information relative to the study about the image as possible without having a photocopy of each image. The variety and frequency of activities of the women on the covers was recorded. Types of activities that the researcher anticipated for portrayal of the True Woman included: sewing, attending to children, arranging flowers, and sitting in groups both indoors and outdoors. These activities were found in the True Woman decade among other activities. Types of activities that the researcher expected to find for portrayal of the New Woman included sports, hunting, and games of intellect, such as chess. While playing chess was not found the other activities were among other unforeseen activities. The dynamics of the groups of women and the direction


of their gaze (i.e., looking down, off in the distance, or directly at the reader) was also considered. Following data collection, the content of each period, 1870-1879 and 1890-1905 was compared in order to understand the changing form of women’s roles in society from the True Woman to the New Woman.

The following categories were developed for analysis of the magazine covers.

1. Do the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* feature women alongside men, children, or servants and at what frequency?
2. Are the women depicted in groups or standing alone?
3. Are women featured in an indoor or outdoor environment? If inside, where in the house are they portrayed? If outside, where are they portrayed? (For example, in a garden, by a pool, etc).
4. What is the direction in which the women gaze? Do the women portrayed look down to the side, off in the distance or do they meet the viewers gaze, looking directly out from the cover of the magazine?
5. In what activities are the women engaged? Sports? Gardening, etc?
6. What kinds of objects/props are the women holding?

The years 1870 to 1879 and 1890 to 1905 were selected for this study for several reasons. The years 1870 to 1879 represent a decade in which the idea of the True Woman was prevalent in American society. The time 1870-1905 is a transitional period in which the idea of the True Woman began to change in that it blended and then was replaced by the New Woman. The later time period, 1890 to 1905, represents a 15-year period in which the idea of the New Woman became increasingly recognized and discussed in American society. Further, in order to effectively compare the shift from one ideal to another, the periods studied needed to be far enough apart to record significant changes in content. Examining two decades in a row such as the 1870s compared to the 1879s might not be far enough apart to conclude that there was a change in overall content. If the selected decades were too far

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apart, however, the idea of the New Woman may begin to blend into other new concepts of women such as the flapper.\textsuperscript{13} Therefore, the analysis ceased at the year 1905.

In order to examine the True Woman and the New Woman a source that was published as early as 1870 and as late as 1905 was necessary. \textit{Harper's Bazar} began publication in 1867 and is still in print today. The magazine enjoyed widespread popularity during the time frame of this study and was considered to have been a major American fashion journal from 1867-1898.\textsuperscript{14} By 1877, Harper’s Bazar had a circulation of 80,000 American readers the majority of which are middle to upper class white women.\textsuperscript{15} As a fashion-focused magazine, cover images presented current trends and editorial content provided the latest in fashionable styles.

The \textit{Harper's Bazar} magazine covers were selected because of their level of consistency in size and purpose each month and their visual importance to the reader. Although almost every issue contained what can be considered a fashion plate in the interior of the magazine, the consistency of their scope could cause problems in data recording.\textsuperscript{16} Within one issue there may be a two-page fashion plate displaying large scenes with several characters, as well as a smaller fashion plate depicting lifestyle scenes. Deciding which fashion plate to record would cause inconsistencies and pose problems for replication. Therefore, the cover image of each issue was selected. The cover images are visually important in that they are the first images the reader sees. Further, unintentional exposure to

\textsuperscript{16} A fashion plate during the time of this study was a drawing usually included in the interior of the magazine for the purpose of showing people the “right” and most fashionable kinds of clothes to wear. Vyvyan Holland, \textit{Hand Coloured Fashion Plates 1770 to 1899} (London: B.T. Batsford LTD, 1955).
the cover images occur as by-standers see the cover while passing by the magazine even if they, themselves, do not own the magazine. Therefore, it is the images on the cover which have the potential for reaching and impacting the most viewers.

The cover image of a magazine also indicates the tone, purpose, and target audience. It is through the cover images that the editor proclaims the message of the magazine. As Marjorie Ferguson notes, “the cover photograph then, insofar as it represents an editorial stance or identity, also reflects the ideology implications of content that in turn reflect the producer’s perceptions of culturally agreed-upon roles, goals and values.”

Magazine covers are an important reflection of the values, goals, and norms of a society.

The months January, April, July, and October of Harper’s Bazar were selected for this study for several reasons. The months represent three-month increments, evenly distributed throughout the year. Each month represents the middle of the weather season: January for winter, April for spring, July for summer and October for fall. Thus, a range of seasons, and possible variations of depictions of women will be captured. The months of January, April, July, and October are considered to be slower times for showing new fashions. These months may not feature the latest in fashionable styles. Rather than a limitation, this poses a benefit to this study, as these months provided the magazine the opportunity to focus on reflective, lifestyle covers. Covers that were not considered to be fashion or lifestyle illustrations that featured reproductions of artwork, scenes that did not apply to the study, head or bust images that depicted hairstyles, and veils or hats, were recorded, but not included in the overall analysis of the cover images.

Limitations

As with any study there are limitations within the scope and depth of this study. One limitation is that this study focused on one women’s magazine, *Harper’s Bazar*. By examining one publication, the findings cannot be generalized to all women’s magazines from the time. The target audience of *Harper’s Bazar* during the period of study was white, middle class to upper class women. Thus, this study focused on the portrayal of the True Woman and New Woman as it related to a particular ethnic and socio-economic class of people. By collecting data from selected months within each year, a complete picture of each decade was not possible.
Definition of Terms

**Designer**
A person who generates ideas for garment styles.\(^\text{18}\)

**Harper’s Bazar**
American fashion magazine founded in 1867 by the Harper’s Brothers. Targeted to middle to upper class American women, the magazine declared itself “A Repository of Fashion, Pleasure and Instruction.” The publication explored the topics of current trends in fashion, patterns for home embroidery and crafts, short stories, society news, entertaining advice, home decoration ideas, cartoons, and poems. The name was originally spelled *Harper’s Bazar* and changed to *Harper’s Bazaar* in the year 1929.

**Gibson Girl**
The images of women in daily life as depicted in the pen and ink illustrations of Charles Dana Gibson. The idea of the New Woman was personified by Gibson’s illustrations. The Gibson Girl became a social symbol of the American New Woman.\(^\text{19}\)

**Magazine cover**
The outward facing front cover of a magazine which served to identify the magazine and sell the magazine to its readers.

**New Woman**
A new type of female personality which emerged in American society towards the turn of the nineteenth century. The New Woman represented a young American girl who was formally educated, physically strong, independent in spirit, and participated in sports and outdoor hobbies. The term New Woman was used during the late nineteenth century and by current scholars to describe these changing ideas regarding women’s roles in late nineteenth century American society.\(^\text{20}\)

**Ready-to-Wear**
Ready-mades described clothing mass produced for mass consumption in the early twentieth century.\(^\text{21}\) After the 1920s, the term ready-to-wear gained more widespread use to describe clothing bought off the rack from retail outlets.

**Separate Spheres**
The Victorian idea that men and women resided in separate spheres of life. Women’s proper place was in the home ensuring a safe comfortable place of tranquility. In contrast, a

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\(^{19}\) Martha H. Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl; Reimagining the American New Woman 1895-1915* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005, 26).

\(^{20}\) Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman*.

man’s sphere was outside of the home in the world of business, industry and politics.\textsuperscript{22}

**Steel-engraving lady** The visual portrayal of the True Woman as she appeared in early print forms such as *Godey’s Ladies Book*. The steel-engraving lady was marked by her pale skin with blushed cheeks, small frame, with corseted waist, oval or heart-shaped face, with small lips, and tiny delicate hands and feet.

**True Woman** Term used by historians to describe the Victorian ideal woman of the mid to late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The True Woman was marked by her modesty, submissive nature, religious and moral piety, and dedication to home, husband and family.\textsuperscript{23}

**Women’s magazine** A magazine targeted to female readers which featured topics central to women’s interests, taste, and needs. Women’s magazines have a clearly defined target audience which is women as a uniform group.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{23} Todd, “Separate Spheres.”

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The later nineteenth century is commonly referred to as the Victorian Age, named after Queen Victoria of England who reigned from 1837 to 1901. The second half of the nineteenth century saw tremendous social, political, and industrial changes. The discovery of gold in the western territories accelerated western expansion and trade. After four years of Civil War, American society attempted a return to normality and sought stability. Industry and transportation continued to grow rapidly in the United States, leading to a new class of first generation millionaires. The late 1870s was a variety of labor disputes which led to violent strikes in urban areas complicated further by the overwhelming number of immigrants landing daily on America soil. Lifestyles between 1870 and the early twentieth century were also changing. Increasing access to apparel through the ready-to-wear industry meant an increase in simplified garments which were more easily obtained by women. Readily available fashion magazines further provided readers images of the latest styles to purchase either in newly created department stores or to replicate at home.

Women’s Access to Fashion in the Nineteenth Century

Life between 1870 and the early twentieth century changed considerably in terms of access to apparel. Before the 1860s, clothing consumption meant personal production for most American women. Technical advancements that stimulated the growth of the women’s ready-to-wear apparel industry included the invention of the sewing machine in 1846, the long cutting knife about 1870, which allowed simultaneous cuttings of multiple layers of fabrics, and the application of electric power to drive the sewing machine and the knife by

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These developments, along with others, such as the invention of synthetic dyes, had a profound effect on the rise of the apparel industry, the price and availability of apparel, and women’s access to clothing. The railroad aided in making goods available faster and cheaper to rural and urban families. Mail order companies such as Montgomery Ward (established 1872) and Sears Roebuck & Company (established 1887) grew in popularity and influence. Americans living in both rural and urban areas began to incorporate fashion catalogs and magazines into their daily lives. As mail order catalogs grew in attractiveness, families began to depend on these publications to inform them of the current products and styles and depended on the railroads to deliver their purchased goods.

Advancements in patterns further accelerated women’s access to fashion. By the middle 1850’s scaled down patterns of both women’s and children’s clothing appeared in women’s magazines such as Peterson’s Magazine and Godey’s Lady’s Book. However, in order for women at home to use the patterns found in these magazines they had to first scale them up to fit their model. In 1863, Ebenezer Butterick developed full sized patterns that were a great success among the American public. Women no longer needed to complete the extra step of re-sizing the patterns and were able to sew directly from the full-scale sizes. Together with the sewing machine, this provided women new opportunities to participate in following the latest styles.

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Styles of fashion changed rapidly from the 1870s to 1900. The ideal silhouette for women’s dresses and gowns in the 1870s and 1880s required detailed measurements and fittings. Tightly fitted bodices adorned with decoration connected to full skirts gathered in the back. Bustles were used by fashionable women to achieve added height, width and overall increased volume in the back of their skirts (see figure 1). This increase in fabric in the back weighed women down and inhibited their movements. Many wealthy women’s garments continued to be made by dressmakers, while middle to lower class women tended to make their garments or parts of the garments themselves. Some middle to lower class women would work on simpler parts of their own garments and dressmakers for more difficult ones.

With advances in the attainment of higher education and the desire for more simple clothing in the 1890s, American women increasingly wore separate skirts and shirtwaists and one-piece dresses, purchased in retail stores, rather than wearing custom or home-made intricately designed dresses. An increased number of simple garments became available to women through ready-to-wear, while other styles such as structured bodices with boning in the waist remained complex. Fashion magazines fed off the newly evolving ready-to-wear industry by providing readers with images of the latest styles ready to purchase. Companies that specialized in ready-to-wear items such as the shirtwaist encouraged women to purchase simpler styles than were seen in the 1870s time period.

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30 Payne, Winakor, and Farrell-Beck, *The History of Costume*
32 Leach, *Land of Desire.*
Within this era of nineteenth century American culture, another element of daily life was developing and changing. The role of women in society was being redefined as America drew closer to the turn of the 20th century. The appropriate roles for women as dutiful homemakers began to shift as women increasingly entered the workforce, previously considered a male-exclusive arena of life. In increasing numbers, women pursued higher education, participated in sports and outdoor activities, adopted new, less restrictive forms of dress, and pushed for equal political and social rights. Early Victorian ideas of the ideal True Woman and separate spheres for men and women were called into question as the New Woman permeated American society. This generated a great deal of anxiety as some people worried about the consequences of blurred gender lines.

The Middle-Class Structure

During the first half of the 19th century, class structure in America was increasingly mobile. Unlike European class structure which relied on a combination of noble titles and wealth, American societal structure was based on an individual’s wealth (among other factors) and a growing number of Americans were earning large amounts of money in a variety of ways. Class structure was far from fixed as fortunes were made quickly from an assortment of trades, industries, farming and land ownership. As American men left rural areas to find work in urban areas and larger cities, some families worried about the morality of their sons. It was far easier to hold middle-class women who resided in the home and

33 A June 1871 article in *Godey’s Ladies Book and Magazine* advertised the first issue of a journal entitled “The True Woman.” This new journal and the group behind it focused on directing women’s new power and involvement in society to topics which suited women’s nature. The article explained the desire to see fair and honest working conditions for women, but stressed the fact that women needed to redirect their efforts back to areas of interest within their own sphere. The journal was not available through Interlibrary Loan.

were kept protected from the outside world to ideals and high standards of strict morality. Middle class women were expected to develop the traits of honesty, purity of thought, moral virtue and sincerity, characteristics closely linked to the principals of the True Woman.

The ideology of domesticity arose in the middle class and was a method by which members of the middle class developed and reinforced their own class identity. In several ways, middle class women imitated the mores of upper-class society in attempts to socially associate themselves with the American elite. For these reasons the concept of the True Woman was first an upper class ideology, then filtered down to middle class American society.

Before the Industrial Revolution, fashion was primarily the province of European court-based aristocracy. But over the course of the 19th century, the increasing power of the middle classes grew and diluted the ruling classes’ domination of fashion. Fashionable forms of dress and conduct were increasingly adopted by the middle class. In 19th century America, fashion served as both a barrier to be surmounted and a standard of membership in the middle and upper classes. In particular, careful attention to dress was adapted by middle-class society in order to even further distinguish themselves from the lower classes in the early nineteenth century. Middle-class women seemed to have accepted and embraced the ideas of the True Woman as a way of both separating themselves from the lower working class and moving closer to association with American upper class society. A family’s wholesome reputation within their community was not only morally desirable, but economically profitable as well. Prospective workers of both genders were hindered by their

36 Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*.
37 Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*. 
relationship with a “fallen” or “bad” family member. High standards of Victorian morality served multiple purposes in society.

The idea of earning wages to support or partially support one’s self became ever more appealing at the end of the 19th century to women of all social classes, evident from the plethora of “career novel” publications. These “career novels” featured fictional stories of heroine women who pursued wage earning jobs outside of the home. Middle class fiction also provided prescriptions for the types of employment opportunities acceptable for respectable women, for instance, serving as a shop girl was acceptable only if the customer base was largely upper class females.

**True Woman and Separate Spheres**

The phrase True Woman is used by historians to describe society’s ideal women of the early to mid 19th century. The True Woman was marked by her modesty, submissive nature, religious and moral piety, and dedication to home, husband and family. Martha Vicinus explains, “in her most perfect form, the lady combined total sexual innocence, conspicuous consumption and the worship of the family hearth.” The idea of the True Woman involved more than a woman’s personality, it also governed her behavior, activities, interests and the company that she kept. The idea of the True Woman within her “sphere of true womanhood” was a reflection of 19th century American culture. Among the middle and

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38 Vicinus, *Suffer and be Still*.
42 As the Victorian age was named after her, Queen Victoria’s influence on society can be seen in fashion, etiquette, and the personification of the True Woman. Completely dedicated to her husband and family she remained in mourning after the death of her husband, Prince Albert from 1861 until her own death in 1901. Martha Vicinus, *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972): ix.
upper classes there existed a dichotomy between the home that was designated as the
women’s proper and natural sphere and the economic world outside of the home. Further
supporting the notion of women’s proper place within the home was a belief in the moral
superiority of women and the idealization of women’s sole function as mother and home-
maker.\(^43\) Inside of the home, middle class women were free to express their emotion and
sincerity. “Sentimentalists insisted that true women were constitutionally transparent,
incapable of disguising their feelings…even her complexion offered evidence of her inner
emotions as she reddened or grew pale in the intensity of her sensibility.”\(^44\)

It is to be noted, that the concept of the True Woman and the extent in which separate
spheres affected and shaped the daily lives of women and their own reactions to the ideology
is debated by historians. Mabel Collins Donnelly explained the two schools of thought in
regards to Victorian women’s sexuality and health in her book *The American Victorian
Woman: the Myth and the Reality*, stating that although there is evidence that women’s lives
were dominated by men, especially in regards to the law and the vote, and that women were
frequently labeled as suffering from “Neurasthenia” there is also a great deal of evidence to
the contrary, pointing to women’s vibrant health, sexuality and even suggesting the presence
of accepted affairs outside of marriage.\(^45\) Furthermore, Glenna Matthews discussed
conflicting views of male verses female supremacy within the family household in her book
*Just a Housewife: The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America*. Matthews noted that the
domestic sphere was important for men as it was for women with evidence that the home
could be a man’s “true place.” Matthews also suggested the decrease in family size at the end

\(^44\) Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 57.
of the 19th century may be evidence that women were enforcing control and limitation in their martial sexuality with their husbands. Lastly, Martha Vicinus stated that “we can now judge Victorian women to have been more varied, active, and complex than previously considered, we must not create a new stereotype that ignores the limits within which Victorians lived and changed.”

The notion of the True Woman developed from a long standing western ideology rooted in medieval religious culture which declared women inferior and wicked. Social prejudices allowed the idea of the True Woman to flourish in the 19th century and included the beliefs that women were inferior to men in intellect, and not capable of operating on an equal level. Due to this fundamental inequality, it seemed natural and proper for women to be kept in a constant subordinate position. Furthermore, the belief that women and men reasoned and thought in completely different ways helped to support the separation of responsibilities and interests. “Woman was defined as a creature of the heart, who acted largely from her affections; man, as a creature of the mind, who was moved primarily by his reason.” Contributing to the notion of intellectual weakness, women were thought to be physically handicapped by their reproductive organs, making them nervous and weak. It was thought that if over-stimulated, a woman’s extremely fragile nervous system could send her into sickness or hysteria. Therefore strenuous work outside of the home or basic exercise

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48 Ironically this notion shifts later in the late 18th to early 19th century as women became held as higher moral guardians of their families.
49 Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere*.
50 Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 57.
was considered dangerous for women, further lending to the notion that it was proper and safer for women to remain primarily inside of the home.\textsuperscript{52}

Another social prejudice of American society in mid 19\textsuperscript{th} century was the idea that women who worked outside of the home were less respectable than those who remained in the home. A respectable woman was thought to not be required, nor desire to work outside of her natural “sphere” of home. As upper class women enjoyed lifetime leisure inside their homes, middle class society aspired to the same in order to establish their own status and further differentiate themselves from the lower classes.\textsuperscript{53} Middle-class girls were similar to upper-class girls in both American and England in the expectation that they would stay at home, assist their mothers in keeping house, and bring comfort and cheer to their fathers until the time came for them to leave home and marry.\textsuperscript{54} The idea of separate spheres is explained by Barbara Harris as “the sharp separation of the woman’s sphere in the home from the man’s outside. The scene outside the home, the man’s sphere, was the scene of the economic struggles and intellectual endeavors.”\textsuperscript{55} Matthews further explains the assumption that during this time it was believed that “men and women are designed by God and nature to operate in different arenas –men in the public world of exploit, war, work, intellect, and politics; women in the world of nurturance and the affections centered on the home.”\textsuperscript{56}

Economic changes that accompanied 19\textsuperscript{th} century industrialization further contributed to the idea of the True Woman.\textsuperscript{57} Industrialization in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century made the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52] Cogan, \textit{All American Girl}.
\item[53] Halttunen, \textit{Confidence Men and Painted Women}.
\item[55] Harris, \textit{Beyond Her Sphere}, 33.
\item[56] Matthews, \textit{The Rise of the New Woman}, 5.
\item[57] Todd, \textit{Separate Spheres}.
\end{footnotes}
production of goods cheaper and faster and women were less needed to produce and work as an equal to support the household.\textsuperscript{58} Women still had work to do, but the mark of a successful man was to earn enough money on his own that his wife did not have to work outside of the home. Since husbands and wives were no longer economic partners within their household, each began to dwell in their own separate sphere. A woman’s status was dependent on the social and economic success of first her father, and once married, her husband.\textsuperscript{59} No longer needed to financially contribute to a household, middle class women found themselves with greater leisure time. “As work moved out of the home, the wife, bereft of her productive duties, acquired a new role as keeper of a calm and orderly ‘haven from the heartless world’.”\textsuperscript{60} Some middle class women aspired to the philosophy of the True Woman because the ideal was seen as desirable and a distinction in society.

Even money-earning pursuits, such as women’s work in the needle trades, were considered by Victorian society as a mere extension of women’s domestic responsibilities. Whereas a man’s skill in a trade was considered an achievement in the economic world, women’s expertise in dressmaking and sewing, which were marketable and profitable skills, were viewed as a natural extension of their traditional duties. In her separate sphere, women had a domestic role which included caring for her children and embodying the moral ideas of beauty and virtue for her family and society as a whole.\textsuperscript{61} Women’s work was not governed by the clock as men’s was, instead women were expected to provide basic human needs, such as food, comfortable shelter, raising of the children, and caring for sick family members.

\textsuperscript{58} Increased immigration and immigrants work in the apparel industry further added to the possible employees for the workforce.
\textsuperscript{59} Vicinus, \textit{Suffer and Be Still}.
\textsuperscript{60} Todd, \textit{Separate Spheres}.
The appearance of the ideal True Woman may best be visualized through images of “the steel-engraving lady.” Steel-engraving was a printing technique used to produce popular magazine illustrations during the 19th century. The steel-engraving lady was the visual portrayal of the True Woman as she appeared in mid-nineteenth century print form in women’s magazines. The term steel-engraving-lady referred to “both the lithograph process by which she was created and to the element of moral rectitude in her character.” She was depicted with frail delicate features and was marked by her pale skin with blushed cheeks, small frame with corseted waist and soft rounded shoulders, oval or heart-shaped face, small lips, and tiny delicate hands and feet (see figure 1). Most popular in mid-nineteenth century America, the steel-engraving-lady was recognized by her down cast eyes or romantic gaze off into the distance. In her book, *A New Atmosphere*, written in 1865, Gail Hamilton described the True Woman type as she sits at home waiting for a future husband to marry her, “Her small hands folded, her meek eyelashes drooping, no throb of impatience or discontent or anxiety in her heart, no reaching out for any career at home or abroad, except a meek ministration in her father’s house.”

It is important to note that Victorian women referred to themselves as True Women. As early as 1871 the term True Woman was used. In the 1871 issue of *Godey’s Ladies Book and Magazine* a brief column under “Notes and Notices” announced the introduction of a new Journal entitled *The True Woman* published annually from 1871 to 1873. The journal discussed the changes in women’s roles and activities but stressed the need to direct women’s attention back to their natural interests by stating “the desire to see the energy of their sex turned into its proper channels.” *The True Woman* stated opposition to “the entrance of

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women into a spheres not their own” but did state support for women’s right to “industrial employment.” The journal was also opposed to women’s suffrage, referring to it as a “fatal gift” and urged congress not to misconstrue “the outcries of a few for the voice of the multitude.”

This article is significant because it provides evidence that the term True Woman was used as early as 1871, and suggests that women were aware of the concept of separate spheres. The True Woman terminology was used occasionally in the print media in the 1870s. However, the term was used most often as women gained increased opportunities in the work force and in education in the 1890s. In essence, as the New Woman slowly developed it became essential to define and discuss the old. The True Woman became an emblem and symbol for domesticity and separate spheres, whereas the New Woman became a symbol of strength, vibrancy, and participation in the outside world. Combined social and economic circumstances prohibited lower class working women from obtaining the ideal True or New Woman status, yet the ideal was still admired by some working class Americans.64

**New Woman**

As a type, the New Woman was young, well educated, and independent of spirit, highly competent, physically strong and fearless.65 The idea of the New Woman grew as both an alarming prospect and slow reality in the later 19th century and continued into the first decade of the 20th century.66 The term referred to women whose roles and activities began to

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64 Quoted in Vicinus, *Suffer and Be Still.*
65 Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman.*
66 Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl.*
change from the ideal of the True Woman. The New Woman widened her sphere as she became involved in activities previously held exclusively in the male sphere of business, politics, college, sports and other physical activities, and the workplace. The concept of the New Woman was not simply a matter of taking on new activities; she represented a new ideology of women and their role in society. The presence of a New Woman in society also meant that the meaning of femininity and masculinity were being redefined within American culture. Rather than focusing on the liberation of women’s sexuality, many advocates of the New Woman reinforced the previous notions of female purity and sexlessness by envisioning themselves as “chaste yet maternal heralds of a higher race” …whereby “female sexuality is purged, protected, or transcended through activism.” Initially very few lower class women directly benefited from the changing ideas of the New Woman. Yet, the advancements made by the upper and middle classes in education, political and legal rights were the beginnings of a process of change in collective thinking of society.

New Woman Activities

The changes in women’s lives were defined at the time as “the advancement of women.” This broad term could be applied to an unlimited number of areas from basic education to more extreme ideas of equal political rights. Although hundreds of new women’s clubs formed after the end of the Civil War in cities and small urban areas, they continued to grow both in numbers and membership. The American Association for the

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69 Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siécle*. 45.
70 Vicinus, *Suffer and Be Still*.
71 Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman*. 
Advancement of Women (AAAW) was founded in 1873\textsuperscript{72} and hosted series of lectures for women on topic such as higher education and financial independence. The AAAW was not the only organization of its kind during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. They differed from pre-Civil War women’s clubs in that they were not devoted to charity, religion or simple sewing circles, but instead focused on intellectual self-improvement and political advancement.\textsuperscript{73} In response to years of exclusion from all male literary and political clubs some women’s clubs featured various lectures on literature and politics. Some of the clubs became the subject of controversy and satire.\textsuperscript{74}

Education was crucial in narrowing the gaps of inequality between men and women around the turn of the century. Before the New Woman, a woman’s education was limited and intended to bring out her ‘natural’ submission to authority and innate maternal instincts. Young women were trained to have no opinions lest they seem “too formed” and “too definite” for a young man’s taste.\textsuperscript{75} It was believed that increased education and critical thinking lessened a woman’s appeal and chances of marriage. In contrast, one of the features of the New Woman was her rising level of education, whether that included completing high school or pursuing college for higher education. From 1870 on, the majority of high school graduates were female (see table 1).

\textsuperscript{72} The beginning of the AAAW was during the time of the True Woman. Indeed, women joined clubs in great numbers following the Civil War. However, the nature of women’s club shifted in focus to include more topics about the advancement of women. Women were allowed increased opportunities for public speaking, group organization and discussion and involvement within their community. The number of different clubs, membership size and scope of topics differentiated new women era clubs from the previous early-mid Victorian clubs.
\textsuperscript{73} Matthews, \textit{The Rise of the New Woman}.
\textsuperscript{74} Showalter, \textit{Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle}
\textsuperscript{75} Vicinus, \textit{Suffer and Be Still}. 
Table 1 Public and Private High school graduates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year Attending</th>
<th>Males (in thousands)</th>
<th>Females (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Women also increasingly entered higher education. In 1870, when one percent of college-age Americans attended college, 21 percent were women. In 1910, five percent of college-age people attended and forty percent of these were women, by 1920, an even distribution of women to men attendees was reached. The content of fashion magazines reflected the changing standards in women’s education. In an April 15, 1893 issue of *Harper’s Bazar*, suggestions for making high school, college, and seminary commencement dresses offered to *Bazar* readers. The very presence of specially designed commencement gowns supports the notion that young women’s matriculation rates were increasing and fashion magazines reflected this growing societal trend.

As women advanced their minds they also strengthened their bodies. Sports activities including hiking, camping, mountain climbing, tennis, golf, basketball, sailing, swimming, skating, bowling, and bicycling became increasingly popular. The invention and popularity of the bicycle had direct effect on the perception of the New Woman. Because it was very difficult to ride a bicycle with a skirt and impossible to ride side saddle as you would a horse,

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76 Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman*.
77 Blum, *Victorian Fashion & Costume from Harper’s Bazar 1867-1898*. 
bloomers or full, somewhat-baggy pants were invented for the activity with the majority [62 percent] of inventors of cycling skirts, women. Cycling was a hallmark activity of the New Woman and she was frequently portrayed in illustrations participating in this activity in a manner similar to men. Bicycling was significant because it introduced new apparel and exercise and helped to alter the image of women. It also created a new social activity as seen through the creation of the two seated cycle and numerous cycling clubs for both men and women. A woman on a bicycle was strong, capable and independent, riding where she wanted and when she wanted. “As a New Woman on a bicycle… she exercised power more fundamentally, changing the conventions of courtship and chaperonage, of marriage and travel.”

Department stores added to the increasing freedom and choice of activities for women by providing them a place to socialize, work, and to spend money. By the mid 1870’s, department stores had created a pleasing new public space for women to enjoy. The department store in many ways became a symbol and very essence of the consumer revolution. Women entered the emerging position of department store buyer, earning high salaries sometimes to the resentment of men who turned to other store departments such as furniture in an effort to occupy a “manly” sector. Women contributed to the department store as consumers, low salary garment workers or shop girls, and high salary buyers. The development and improvement of public transportation such as commuter trains and

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79 Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman*.
80 Helvenston, Invention, the angel of the Nineteenth Century.
81 Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs and Bloomers; The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990)
82 Leach, *Land of Desire*.
83 Leach, *Land of Desire*. 
streetcars in cities further allowed women to travel both in and around cities by themselves to shop and to participate in other consumption and social activities.\textsuperscript{84}

**Working Women**

At the turn of the century, increasing numbers of women entered the work force.\textsuperscript{85} From 1870 to 1900 the number of women employed outside of the home grew substantially (see table 2). In 1870, nearly 1.8 million women worked outside of the home, 2.4 million in 1880, and finally over 5 million women worked outside of the home by 1900.\textsuperscript{86} The idea of women working outside of the home was by no means new, but the number of women doing so, and the variety of employment available was the considerable difference. American female workers represented every race and marital status. Author Olive Schreiner writes in her 1911 book *Women and Labor*, “Today we are found everywhere raising our strange new cry-‘Labor and the training that fits us for labor!’”\textsuperscript{87} Schreiner reflected the enthusiasm some women felt at the prospect of financial independence and the general right to work. As stated by the historian Julia Blackwelder, “Whether driven by poverty or drawn by the prospect of wages and a life outside of the home, working women had established a conspicuous presence by 1900.”\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{84} Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman.*
\textsuperscript{86} Susan Estabrook Kennedy, *If All We Did Was To Weep at Home: A History of White Working-class Women in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979). It should be noted however that although the number of women working outside of the home is drastically increasing so is the overall population of the United States. General population increase should be taken into consideration when evaluating theses figures.
### Table 2 Comparison of females to males in the labor force from 1860-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Women</th>
<th>Number of Men</th>
<th>Percent of Women</th>
<th>Percent of Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1,029,817</td>
<td>7,130,935</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>8,160,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1,778,348</td>
<td>10,225,890</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>12,004,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2,479,869</td>
<td>13,999,048</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>16,478,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>5,165,822</td>
<td>22,388,264</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>27,554,086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Many of the women that entered the workforce increased their presence in what Wendy Gamber called “feminine pursuits”: the sex-segregated occupations of food preparation, the needle trades, and childcare.\(^89\) This sex-segregation was in part shaped by the curricula and culture of late nineteenth and early twentieth century schools, which guided young people in directions that “suited” their sex as well as their racial and class backgrounds.\(^90\) Once employed, stereotypes of femininity crept into advice literature targeted at “pink-collar” professionals. Historian Sally Mitchell [referring to early 1900’s women’s work] explained “As women moved into a new profession, the conception of that profession was altered to show how it served the womanly ideal.”\(^91\) For example, as the number of female secretaries and clerks increased, the advice literature published in the British magazine *Young Women* encouraged female clerks to work obediently and silently, whereas

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\(^{89}\) Gamber, “A gendered Enterprise.”
\(^{90}\) Blackwelder, 40.
young male clerks were urged to demonstrate their intelligence, confidence, energy, and leadership in the hopes of promotion.  

While most lower-class women worked out of necessity, many single women entering the work force in the later 19th century were from middle class families. At the beginning of the twentieth century, teaching, clerical work, and nursing, which required formal and advanced education, remained the almost exclusive purview of the middle class. Higher education supported women’s pursuits, particularly upper and middle class women who could afford higher education. Between 1880 and 1920, the number of four year collegiate degrees conferred on women increased from 2,500 to 16,600.  

Mainstream periodicals and advice manuals targeted to the middle class encouraged teenage girls to complete high school and find some form of work which would teach them skills they would not learn in school or at home.  

**Clothing Changes of the New Woman**

The New Woman was also different from the True Woman in the clothes that she preferred to wear. The style of the New Woman was functional. The shirtwaist and skirt was a popular look recognized as a New Woman style. Compared to the True Woman, the New Woman had less weight of clothing to bear. The basic shirtwaist style, consisting of a plain fitted skirt and separate blouse became popular in the 1890’s, and introduced a new phase in women’s dress design. The shirtwaist (see figure 2) was the beginning of a revolution in clothing production as its ease of construction accelerated ready-to-wear garment manufacture. These garments were mass produced and widely available to be purchased.

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93 Blackwelder, 39.
directly from the store. Upper-middle class women as well working women in small businesses, offices and factories adopted the style. The skirt of the New Woman was functional in that it was not too-narrow nor was it too wide or heavy, which would make movement a challenge. The more functional attire of the shirtwaist and comfortable, less cumbersome skirt of the New Woman used for everyday wear reflected the goals of women’s rights activists in that the women were strong, confident and capable of physical exertion.

**Resistance to the New Woman**

The New Woman did not arise in American culture without first being met with fear, skepticism and resistance. Opinionated editor-in-chief Edward Bok doubted the very existence of the New Woman. An extremely influential force at *Ladies Home Journal* he often featured editorials and advice columns which warned against the idea of the New Woman. When asked in a June 1895 issue his opinions of the New Woman, Bok stated, “the ‘new woman’ as an actuality, does not exist. At present, she has two kinds of existence only: one in the minds of a certain group of women; the other on paper. Beyond those two places she neither does exist, nor will nor can exist.” Although the New Woman clearly did exist at the time and was frequently directly referred to in *Ladies Home Journal* via editorials and advertisements (see figure 3), Bok insisted to his readers that the New Woman could never become a reality. Historians have stated that Bok regularly addressed his readers in a “minister or schoolteacher” tone, preaching morality and proper manners in an obvious and straightforward manner.

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96 Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman.*
Fears regarding the place of men and women were similar to general fears of uncertainty in an ever changing modern world. An unstable and shifting sense of order in regards to race, class structure and nationality were intensified around the turn of the century. Historian Elaine Showalter wrote that society felt at the time, “if men and women can be fixed in their separate spheres...we can preserve a comforting sense of identity and permanence the face of that relentless specter of millennial change.”

In many ways the New Woman represented unsettling change and the deep-rooted erosion of long-established gender roles.

There were fears that liberated women would avoid marriage and bear children outside of wedlock, or a far worse scenario, that women would cease having children altogether. It was also feared that once distracted by education and the potential for a career which brought financial independence, women would begin “abandoning their natural destiny” of home and child care. Both science and medicine worked against the New Woman by suggesting that women who sought higher education and self-development outside of their home would suffer from freakishness, sickness and sterility, with the latter resulting in racial degeneration. The very medical and scientific beliefs which helped support keeping the True Woman indoors with her children were used against the New Woman. The few female scientists in American society faced such overwhelming discrimination within their field that it led to their own segregation from the mainstream.

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100 Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siécle*. 4.
101 Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl*.
102 Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*.
104 Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*. 
Scientists of the time stressed the relationship between an increase of nervous disorders among women to the new changes in women’s roles, activities and aspirations. It was believed that a woman’s body and mind could not handle such stimuli and activity outside of the home and that their personal nerves and nervous system as a whole would suffer as a result of such a lifestyle. Some doctors assumed that women’s brains and reproductive organs were in direct competition with each other for women’s limited energy, and therefore women’s menstrual cycles controlled their physical and mental lives. Scientists and doctors of the middle to late 19th century referred to Darwin’s 1859 publication of *The Origin of Species* as evidence that men had a more highly evolved brain than women and were therefore capable of higher thought and reasoning.

Some popular press outlets such as magazines, newspapers and journals worked to discourage the idea of the New Woman by featuring cartoons and editorials against her. Caricatures of the New Woman often featured her as an “old maid,” a “tom-boy” or a very mannish woman. One such cartoon in an October 11, 1896 issue of *The San Francisco Call* (see figure 4) stated the New Woman could be sorted into six basic stereotypes, the “Shouting Woman,” the “Athletic Woman,” the “Learned Maid,” the “Manish Woman,” the “Political Woman,” and the “Old Maid.” Within this cartoon, the stereotypes of the New Woman were compared to the ideal wife and mother figure that still prevailed as the desirable role model for young girls and women. This type of cartoon was not uncommon and reflected social fears surrounding the New Woman. Women’s magazine editors and writers also helped to discourage the New Woman’s popularity among their readers.

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105 Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere.*  
106 Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy.*  
107 Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere.*
September 1897 article in *Ladies Home Journal* questioned the worth of New Woman literature and expanding careers paths:

The increased opportunities for ‘careers’ now offered to women, and the facilities for higher education, have brought forth a host of new types of heroine in the past decade. Many of these are atrocious caricatures, the product of ill-balanced minds. These unfortunately have been christened ‘new women’ novels, and have had more than their share of comment. The facility with which they are forgotten is the best proof of their worthlessness and of the prevalence of a healthy taste among readers.

It should not be overlooked that members of the middle-class had concerns similar to upper-class society regarding women’s new role in the public sphere. Although printed in Great Britain, the *Girl’s Own Paper* reported in 1894-5 concerns of a “widespread feeling, especially amongst the lower middle-class, that a woman becomes unwomanly when she enters into the same field of labor as a man, in direct competition with him.”108 Such articles warned that once a woman chose to become educated and enter into a profession outside of the home she would inevitably reject the option of marriage and become a spinster.109 The single middle class woman was often labeled one of two things; either as a pitted poor lady (which was a social problem) or a glorified spinster (held as a liberated example).110

**The Gibson Girl**

The term Gibson Girl has both a specific and a general meaning. In its literal sense it is used to describe the women in illustrations of Charles Dana Gibson. Gibson drew images of women and daily life from 1886 to 1910. Unlike steel-engraved images which can be credited to a variety of artists, the Gibson Girl was created and maintained by Charles Dana Gibson (although there were several artists with a similar style). It was Gibson’s portrayal of

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109. Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*.
women which gained mass public attention. Born in Massachusetts on September 14, 1867, Gibson began illustrating for *Life* magazine in 1886 at the age of 19. His early images had style and humor which made them both interesting and attractive, but it wasn’t until the birth of his Gibson Girl illustrations that Gibson’s national reputation developed.\textsuperscript{111}

Charles Dana Gibson’s name and illustrations captured the essence of the 1890s. As a talented illustrator, he rarely worked with political cartoons, but was instead intensely drawn to images of social life within all social classes. His illustrations of women had distinguished characteristics which immediately separated them from other depictions of the time. His pen and ink drawings of the American female were known simply as the “Gibson Girl.” These women in his illustrations had long slender necks, strong healthy figures, thick hair piled on top of their heads, proud stances and confident looks (figure 5). The Gibson Girl was a balance of the independence of the New Woman and the feminine allure of the True Woman. As Martha Patterson explains, “While her stature connoted formidability, her large bust, cinched waist, and voluminous hair would come to define feminine allure and fecundity.”\textsuperscript{112}

The Gibson Girl embodied the ideal American beauty and offered a popular version of the New Woman.\textsuperscript{113} Her appeal was vast and “while any woman could appropriate her image, the Gibson girl was an essentially ‘white’ bourgeois ideal representing the pinnacle of evolutionary accomplishment and serving as a foundation for American dominance on a world stage.”\textsuperscript{114}

The Gibson Girl and the illustration style was a contrast to the former illustrated images of the True Woman as reflected in the steel-engravings of previous

\begin{footnotes}
\item[112] Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl*, 38.
\item[114] Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl*.
\end{footnotes}
magazines. As illustrator Harrison Fisher, one of Gibson’s imitators, pointed out, Gibson had abandoned ‘the little, dimpled chin, the low forehead, the tiny mouth’ that had characterized the steel-engraving lady.”  

Gibson explored social issues such as social climbing, mis-matched marriages, courting, awkward social interactions, and marriage. Among these situations, poorly matched marriage of American girls to European nobility were important to Gibson who “wage[d] a relentless campaign against the tendency of American girls to wed European nobility for their titles...he represented the ideal in courtship as a matter of mutual respect and admiration.”  However, Gibson was careful not to push the boundaries of his illustrations by drawing his Gibson Girls in controversial situations that expressed political ideas or radical social reform. The Gibson Girl was almost never shown working outside the home, participating in politics, or advocating women’s suffrage. “In many ways the independence of the Gibson girl did not go much beyond playing sports, wearing comfortable clothing, and looking self-reliant.” In essence, the Gibson Girl represented only a partial depiction of the new woman, whose main asset remained her feminine charm and beauty.

Paired with the Gibson Girl was her counterpart and equal, the Gibson Man. Although never the focus of the illustrations, the Gibson Man was similar to the Gibson Girl in that he represented the ideal within the gender. Similar to the Gibson Girl, he also had a proud, strong look without appearing arrogant. He was tall and slender, with distinct features. However attractive, the Gibson Man never reached the same popularity and influence as the Gibson Girl. Gibson’s illustrations and artistic style were popular with the American public,

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and were so captivating that the style of the Gibson Girl was idolized, imitated and commercially marketed to the American public for nearly twenty years.\textsuperscript{118} The Gibson Girl was reflected on the stage, in products such as china, furniture, and even wallpaper composed of repeating Gibson Girl faces. Gibson’s influence on American society was extraordinary; clothing styles and dances were named after her.\textsuperscript{119} “He not only recorded the manners, morals and mating habits of the era with perception, commentary and fantastic style, he also managed to create and contribute to the very way in which the decade chose to act and look.\textsuperscript{120}

**The Steel Engraving Lady compared to the Gibson Girl**

The contrast between the idea of the True Woman and the New Woman can be seen when comparing the illustrations of the steel-engraving lady and the Gibson Girl. The steel-engraving lady represented the True Woman as she appeared in early print forms. An article in the Atlantic Monthly (1901) written by Caroline Ticknor entitled “The Steel-Engraving Lady and the Gibson Girl” illustrated the differences in the two ideas of women through a fictional conversation between prototypes of these women. Written in 1901, the article provides a unique perspective of two distinct behavioral ideals. The article described the Steel-Engraving Lady as sitting quietly, mistress of the home and domestic space and ensuring tranquility, while the Gibson Girl bursts into the room flinging golf clubs on the sofa and dropping down into a low chair. The two characters talk back and forth on the issue of women and their new place in society.

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\textsuperscript{119} Banner, *American Beauty*.

\textsuperscript{120} Gelman, *The Best of Charles Dana Gibson*. 
The Gibson Girl explains to the Steel-Engraving Lady that her role is one of equality with men, that she is an active and useful member of society, and that she regularly disregards the thoughts and wishes of her male peers. The Gibson Girl states, “We don’t require their approval. Man has been catered to for ages past, while women was a patient, subservient slave.” The Gibson Girl explained her career goals and her education which opened up opportunities for her to leave the sphere of the home to make a difference in the world. The Steel-Engraving Lady asked, “‘and can no woman serve the public at home?’ The other said gently. Her voice was very sweet and low. ‘I have always been educated to think that our best service was’-” here the Gibson Girl cuts her off and says “‘To stand and wait...the motto ‘heaven helps her who helps herself’ suits the ‘new woman.’” The Gibson Girl also adds “the question now is not ‘What does man like?’ but ‘What does woman prefer?’” The idea of the True Woman and New Woman were reflected not only in the words of these two characters, but also in their behavior throughout the conversation. The author of the article, Caroline Ticknor, did not strongly advocate which side was better or right. Both characters made arguments and questioned the other. However, the tone and general conclusion of the article leaves the reader with a sense that change was occurring.

Victorian Era Women’s Magazines

By the mid-1870s a good portion of the magazine industry targeted female readers, with at least fifty new magazines making their début between 1870 and 1900. Increased literacy rates contributed to the success of women’s magazines. By the mid 1800s almost

ninety percent of American women could read and write.\textsuperscript{123} Traditional women’s magazines were defined by Marjorie Ferguson as “magazines whose content and advertising is aimed primarily at a female audience and at female areas of concern and competence as customarily defined within our [American] culture.”\textsuperscript{124} Popular Victorian women’s periodicals of the time included \textit{Delineator} (1872), \textit{McCall’s} (1897), \textit{Ladies Home Journal} (1883), \textit{Woman’s Home Companion} (1873), \textit{Good Housekeeping} (1885), \textit{Pictorial Review} (1899), \textit{Godey’s Ladies Book} (1830)\textsuperscript{125}, \textit{Harper’s Bazar} (1867), \textit{Peterson’s Magazine} (1863), and \textit{Frank Leslies Gazette of Fashion} (1854), among others. Women’s magazines were easily identifiable by their cover images, which featured women and traditionally feminine topics (home, crafts, gardens) to entice the female audience.\textsuperscript{126}

Women’s magazines were sources of news, fashion advice, home craft ideas and trends, literature, advice, etiquette and much more. The popularity of women’s magazines and their continuous growth in readership and new titles reflected the Victorian American cultural enthusiasm for woman-targeted forms of media. By 1900, print media reached great numbers of middle and upper class American women and was affordable and accessible to the majority of the American population.\textsuperscript{127} Technology such as railroads, postal services and power industries helped the magazine industry prosper in the mid to late 1800s. Advances in print technology made it possible for publishing houses to produce hundreds of copies of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Godey’s Ladies Book} is an early 19th century women’s publication targeted at elite upper-class American women. It first appeared in 1830 was popular among its readers. According to historian Mary Ellen Zuckerman this publication is often seen as a model for later women’s magazines and helped create a “female sphere” in periodical forms of media. \textit{Godey’s Ladies Book} is considered an early to mid 19th century women’s publication and is therefore mentioned for its early significance but not included in the discussion of later 19th century women’s periodicals.
\textsuperscript{126} Benet, Daniels, and Tuchman, \textit{Hearth and Home}.
\textsuperscript{127} Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer, and Hebbron. \textit{Women’s Worlds}.
\end{flushleft}
magazines in a short amount of time.\textsuperscript{128} Expansion of this type of technology and the concentration of populations in towns and cities made the magazine industry a continuously prosperous business.\textsuperscript{129}

Furthermore, publishing houses aggressively pursued advertising within their titles which helped to lower the cost of the magazine.\textsuperscript{130} Due to the great success of women’s magazines, companies were eager to invest in advertising. Magazines used common marketing strategies by expanding their markets and dividing the population into consumer groups based on age, class, region and gender.\textsuperscript{131} For this reason there were a great number of specialty magazines in circulation by the late 1800s.

Women’s magazines not only served as a leisure time entertainment but worked to help women make sense of themselves and the world; because of this, magazines reflected societal change. As “women’s role in the home and economy changed, so too did the nature of the women’s magazine.”\textsuperscript{132} Magazines focused on the role of women as consumers for their households. Instructions for upper-middle class women regarding their servants and general housekeeping were often combined with fashion and entertainment. The style, direction, and topics were decided on by the editors and producers of the magazine. Images and content reflected the producers’ perceptions of socially accepted values, roles and goals of women.\textsuperscript{133} Some British historians such as Alison Adburgham view women’s magazines of the early 19th century as tools of women’s repression by narrowly defining women’s

\textsuperscript{129} Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer, and Hebbron, \textit{Women’s Worlds}.
\textsuperscript{130} Zuckerman, \textit{A History of Popular Women’s Magazines}.
\textsuperscript{131} Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer, and Hebbron, \textit{Women’s Worlds}.
\textsuperscript{132} Zuckerman, \textit{A History of Popular Women’s Magazines}, 2.
\textsuperscript{133} Benet, Daniels, and Tuchman, \textit{Hearth and Home}, 78.
activities and interests so that any interest outside of this domestic sphere came to be viewed as ‘unwomanly.’

Similar concepts can be applied to early American women’s magazines such as *Godey’s Ladies Book*, which helped shape ideas regarding feminine hobbies and interests. Other historians argue that for better or for worse women’s magazines contributed to distinctions in gender by narrowing their content to perceived woman-focused topics such as housekeeping, fashion, beauty and family. “The increasing importance of the magazine in this century has a close but complex relationship to changing constructions of gender differences.”

Magazine cover images are perhaps the most powerful communication of the periodical. The primary function of a magazine cover is to identify the name of the magazine and sell it to the reader. As the first image the reader views, cover images send an instant message about the content, style, tone, lifestyle and quality of the magazine and plays a crucial role in selling the magazine. Furthermore the image itself embodies the projected lifestyle the magazine is promoting to its readers.

Editors of women’s magazines had the power of interpretation; to project lifestyle images on the cover of its magazines with the hope that such images would be accepted and further contribute to selling the magazine. Most of all “a chosen model represents one editor’s beliefs about what a particular group of readers want to be like.”

Within her study of traditional women’s magazine covers, Marjorie Ferguson explained, “The world of women suggested by the covers of traditional women’s magazines is one of several sex-

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135 Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer, and Hebbron, *Women’s Worlds*, 76.
segregated worlds our culture presents to females along with others which occur in the education, occupation, and sporting spheres.”

**Harper’s Bazar**

*Harper’s Bazar* was among America’s major fashion journals from 1867 to 1898. Founded by Fletcher Harper in association with his brothers, the first issue of *Harper’s Bazar* appeared on November 2, 1867. *Harper’s Bazar*, with the subtitle “A Repository of Fashion, Pleasure and Instruction,” was targeted to upper-middle class American women and edited by Mary L. Booth, a historian of New York City. The publication explored topics such as current trends in fashion, patterns for home embroidery and crafts, short stories, society news, entertaining advice, home decoration ideas, cartoons, poems and of course featured advertisements. By 1877, *Harper’s Bazar* had 80,000 issues in circulation, a great success by the standards of the day. The magazine was widely distributed throughout America and even reached remote areas of the country. *Harper’s Bazar* was the female equivalent of *Harper’s Weekly*, with similar style, layout, font, and illustration style.

One factor that made *Harper’s Bazar* significant to its readers was its claim to deliver the latest fashion styles almost at the same time as they were developed in Europe. An early issue of *Harper’s Bazar* proclaimed, “Special arrangements have been made with leading European journals. Whereby *Harper’s Bazar* would receive fashions designs in advance and publish them at the same time that they appeared in Paris, Berlin and other European cities.” In the early years of the magazine, the fashion plates came in the shape of duplicate electrotypes from the *Der Bazar* in Berlin, Germany. *Der Bazar* was the original

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139 Amnéus, *A Separate Sphere*.
141 Blum, *Victorian Fashion & Costume from Harper’s Bazar 1867-1898*. 
fashion magazine published in Germany after which *Harper’s Bazar* was named and modeled. In its first issue, the editor of *Harper’s Bazar* stated “our readers will thus be sure of obtaining the genuine Paris fashions simultaneously with Parisians themselves.”*Harper’s Bazar* was a primary source for fashion trends and other information regarding clothing. The magazine provided its readers detailed illustrations and descriptions of the latest trends for women and children. The *Harpers Bazar* staff included their own descriptions and opinions of styles and trends coming out of New York City, adding to the fashion content.

Margaret Sangster assumed the position of editor in 1889 following the death of the original editor, Mary L. Booth. The Harper firm began to fail as a business, and weekly publications were reduced to monthly editions in 1901. The publication lost popularity from 1899 to 1913 due to competition from newer magazines such as *Vogue*. Under new ownership of William Randolph Hearst in 1913, the magazine regained its status as a major fashion journal. In 1929 the original spelling *Bazar* from German origins was replaced with *Bazaar*. *Harper’s Bazar* is unique in that it is the oldest running American fashion magazine with over 141 years of issues, and is still in print today. *Harper’s Bazar* originally sold for ten cents a copy or $4.00 a year in advance.

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143 Blum, *Victorian Fashion & Costume from Harper’s Bazar 1867-1898*.
144 Amnéus, *A Separate Sphere*.
147 Blum, *Victorian Fashion & Costume from Harper’s Bazar 1867-1898*. 
CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

The transition of the portrayal of the True Woman into the New Woman in the cover images and content of Harper’s Bazar did not change overnight or even in the course of a few years, but rather there existed a gradual blending of New Woman ideas and activities into the previous content of the True Woman. In the following section, I will discuss the quantitative and qualitative results of the Harper’s Bazar research.

Types of Cover Images

When looking for a portrayal of the True Woman or the New Woman on the covers and in the content of Harper’s Bazar, it was important to analyze both the image of the woman and her surrounding environment. In many cases we see a notable change in content of the cover images when we see the American woman in a new setting, participating in a new activity or with new company. This change in atmosphere was also found in Carolyn Kitch’s study of Ladies Home Journal covers when she stated, “The means of the ‘American Woman’ had to do not so much with her looks, but rather with her location and context; it was defined by where and in whose company she appeared, and by what she did there.”148 By determining the norm for the earlier period we can note changes in the later time which may indicate a shift from True Woman towards New Woman ideology.

This study divided the covers of Harper’s Bazar into five basic categories: fashion illustrations, illustrated scenes, portraits, assorted heads, and multiple images. The fashion illustrations on the cover of Harper’s Bazar depicted women in lifestyle scenes and were recorded for this study. The second type of cover were illustrated scenes which accompanied a fictional story in the magazine or resembled a painting. This type of cover image often did

not feature people and thus was not included in the study. Some covers featured heads or bust images and illustrated a portrait image of a well-known person or was intended to illustrate women’s hat or hairstyles. Since these types of covers did not include background details or a full view of the person, information from these covers were not included in the study. There were also instances of cartoons or multiple images on the cover. Cartoon covers occurred twice in the study and featured cartoons about the changing seasons. Lastly, multiple image covers featured two or more smaller images on the cover. If one of the images was a fashion illustration it was considered for the study, otherwise the cover was not included. Fortunately for the researcher, most of the covers were fashion illustrations and encompassed the majority of the data collected for this study.

The initial intent of this study was to research Harper’s Bazar covers from 1890 to 1905, however beginning in 1901 the cover images shifted from a new cover each month as previously seen from 1870 onward to a generic cover which remained the same each month. From 1901 to 1905 a standard cover featuring two side pillars, the title of the magazine and date were found on the magazine cover every month. For this reason the New Woman cover image research ended in 1901. Internal editorial content continued to be collected and analyzed until 1905 as originally intended. I hypothesize that the change in the cover format may have been effected by the financial success of Harper’s Bazar which was in decline at the turn of 19th century.

**True Woman Covers**

Within the study’s True Woman era, 1870 to 1880, there were 116 cover images. During the time period there were an approximately even number of indoor and outdoor scenes. A total of 54 indoors scenes were recorded for January, April, July and October and
52 outdoor for the same months (see table 3). Within this set of research, there were ten covers which had non-recognizable environments. These covers included a blank white background or ambiguous background objects such as pillars or potted plant which could indicate either indoor or outdoor environments.

Table 3. Total and percentages of indoor to outdoor scenes on *Harper’s Bazar* Covers 1870-79.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1870-1879 number</th>
<th>1870-1879 percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Covers</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Covers</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non- recognizable background</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were a limited number of activities portrayed for covers featuring indoor or domestic scenes. Sitting and standing were the most common activity found on the cover during this period (82%). The activity of attending to children was defined within this study as women holding, looking to, kneeling down with or otherwise giving children attention.

Attending to children was the second most frequent activity at 10.4%. Many covers counted for more than one activity as some members of a group were sewing while others were standing or attending to children (see figure 6). Other domestic or indoor activities included sewing, arranging flowers and assisting a bride (see table 4).

Table 4. Numbers and percentages of indoor or domestic activities as seen on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* Covers 1870-79.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indoor/Domestic Activity</th>
<th>1870-1879 Number</th>
<th>1870-1879 Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing or Sitting</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending to children</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging Flowers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting a Bride</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the 1870's there was a narrow selection of outdoor activities on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* including walking, swimming, skating, horseback riding, hunting, and shopping. Although there was a total of 52 covers featuring outdoors scenes, the majority showing women sitting or standing outdoors. Activities women participated in outdoors besides sitting and walking were limited on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879 (see table 5). Walking and swimming or sea bathing were the two most common activities women were found participating in outside of the home. Covers devoted to the bathing costume such as July 1, 1871, July 13, 1872, and July, 26, 1873 suggested the importance of swimming in the month of July and its social acceptance among women of the time (see figure 7). A total of 5.2% of cover activities included swimming. Horseback riding and hunting were also featured on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* and were both considered accepted pastimes for women.149 Only one hunting cover was found for the selected months from 1870 to 1879. The July 8, 1876 cover entitled “A Country Ride” featured women riding on horseback in groups.

Table 5. Numbers and percentages of outdoor or sport activities as seen on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* Covers 1870-80.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor / Sport Activity</th>
<th>1870-1879 Number</th>
<th>1870-1879 Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming/Sea Bathing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Skating</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback riding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching a Horserace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

149 Boucher, *20,000 Years of Fashion*. 
The internal content of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879 mirrored the substance of the covers. The magazines were filled with home crafts, sewing projects, decorative embroidery and other activities designed for a reader who had plenty of free time at home. The idea of separate spheres as explained by Barbara Harris as a sharp distinction between a woman’s sphere in the home from the man’s outside is reflected by the range of domestic and traditionally feminine topics found in *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879. A typical inner page (see figure 8) consisted of articles on fashion and home care, entertaining, short literary stories and crafts. Short stories followed the lives of fictional characters as they traveled, courted and married or faced obstacles in life. Advice columns were limited to social entertaining, etiquette, raising children, home décor, managing servants and other domestic topics.

Regardless of the environment, whether indoors or outdoors, women were most often found clustered together in groups of three or more suggesting an emphasis on group structure (table 6). Almost 36% of all *Harper’s Bazar* covers from 1870 to 1879 featured groups of women with children. Of the 116 fashion illustration covers studied in the months of January, April, July, and October, only 21 illustrated a woman standing alone.

Table 6. Totals and percentages of group structure of *Harper’s Bazar* Covers 1870 to 79.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1870-1879 (True woman era)</th>
<th>Percentage of fashion illustration covers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups of women (two or more)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of women with children</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman standing alone</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children only</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman with single child</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of women with men</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
True Woman Articles

The articles and other editorial content in *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879 provided valuable insight into the values, expectations and norms editors conveyed to their readers. While topics such as sports and outdoor activities and education were explored, there were often caveats or limitations imposed upon the woman participant. Frances Colgans 1989 argument that strenuous work outside of the home or basic exercise may have been considered dangerous for women was illustrated in the limited range of activities found within *Harper’s Bazar*.

An October 4, 1879 article “Practical Hints to Lady Archers”\(^{150}\) stated that archery was the only pastime which men and women could play together and that women had an equal chance of success. Walking was also one of the few acceptable pastimes and forms of exercise. An April 15, 1876\(^{151}\) article encouraged city women to follow the suit of country women and increase the amount of time spent walking. The article mocked city women who viewed their feet as tools for dancing only, felt their feet were too delicate, or commented, ‘why walk when there are carriages and streetcars?’ The article even declared that after walking “Complexions are cleared from their impurities, eyes are made brighter, digestion is perfected, rounded flesh takes the place of flaccid fibre, grace becomes a thing of nature rather than art, and health a tolerably permanent possession.”

Articles addressing women’s education and particularly women’s college education were occasionally found throughout the 1870s. A July 22, 1871 article entitled “Vassar College”\(^{152}\) provided a positive account of the Poughkeepsie, New York, Vassar College for

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\(^{150}\) Thompson Maurice, “Practical Hints to Lady Archers,” *Harper’s Bazar*, October 4, 1879, 635.


young women. The article acted as an unofficial endorsement for the college, giving accounts of different departments, faculty members, alumna, death rates for the college (which related to ensuring campus safety) and other information. Within the first few paragraphs the author related a meeting with a class of 1868 alumni who attended the graduation ceremony with her husband and new baby, seeming to ease fears that alumni indeed married and bore children. Within this exclusively female college the article claimed, “Young women may have every advantage for learning that may be found in any college or university for young men in this country or in Europe.”\(^ {153}\) The article concluded by stressing the importance of such institutions for women which provided “thorough education of young women, the prospective mothers of future custodians of the highest interests of our republic.” The important aspect of this article was the focus on educating women in all-female academies to better prepare them for their future roles as mothers. Even with a college degree there were limited opportunities after graduation. In a July 2, 1870 article entitled, “Young Lady Novelist,”\(^ {154}\) it was suggested that writing was within the male sphere and women could not easily write fiction, because “it is the most difficult and serious of arts, since it is the art of reading men’s arts, of playing on men’s passions and sympathies, and of painting men’s characters.”\(^ {155}\)

Within articles from Harper’s Bazar 1870 to 1879, there was evidence of both the pre-existing ideology of the True Woman and separate spheres and that of the New Woman who was slowly beginning to make a presence. “The Old Maid,” published in April 19, 1879

\(^ {154}\) "Young Lady Novelist," *Harper’s Bazar*, July 2, 1870, 423.
\(^ {155}\) "Young Lady Novelist," *Harper’s Bazar*, July 2, 1870, 423.
in *Harper’s Bazar*\textsuperscript{156} directly referred to the idea of separate spheres when the author stated, “the old maid will cease to exist as soon as woman is emancipated from the so-called ‘woman’s sphere’.” The article argued against the harsh criticism and social mocking of old maids and suggested that the ‘old maid’ was a product of a backwards system in which women were helpless in pursuit of marriage. The article explained the flaws of the social system by saying “‘Marry’, says society to a young woman-‘marry you must marry.’ ‘Certainly,’ says the young woman, ‘but what am I to do to get married?’ ‘Nothing,’ is the answer. ‘Don’t show any greater liking for any marriageable young man’”\textsuperscript{157}. The article argued the system was illogical as it told women their one purpose in life (marriage) depended completely on the inclination of another person (the potential groom). This article suggested a resistance to the system which dominated the True Woman, a system which insisted young girls put no effort into find a husband.

We can see the beginning stages of the New Woman emerge as a result of this flawed system of attracting a husband. In an April 29, 1876 article entitled “American Girls at Home”\textsuperscript{158} the author (an unknown foreign man) described the American girl as “A bright, pure, straightforward girl, early accustomed to stand on her own pretty feet, see with her own young eyes, and speak her own thoughts in expressive English.”\textsuperscript{159} The male suitor calls on an American girl even though her mother is not home and is welcomed in. This description written in 1876 illustrated the image of a more independent New Woman beginning to take form. This was a girl who could handle herself in the company of men who did not shy away as the True Woman might have done. However, this American girl had not lost touch with

\textsuperscript{156} “The Old Maid,” *Harper’s Bazar*, April 19, 1879, 251.
\textsuperscript{157} “The Old Maid,” *Harper’s Bazar*, April 19, 1879.
\textsuperscript{158} “American Girls at Home,” *Harper’s Bazar*, April 29, 1876, 283.
\textsuperscript{159} “American Girls at Home,” *Harper’s Bazar*, April 29, 1876, 283.
the True Woman completely as the author continued, “but should he [the male suitor] venture to approach her with too warm a compliment, the recoil is instant, the gay frankness chills into sudden reserve.”  

On a final note, the presence of women portrayed in short story illustrations as nervous, helpless, or frail was far more common from 1870 to 1879 than from 1890 to 1905. Women illustrated fainting or having breakdowns (crying, begging, etc.) were familiar among short story illustrations in the earlier period. Printed articles and illustrations that showed the True Woman as nervous and weak even to the point of becoming physically handicapped by their reproductive organs were common during this decade. Fainting and hysteria were considered a result of a woman’s extremely fragile nervous system becoming over-stimulated. In “The Future Bride,” an illustration in the April 23, 1870 issue shown a woman groveling at the feet of a seated older man within a decorated parlor. The caption for the illustration reads, “But the woman, with a low moan, suddenly flung herself on the floor before him.” Another example of the fragile woman was found in the January 13, 1872 illustration which showed a young woman fainting into a chair surrounded by three men and an older woman. The caption for this illustration read, “She gave a deep sigh, and sank back into a chair, fainting.” Women depicted in this way within literature did not completely disappear with the rise of the New Woman, but the rate at which it appeared in Harper’s Bazar noticeably decreased.

True Woman Cartoons

161 Frances Cogan, All American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth Century America (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1989).
Cartoons played an important role in reflecting values and societal fears of the time. These cartoons presented stereotypes and jokes depicting women in various situations. The topic of such cartoons ranged from women’s work outside of the home, a wife’s proper role, body image, courtship, and education for women. A June 21, 1879 cartoon entitled “Men’s Wives”\(^{164}\) illustrated eight types of wives a man could have. Seven out of the eight were drawn in a mocking way, with the eighth shown as the loving ideal. The types of wives mocked were “The Extravagant Wife” shown admiring herself in a mirror and wearing fur, “The Parsimonious Wife” shown serving a meager dinner which cannot satisfy her husband by the look on his frowning face, “The Wife with Nerves” shown fainted on the sofa with a man fanning her, “The Medical Wife” shown ladling medicine to a child and sick looking man, “The Scolding Wife” shown yelling at children from her yard, “The Coaxing Wife” shown grabbing and reaching up to a man, “The Wife with Pets” shown surrounded with animals and a fluffy dog on her lap and then finally “The Wife and Mother” shown by an attractive young woman with a baby in her arms, a smaller child at her side admiring the baby, and yet another child reading by her lap. The woman had a warm smile on her face and was the only type of wife not portrayed in a mocking fashion. The cartoon portrayed the wife and mother figure as the ideal type of woman, a notion which reflected True Woman values.

Other cartoons warned against the instability of working outside of the home. A January 17, 1874 cartoon entitled “Native: Lady-Like Independence”\(^{165}\) (see figure 9) showed two women shivering in the wind and rain outside of a locked factory door. The sign on the door read “These Works CLOSED on Account of Hard Times.” The cartoon does not convey to its readers a positive outlook on women’s dependence on work outside of the

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home. This cartoon seemed to be warning women that there was less stability working outside of the home. Overall from 1870 to 1879 there were few to no cartoons in *Harper’s Bazar* which featured positive support or benefits of women’s work outside of the home.

Education was an important topic in True Woman era cartoons. As previously mentioned in chapter 3, the education of the True Woman was limited and focused heavily on accomplishments to be used while courting (singing, music, dancing etc) and for domestic duties. The expectation for young women to pursue college was minimal and considered unnecessary in preparing them for their future role as wives and mothers. A July 20, 1872 cartoon from *Harper’s Bazar* entitled “Real Education”\(^ {166}\) (see figure 10) reflected the True Woman ideology in regards to expected outcomes of a young girls education. The cartoon featured a line of paired boys and girls walking in the country with an older pair of adults (presumably the school mistress and teacher). The caption read,

> A polite and easy bearing towards the opposite sex (tempered of course with propriety and discretion) can not be inculcated at too early an age. It is therefore recommended that whenever an institution for young ladies happens to meet an academy for young gentleman, they should be all formally introduced to each other, and allowed to take their walks abroad in company.

The title and content of this article, “A Real Education,” seemed to suggest that contrary to any subject learned in school, the real education was in the ability to gracefully interact with the opposite sex in preparation for courtship and marriage.

Within the True Woman years was evidence of the limitations of a young girl’s life. In a January 11, 1873 full page illustration entitled “The Life of a Young Lady – in Thirteen Chapters,”\(^ {167}\) Gray Parker illustrated the years between birth and marriage broken up into 13

\(^{166}\) “Real Education,” *Harper’s Bazar* July 20, 1872, 488.

scenes. The scenes consisted of music, riding and dancing lessons, her first long skirt, her first love, her first introduction into society, being admired by men, her marriage proposal and final wedding ceremony (which was the center and largest scene). The illustrations could be broken down into three main sections; childhood and preparing herself for society, being introduced and interacting in society where the measure of success was the number of admirers she acquired and finally, the ultimate success, getting married. Nowhere in the illustration were there any references to sports, college, or the potential for work and involvement outside of the home.

**New Woman Covers**

In comparison to the True Woman decade 1870 to 1879, this research found differences in cover image content in the second decade of *Harper’s Bazar* covers 1890-1901 representing the New Woman era. There was a difference in the percentage of indoor cover scenes compared to outdoor cover scenes from 1890 to 1901. Within *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1901 there were more covers which depicted an outdoor environment at 78 total covers or 55% compared to an indoor environment at 54 covers or 38% (see table 7). Since the New Woman was marked by her presence outdoors and participation in sports, an increase in outdoor covers is significant. However, not every outdoor cover featured women in activities. In many instances women were depicted merely standing outdoors. There were also ten non-recognizable background environments which featured a blank white background or simple objects which did not indicate an indoor or outdoor setting. These ten non-recognizable background environments comprised 7% of the total covers from 1890 to 1901.
Table 7. Total and percentages of indoor to outdoor scenes on Harper’s Bazar Covers 1890-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1890-1901 number</th>
<th>1890-1901 percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Covers</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Covers</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-recognizable background</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>142</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the decade from 1890 to 1901 the range of cover activities grew significantly. Ice skating, horseback riding, sewing and embroidering, and arranging flowers were all still present, however now women were illustrated boating, bicycling, riding in carriages, fishing, walking dogs, playing piano, visiting art galleries, driving automobiles, and strolling through public parks (see table 8). Hockey, which was previously unseen on Harper’s Bazar covers from 1870 to 1879 made an appearance on the February 3, 1900 cover\(^{168}\) featuring three women in simple shirtwaists playing hockey together with a caption “The Fashionable Winter Sport For Women.”

\(^{168}\) February is not among the selected months of this study gathered for primary data, however when moving from January to April this February cover was observed and considered too important to omit from the study. This is one of the few months referenced that was not originally part of the studies guidelines.
Table 8. Numbers and percentages of outdoor or sport activities as seen on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* Covers 1890-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor / Sport Activity</th>
<th>1890-1901 Number</th>
<th>1890-1901 Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing Art</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking a Dog</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding a Bicycle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage or automobile</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skating</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending an Opera</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching a Horserace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The July 1, 1893 cover of *Harper’s Bazar* featured a fashionable woman driving a carriage by herself, stopping to talk with another woman. In an April 7, 1900 cover, the carriage was replaced with an automobile driven by a woman who stopped to talk with a woman on a bicycle (see figure 11). Bicycling was extremely popular during this time and was the focus of three *Harper’s Bazar* covers. The cover of the April 14th 1894 issue of featured an illustration for the Paris model bicycling dress known as the *Faire la bicyclette*. Even when the main figure on the cover was not riding herself, she was frequently walking in a public park where other women rode bicycles in the background. This is the case for both the April 27, 1895 as well as the July 16, 1898 covers.

Appropriate clothing was designed and advertised for a host of activities including mountain climbing, tennis, and boating. Boating increased as a popular activity and Charles Fredrick Worth featured costumes specifically for boating on the July 7th 1894 cover of
Harper’s Bazar Entitled “A Yachting Costume from Worth.” Previous pastimes found on covers from 1870 to 1879 were still present, such as hunting on the October 4, 1890 cover. Ice-skating was also still present however, when ice-skating was featured on the cover of 1870 to 1879 issues of Harper’s Bazar the activity was among women and their children. On the January 13, 1900 cover of Harper’s Bazar a couple was skating together hand in hand (see figure 12).

Domestic activities were still present on the cover of Harper’s Bazar from 1890 to 1901; however the frequency decreased (see table 9). As women walking in public parks began to increase so did another previously unseen environment: a woman’s bedroom (see figure 13). From the decade of 1890 to 1901, women appeared on the cover standing in their bedrooms a total of four times where we had previously seen no private bedroom in the earlier decade. Although four times may not seem noteworthy, in the span of two years there were four covers featuring a woman’s bedroom and may provide evidence that the bedroom was perhaps losing its reputation as an off limits place for visitors within the home.169 Victorian standards of modesty may have served as a barrier which prevented a woman’s bedroom as a setting for a magazine cover image. From 1870 to 1879 no covers within this study featured a woman’s bedroom.

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169 The bedroom was featured on the April 11, 1891, January 23, 1892, April 23, 1892, and January 21 1892 covers of Harper’s Bazar. The bedroom was identified as having a bed in the background and/or a dressing table.
Table 9. Numbers and percentages of indoor or domestic activities as seen on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* Covers 1890-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Activity</th>
<th>1890-1901 Number</th>
<th>1890-1901 Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing or Sitting</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging Flowers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting a Bride</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Piano</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of *Harper’s Bazar* covers in this second decade featured one woman standing alone on the cover of the magazine. The number of children on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* decreased from 1890 to 1901. During this period children appeared only twice or 1.4% of the total covers (see table 10). This is a significant difference compared to the earlier decade. The decrease in the number of children on the cover of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890-1901 is one of the major differences between the two time periods. When women on the cover were not outdoors they often appeared indoors next to a piano. The piano featured on a magazine cover was a symbol of wealth and middle-upper class standard of living and refinement.\(^{170}\) The woman on these covers displayed an implied confidence and strength, features not always seen on True Woman era magazine covers.

Table 10. Totals and percentages of group structure of *Harper’s Bazar* Covers 1890-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1890-1901 (New Woman Era)</th>
<th>Percentage of fashion illustration covers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman standing alone</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups of women (two or more)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman with man</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of women with men</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women with child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of women with children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>142</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women were depicted standing alone with greater frequency and also with a more confident stance than in the earlier period. The April 18, 1891 cover of *Harper’s Bazar* (see figure 14) is an excellent example of the noticeable change in women’s physical presence on the magazine covers. The woman stands in an outdoor setting and appears to be getting ready for a walk with a large dog. Her grasp on the leash appears tight with full control over the powerful looking animal. Another example is the April 23, 1892 cover which illustrated a woman sitting on the edge of a small wall, wearing a neatly tailored jacket and masculine hat with feathers. Her hand is at her waist and she is looking up and to the side; her nose tilted up in the air. (see figure 15) The same type of posture and disposition were found on the January 16, 1892 cover among several others. The position of women on the cover and the perceived strength of their stance is a notable change from the earlier decade.
As mentioned in chapter three, the perception of the New Woman included more than just taking on new activities; she brought forward a new ideology regarding women and their role in society. An example of the New Woman teasing, flirting and having multiple suitors competing for her affections was found on the October 25, 1890 cover of *Harper’s Bazar* with the caption “A Successful Catch” (see figure 16). The woman on the cover was simply dressed in an outdoor sporting outfit along the edge of a pond or lake. With her fishing rod over her shoulder and her creel basket at her hip, she holds up her fishing line and admires the string of men caught in her line. The illustration comically reflected the view of women out to “catch” a husband. The cover image also reflects the social anxiety of the time in regards to women’s perceived power in their role of courtship. The main difference between True Woman courtship and the “New Woman’s” approach to courting as seen through *Harper’s Bazar* was that the woman appeared to have more control and a leading role in the process. She is the one seeking out several potential husbands as opposed to shyly waiting for one to approach her. As Elaine Showalter explained, the New Woman in society meant that the traditional sense of femininity and masculinity were being redefined.\(^{171}\)

**New Woman Articles**

Articles from 1890 to 1905 began shifting focus, covering new topics such as women’s clubs, sports such as tennis and golf, politics, women’s employment, and outdoor life. Weekly columns such as “New Order of Women,” “The Outdoor Woman,” “Women and the Law,” and “News of the Women’s Clubs” provided commentary, advice and news to readers. Some of the columns ran for a few months while others such as “The Outdoor Woman” and “News of the Women’s Clubs” ran for many years. The presence of women

\(^{171}\) Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy.*
riding bicycles, playing sports, dressing for outdoor activities and attending college all provide further evidence of the New Woman’s presence in Harper’s Bazar.

Not only was the bicycle found on the covers of Harper’s Bazar, it was also prevalent in the internal pages of the magazine. There were several articles throughout the decade which promoted bicycling, provided advice on how to ride a bicycle, demonstrated proper attire when riding, and illustrated groups of women riding together. Early articles seemed to dispel fears and misconceptions regarding the bicycle by offering readers instructions and etiquette on how to properly dress, ride, mount and dismount. A July 14, 1894 article entitled “Bicycling for Women”\(^ {172}\) narrowed the concerns and criticism of female cyclist into three main issues; the position of the female body when riding, the level of exertion caused by exercise, and the problem of dress when riding. The author Ida Trafford Bell addressed each area of concern, hoping readers would feel at ease and prepared to attempt riding for the first time. She instructed each woman to “carefully arrange your dress so that it might fall gracefully and evenly” and to “use her own best judgment in clothing herself according to the laws of health, comfort, and common sense.”\(^ {173}\)

Throughout the time period, numerous fashion illustrations for bicycling attire were published. These illustrations become commonplace and were often mixed in with other fashion illustrations such as foulard gowns or walking dresses. The April 16, 1898 issue of Harper’s Bazar featured an illustration with a lengthy description and a cut pattern for a bicycle skirt for its readers to use.

Illustrated scenes of daily life often featured women riding bicycles in public either with other women or accompanied by men. An illustration from the October 24, 1894 issue

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of *Harper’s Bazar* entitled “A Ladies Bicycle Outing in the Environs of Paris-A Drink by the Way”\(^{174}\) showed a group of five women stopped for a drink at a well with their bicycles. An April 18, 1896 illustration entitled “The Morning Ride in a London Park”\(^{175}\) showed women and men cycling together in a public park while well-dressed bystanders watch from behind a fence. These illustrations suggested cycling was a popular social activity. In 1900, an article entitled “Fine Points in Bicycle Riding” by J. Parmly Paret\(^{176}\) gave readers further advice and instruction to those who wished to learn to ride a bicycle. Paret openly encouraged bicycling as “one of the most attractive and most healthful exercise ever available for women.”\(^{177}\)

Everyday dress was another distinguishing factor which helped to separate True Woman and New Woman figures. The increased functionality of the shirtwaist and relaxed skirt the New Woman used for daily wear reflected that women were strong, confident and capable of physical exertion.\(^{178}\) Clothing specifically designed for sports, bicycling, and general exercise also indicated this idea and was found throughout *Harper’s Bazar*. From 1890 to 1905 there were several new types of sporting costumes introduced and promoted within the pages of *Harper’s Bazar*. Tennis gowns were perhaps the most common type of athletic gown pictured in the *Harper’s Bazar* fashion sections. Tennis and yachting gowns were frequently promoted throughout the 1890’s. A July 14, 1894 issue presented a large illustration of a “French Tennis Gown”\(^{179}\) with lengthy description. The description begins by stating “Out-of-door dresses are of interest at present and as one must have gowns

\(^{178}\) Banner, *American Beauty*.
appropriate for all occasions, the tennis dress becomes important.” There were also
illustrations accompanied by patterns in the July 18, 1896 issue with illustrated pairs of
women playing tennis and boating together.

Golf also required specialized forms of dress and could be found throughout the
pages of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1905. An October 15, 1898\(^{180}\) issue displayed an
illustration of five women in various outdoor garments (see figure 17). The caption read,
“Costumes for golf, bicycling, and out-of-door sports in general.” Another excellent example
of the changing clothing styles for women was found in the May 30\(^{th}\) 1896\(^{181}\) issue of
*Harper’s Bazar*. The full page illustration showed eight costumes for women labeled “Gown
with Bolero Jacket” worn by a women holding a tennis racket, “Shirt-waist and Tweed Skirt”
worn by a woman playing golf, “Gymnastic Suit” worn by a woman in front of a climbing
structure, “Tailored Costume for Driving” worn by a woman driving a carriage, “Outing
Gown” worn by a woman fishing alone by a stream, “Traveling or Outing Gown” shown by
a woman hiking with staff, “Mountain Costume” worn by a woman with walking stick next
to large rocks, and lastly a “Bathing Costume” worn by a woman with large wrap but no
background. Each garment had accompanied patterns and descriptions in the supplement
section in the back of the magazine. This section demonstrated the expansion of women’s
out-doors pastimes and how their dress changed to adapt to new activities. The New Woman
was recognized as being athletic, and participated in a variety of sports and outdoor activities.
The fact that we see several promotions for such garments gives support to the presence of
the New Woman in *Harper’s Bazar*.

\(^{181}\) May is also not among the selected months this study gathered primary data from, however when moving
from to April to July this May article was observed and considered too important to omit from the study. This is
one of the few articles from other months referenced that was not originally part of the studies guidelines.
A column entitled “The Outdoor Woman” ran in *Harper’s Bazar* for several years beginning in 1895. “The Outdoor Woman” focused on women’s sports and other outdoor activities whether professional, college orientated, or part of a homemakers free-time. The article in the October 5, 1895\textsuperscript{182} issue related to its readers the events of the Westchester Country Club sports week. The club dedicated a week to women’s sporting activities and included competitions in tennis, golf, polo, races, driving competitions, and bicycle racing. Bicycle racing however, was not promoted in the article which claimed the exercise was far too strenuous for men let alone women, and many participants of the Westchester Country Club race fell after taking hard turns at high speeds. This demonstrated that although women participating in a greater number of activities, their full participation was still limited.

Another installment of the July 24, 1897 “The Outdoor Woman”\textsuperscript{183} column focused on women’s swimming, urging women to learn to swim in still water before attempting to swim in the ocean (which could be very exhausting). This issue urged women sailors to wear old gowns they did not mind getting wet in an attempt to accommodate the wishes of the male sailor. “Nothing is more annoying for a man who is sailing than to have to worry lest a drop may touch the gowns of the girls her has asked to accompany him.” “The Outdoor Woman” also followed the news of golf pro Miss Beatrix Hoyt as she traveled internationally and competed for titles. Some issues of the column “The Outdoor Woman” in *Harper’s Bazar* focused on women’s college activities such as the April 23, 1898 issue\textsuperscript{184}. The articles reflected sports practiced at different colleges and suggested that basketball, tennis, golf and bicycling were the most popular.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{182} Brainerd Adelia, “The Outdoor Woman,” *Harper’s Bazar*, October 5, 1895, 807.
\item \textsuperscript{183} Brainerd Adelia, “The Outdoor Woman,” *Harper’s Bazar*, July 24, 1897, 609.
\item \textsuperscript{184} Brainerd Adelia, “The Outdoor Woman,” *Harper’s Bazar*, April 23, 1898, 362.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Although college was briefly mentioned in Harper’s Bazar issues from 1870 to 1879, the frequency with which college related articles appeared from 1890 to 1905 increased noticeably. Much was written on the general college environment, sororities, how girls should handle themselves and their time at school, potential career choices to pursue after graduation, and the changing opportunities available in women’s education. Every year from 1890 to 1905 had some reference to college or education. Within Harper’s Bazar there was an increase in the number of articles covering women’s colleges which supported New Woman ideals in the magazine.

However, not every article was an enthusiastic push forward for women’s rights in education. In the July 8, 1893 article entitled “Prospective Graduate,”185 the unknown author warns against the stresses of college exams and the effect it may have on young women. The article began by examining the strain of exams and declaring that it is not uncommon for female students to “lose flesh and color and bring shadowy faces”186 to the graduation ceremony. The article explained that this can be prevented by the watchful eye of the resident physician who “observes if a girl is in danger of breaking down, and urges her to rest before the strain becomes excessive.”187 In many ways this reflected the True Woman theories that a woman’s brain couldn’t handle increased intellectual work and nervous tension. The article continued to stress that if intellectual work was kept in moderation and balanced with recreation that this would have an overall positive effect on women’s health. Later in the article the author stated, “We cannot place any profession on so high a plane, in our estimation, as that old one of making a good man’s life happy and bringing up children.

185 “Prospective Graduate,” Harper’s Bazar, July 8, 1893, 270.
186 “Prospective Graduate,” Harper’s Bazar, July 8, 1893, 270.
187 “Prospective Graduate,” Harper’s Bazar, July 8, 1893, 270.
lovingly and well. Wife and mother are queenly titles.”

It is clear that the True Woman values of becoming a wife and mother were still prevalent in *Harper's Bazar*.

What was to happen if or when the college graduate preferred to look for a job after graduation? A five part article from 1899 entitled “College Days and Their Sequel” by Adaline W. Sterling attempted to guide graduates to find work with their newly earned degree. Sterling makes the point that the increase of female graduates brought a growing number of women who wished to enter the job market. The author warned that women who wished to work full time would face “social chastisement” but if they were strong enough to handle the work and the social backlash there were various career paths open to them.

In most cases these career paths were an extension of the type of work women had previously done including teaching, nursing, secretarial work, working for journals or magazines, real estate etc. Sterling discouraged women from seeking employment in newspapers in part five of “College Days and Their Sequel”, issued January 28, 1899, because women would be continuously limited to writing for the women’s pages of the paper. Sterling also warned that a woman must be tough in order to work and would receive no special treatment or courtesy because of her sex. Overall, the author inferred that the working college graduate would have to be strong and determined in order to work full time, giving the reader a harsh but perhaps realistic impression of post-graduation options.

Similarly, another *Harper’s Bazar* article entitled “Wanted-A New Woman’s College” steered readers away from the idea that a college education led to a career after graduation. The author, Jessie A. Chase, a graduate of Smith College, argued that women in

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188 “Prospective Graduate,” *Harper’s Bazar*, July 8, 1893, 270.
college should only be taught material which would help them prepare for the future roles of wife and mother. Despite the articles misleading title, Chase proposed the idea of a woman’s college which was far from New Woman ideals. She agreed that while modern colleges were providing a liberal education for both men and women, this was doing an injustice to women who would not be able to use their education. She stated, “In our present society, this difference between a man’s lot and a woman’s, that a woman normally has one special ‘profession’ to plan for—that of home life.”\textsuperscript{192} Chase therefore proposed the ideal college and course content which would truly prepare women for their role in life. These courses focused on topics that would help a woman raise a family and manage a home. Topics included how to build up a child’s bones, muscles, nerves and blood, food and cooking, gymnastics, fencing and dancing, care of material such as woolens cottons, metals china and glass, how a house is put together, electricity, home decoration, needlework and others. By learning within these topics as opposed to Latin, Greek classic literature, chemistry etc. a woman would be “prepared for ‘doing things herself’ on a small scale.”\textsuperscript{193} Clearly the author did not intend graduates from her “New Woman’s” college to work outside of the home. Chase ended her article by saying after this training “The New Woman will be a Happy Woman.”\textsuperscript{194}

There were several college-focused articles which openly encouraged and promoted college and equal opportunities for women. The July 20, 1901 article entitled “Woman’s Work and Health-The Student” written by Grace Reckham Murray, M.D.\textsuperscript{195} presented a strong argument for the physical equality of women’s brains compared to men’s brains. Murray directly disputed past notions that women’s brain did not have the potential for

\textsuperscript{195} Murray Grace Reckham, “Woman’s Work and Health-The Student,” Harper’s Bazar, July 20, 1901, 1056.
intense learning and strenuous thought could impair the body. Lending her own medical background to her statements, Dr. Murray argued that college education was a universal pursuit possible for both genders. “While it is not yet considered as a matter of course that women will go to college, nevertheless every year it comes to be a more settled fact.”

Various articles within *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1905 focused on reporting commencement ceremonies of popular colleges, and discussed how far women’s education had advanced. A May 6, 1899 article “The First Woman’s College Diploma” written by Mrs. H. M. Plunkett gave a brief introduction into the history of women’s colleges and education in America. Beginning from 1830 to 1840, the author related the circumstances of the transition from women’s “institutions” to women’s “colleges” and gave credit to some of the first female graduates. The article openly acknowledged the previous barriers to women’s education including societal beliefs of women’s inferiority. In a report of the Commencement Ceremonies at Mt. Holyoke College, President William McKinley, the honored guest speaker offered this advice to the young women graduates, “I wish for this graduating class all good things, and I want you to be assured that all good things wait upon a pure and noble woman.”

The New Woman and particularly the young college girl were associated with sports and other athletic activities. In addition to the promotion of athletic dress found in *Harper’s Bazar* there were several articles from 1890 to 1905 which encouraged and gave instruction on women’s sports and exercise. Within *Harper’s Bazar* there were articles on women’s basketball, English women’s cricket, gymnastics, women’s tennis championship golf, and

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general exercise designed specifically for women. In the January 6, 1894 article “Girls in the Gymnasium” the unknown author remarked that one of the signs of progress in the modern age was the way in which girls and women were taking interest in health and exercise. The article added that those who practiced gymnastics regularly were “better prepared to endure the strain of life than were their predecessors of a past generation.” The article also stated that comfortable loose-fitting clothing was required for the sport and that corsets were out of the question. The women of the gymnastic clubs were equal to any boy and could accomplish the same physical activities as their brothers. Lastly the article concluded by declaring, “A new womanhood, a womanhood benefiting the mothers of the race, may thus be developed to finer and stronger proportions, and cast in a more heroic mould.” The article suggested that not only was the next generation stronger, but they would be better off because of it. Another five page article focused on fitness ran in the July 6, 1901 issue entitled “Exercise for Women” written by Parmly Paret. The article was focused on promoting women’s exercise and outdoor activity. Improving and building strength and muscle were stressed as crucial elements in a women’s development and the article suggested women participate in tennis, basketball, bicycling, sailing, swimming, skating, fencing, and bowling.

Tips for improving women’s golf and tennis games were frequent throughout the 1890’s and into 1905 and were perhaps the most common sport discussed in the magazine. Both the October 13, 1894 article “Women in Golf” by Casper W. Whitney and the

199 “Girls in the Gymnasium” Harper’s Bazar, January 6, 1894, 12.
200 “Girls in the Gymnasium” Harper’s Bazar, January 6, 1894, 12.
201 “Girls in the Gymnasium” Harper’s Bazar, January 6, 1894, 12.
October 6, 1900 article “Miss Griscom’s Game of Golf” by Arthur Pottow were specifically focused on the game of golf from a woman’s prospective. Whitney gave a short account on how women were rising in the game and in some cases had better form and follow through than male players. The article highlighted popular women’s golf champions and compared the game from the English versus American approach to playing. Arthur Pottow focused exclusively on the 1900 Golf champion American Frances Griscom. The article covered her rise, technique and provided tips for other lady golfers. Pottow began the article by stating, “It seems to be generally conceded that the standard of play amongst the women golfers has advanced.”

Tennis articles were also commonly found from 1890 to 1905. The July 18, 1891 issue featured coverage of the Lawn Tennis Tournament for Ladies Championship of the United States at the Philadelphia Cricket Club. This event focused specially on women’s tennis and included a two page article and illustrations of the event. Women’s Cricket in London was also discussed in the July 4, 1891 issue of Harper’s Bazar. News of cricket matches between the English Lady Cricketers and the Honorable Artillery Company, London was presented to readers along illustrations of female cricket players. Coverage of this and other women’s sporting events was very significant to this study as it provided evidence that the content of the magazine had shifted to include coverage and promotion of women’s sporting events as well as instruction to its readers on how to participate and improve their own game.

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New sports such as basketball also made an appearance in *Harper’s Bazar* on October 20, 1900. An article entitled “Basket-Ball for Young Women,” written by Parmly Paret\(^{208}\), promoted basketball as a sport for young college women. The article stressed the need for young women to have a combination of school work and physical exercise in their daily college lives. The article thoroughly explored both how women could play basketball together and explained the rules of the game. Paret stressed that future generations of American children would benefit from having strong mothers who participated in exercise. Lastly the article ended with the statement, “That ‘all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy’ has never been disputed. Jill suffers from the same monotony if her college work-days are not lightened by some recreation, and basket-ball is the welcome ‘play’.”\(^{209}\) Not only did the article stress that college men and women needed the same things, but they could be active in the same manner.

Articles, illustrations and covers featured women independently driving their own carriages and automobiles in public places. This provided further evidence to the idea of women’s increased freedom and mobility outside of the home. An April 25, 1898 illustration labeled “Costumes for Driving and the Races” gave evidence that women’s driving was growing in popularity and, similar to other new activities, required a specially designed garment. A July 7, 1900 article entitled “The Automobile at the Nation’s Capital” by Abby G. Baker\(^{210}\) focused on well known women who drove their automobiles around Washington D.C; the article included seven photographs of women driving their own automobiles, unaccompanied by men or servants.

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\(^{208}\) Paret Parmly, “Basket-Ball for Young Women,” *Harper’s Bazar*, October 20, 1900, 1563.

\(^{209}\) Paret Parmly, “Basket-Ball for Young Women,” *Harper’s Bazar*, October 20, 1900, 1567.

Articles relating the announcements of women’s clubs, and club life were frequently found in *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1905. One such column called “News of the Women’s Club” ran monthly articles for years\(^{211}\), each article 1 to 4 pages long, which highlighted different women’s organizations and clubs, and their latest news and announcements. These articles provided readers’ information on speeches, meetings, trips, luncheons and other events of clubs nationwide if they could not attend themselves. One such article was the “Club Life for Women” published October 25, 1890\(^{212}\) which did not relate the specifics of already established clubs, but rather provided a general endorsement on the idea of women’s clubs and the need for them. The article argued that “women are mentally weakened by living always among minds inferior to their own” and that forming groups where intelligent women met and conversed benefited everyone in the group. The article also pointed out the differences between modern clubs and earlier women’s clubs by stating “The old fashioned gossip societies have ‘had their day and ceased to be.’ Women meet at these modern clubs for a higher purpose than to talk about their neighbors.” \(^{213}\)

Another article entitled “International Woman’s Congress” by Cynthia Westover Alden published July 29, 1899\(^{214}\) gave a lengthy account of a women’s “congress” meeting which took place in London in late June to early July of 1899. The congress was a meeting of several American and British women’s clubs who collectively formed the “International Council of Women” which met every five years. The article gave a full account of the schedule of the congress including speakers and thankful credit to its organizers. Reports of

\(^{211}\) Monthly column was observed until the end of this research in 1905.
\(^{212}\) “Club Life for Women,” Harper’s Bazar, October 25, 1890, 826.
\(^{213}\) “Club Life for Women,” Harper’s Bazar, October 25, 1890, 826.
such large scale women’s club events provided evidence that the idea of women’s clubs was supported in *Harper’s Bazar* content.

Although women suffrage and general involvement in politics was a controversial subject at the end of the 19th century, a few articles were published in *Harper’s Bazar* which touched on women’s legal rights. A column entitled “Women and the Law” by L. H. Bartght L.L.M. ran for years beginning in 1901 and continuing until the end of this research in 1905. This series of articles explained the principles of law and their application to everyday problems facing women. Readers were encouraged to write in their legal questions which would be answered anonymously within the next few issues. Columns such as this one suggested that women could understand basic principles of the law and should not be completely dependent upon their husbands or fathers for advice. The series of articles empowered women with legal information regarding property rights, child custody, taxes, and inheritance issues.

Within the scope of this study, only one article appeared which argued for the rights of women to vote and hold public office. Although only one, the fact that it was present at all within the magazine still may provide interesting insight into the suffrage movement as portrayed within *Harper’s Bazar*. A July 25, 1896 entitled Woman’s Right of Suffrage Under a Popular Government” written by Florence Howe Hall215 provided a strong argument in favor of women’s rights to vote and actively participate in government. The article gave several logical reasons why women were currently not represented in government and therefore should earn their own right to vote. Hall even went so far as to take arguments used against women’s suffrage and turn it around as additional evidence in support of it. “If

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women as a class are weaker physically than men, if they are from the nature of their avocations more confined at home, do they not all the more need some one who will take up their part in the councils of the State, some one to plead their cause, to represent them and their views?” Hall was clearly a strong advocate of women’s suffrage, yet she does not state that all women could hold office. Rather, she stated, “Few women can leave the home to hold office, but all women in ordinary health can spare the time to choose their representatives, to deposit their vote.”

From 1890 to 1905 there were several articles which addressed wage earning women, and the career paths now open to them. Advice articles helped women dress for work, find colleges that would help them find work, addressed what it meant to be labeled a “working girl” and concerns about women working after college. The presence of articles relating to women’s work outside of the home supported the idea that as women’s employment increased; women’s magazines began to address the needs of working women. An example of this as the April 11, 1891 article entitled “On Business Dress for Women” which stated that women in business must have the sense to dress themselves appropriately. The article stated that The Woman’s Council, newspapers, business women, and society women had all given the subject their thoughts and found that women in business must dress in accordance to health, suitability, beauty and artistic taste. This form of dress should then be extended to women of all classes and condition. Although specifics for business attire were never disused, the article implied that women of business needed to dress in a way which was practical and consistent among working women. The fact the Harper’s Bazar addressed the

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concerns of business attire for women in 1891 was a significant factor which supported the presence of the New Woman in the magazine.

Another article entitled “Women Librarians” was the first article found for this study which directly addressed women in a specific type of profession. Published on July 8, 1899 this article discussed the general outlook of women in the field of library sciences, the growing demand for librarians, the nature of the work, why women were fit for such work, the salaries of female librarians, and where a woman could go to college if she planned to study and become a librarian. The article clearly explained the career path to becoming a librarian and provided a positive account of college work and the profession. The article was an endorsement for women to pursue work as a librarian if they were interested. While a career was promoted, it is important to note that it was a female-dominated career.

Other articles focused on the health and well being of working women. Such articles addressed the concerns women might have as they entered into a new profession, the mental and physical strain of working, and social issues surrounding working women. An April 27, 1901 article called “The Health of the Professional Women” written by Grace Peckhman Murry, M.D. explored the mental and physical demands of various professions women might choose to pursue. The article covered women doctors, nurses, teachers, writers or literary women, artists, and actresses. The article is interesting because it was not only written by a female doctor but it also disputed the previous misconceptions of women’s mental and physical inferiority to men as barriers to women’s employment.

In some instances the changing role of women in society, the woman’s movement or the New Woman as a term were directly referenced in Harper’s Bazar articles from 1890 to

1905. Articles such as “The Women’s Movement of Our Day” by Olive Schreiner published in January 1902\textsuperscript{220} argued for women’s rights of equal opportunity and closing the salary gap. Schreiner also pressed that if women did not find a strong footing in the workplace they would become forever useless and dependent upon men. Schreiner predicted that the advancement of household technology would eventually replace women’s work as housekeepers. For these reasons the author focused on the importance of women’s labor as security for women’s independence and a key element in the woman’s movement.

A series of articles entitled “The New Order of Women” which first appeared in July 21, 1894, gave another hearty endorsement of the new place of woman in society. The author, Junius Henri Browne referred to the presence of the New Woman as the “New Order of Women” which he defined as women “embracing their social, political, legal, industrial, connubial, and educational rights.”\textsuperscript{221} Browne further claimed that such a movement was “an unmistakable sign of American progress” and explored the depth to which women were becoming involved in society, especially in New York. Within the next issue of Harper’s Bazar another installment in “The New Order of Women”\textsuperscript{222} focused primarily on women as wage earners. The article related statistics of working women, including number and wages. Browne focused on large cities for the article and concluded that changes in available employment had also changed women’s outlook on marriage. The article suggested that increased employment opportunities for women “prevented woman from regarding marriage as a source of support, and the sole proper function of her life, that love and sympathy, rather than mere convenience and self-seeking, will be more apt to guide her in acceptance of a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{220}Schreiner Olive, “The Women’s Movement of Our Day,” January 1902, 3.
\item \textsuperscript{221}Browne Junius Henri, “The New Order of Women,” Harper’s Bazar, July 21, 1894, 574.
\item \textsuperscript{222}Browne Junius Henri, “The New Order of Women,” Harper’s Bazar, July 21, 1894, 574.
\end{itemize}
husband.”

Overall the article was yet another support for the general idea of the New Woman within *Harper’s Bazar*.

In contrast to True Woman era cartoons such as the July 20, 1872 cartoon from *Harper’s Bazar* entitled “Real Education” there was a shift in general attitudes as seen in a cartoon created by W. B. Tilbert published July 3, 1897 (see figure 18) entitled “A Cautious Girl.” This cartoon addressed women’s education by depicting a young woman in a basic shirtwaist and skirt standing by a fence next to a man. The caption read “Mr. Goldthwaite. ‘Don’t you think you can learn to love me?’ Miss De Mure. ‘It depends how much you’re willing to spend on my education.’” This cartoon may have reflected the growing importance and emphasis on women’s education. Furthermore considering the apparent age of the young woman in the cartoon who appeared to be a teenager or early adult, combined with the fact that the man in question must pay for the education, one might infer that she is referring to a college education. This cartoon is just one of several which reflected New Woman values of education, employment and increased freedom among young women. Ironically the cartoon reminds us that for many, this higher level of education was still financially dependent on a man.

Advisements found in *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1905 often referred to New Woman ideas and values in order to sell products. In some cases the term New Woman was directly used in the advertisement, in a positive tone, as a way to further promote the product. For example, a July 2, 1892 advertisement for Columbia Bicycles told women to exercise and be active “out-doors is yours as well as theirs [men’s] – delicate women are unfashionable-….women of to-day are seeking health and strength.” The advertisement

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directly made the contrast between the delicate True Woman and the idea of the New Woman in order to sell bicycles. An advertisement for Ivory Soap, published on April 1, 1899 (see figure 3), illustrated a woman smiling while lifting weights. The caption read, “With nerves braced and muscles hardened, she feels that she is indeed a new woman.” The fact that the term New Woman was used in italics in the advertisement not regular print tells us that the advertisement is referencing the New Woman term or idea and not a statement you’ll feel like a brand new woman or a new person. Direct reference to the term New Woman and promotion of new woman ideals within advertising also suggested that the New Woman had a greater presence in the *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1905 compared to 1870 to 1879.

Within *Ladies Home Journal* there were several advertisements which directly referenced New Woman issues, such as using the controversial topic of women’s right to vote to sell products or to catch the attention of the readers. One such advertisement was for SH&M First Quality Bias Velveteen Skirt Binding found in the January 1895 issue of *Ladies Home Journal*. The main caption for the advertisement read “I don’t want to vote…but I would like to emancipate womankind from unnecessary work (see figure 19).” The company downplayed the controversial idea of women’s suffrage in an effort to sell skirt bindings. This company later ran an advertisement which promoted the New Woman as the smart shopper. In the June 1895 issue of *Ladies Home Journal* the advertisement for SH&M Redform Bias Corded Velvet read “The New Woman puts on Redfern Bias Corded velvet on her ‘nice’ gowns.” (see figure 20) It appeared the SH&M company did not have a preference on which womanly ideal was better for society so long as she continued to buy their sewing supplies.
Another New Woman advertisement appeared in the October 1895 issue of Ladies Home Journal with the main caption “Don’t sweep the old way! The New Woman sweeps carpets, and bare floors with…” the phrase New Woman appears in larger bold print in the advertisement and is capitalized as way of emphasizing the phrase. Other Ladies Home Journal advertisements referred to the idea of separate spheres such as the August 1895 advertisement for Pearline Maid in the Moon. The first line of its lengthy descriptive paragraph read “Not since Eve left the Garden of Eden had Woman’s sphere been so wide or so elevated as to-day.” This provides further evidence that the establishment of separate spheres for men and women was at least recognized if not always strictly followed.

Comparison

Similar to Carolyn Kitch’s study of cover images in *Ladies Home Journal* this research found that cover images and content from *Harper’s Bazar* was a blend of True Woman and New Woman ideals which reflected that “American Life was changing, though through a gradual rather than radical transformation…this transformation had to do not only with gender roles but also with the social and economic aspirations of a growing American middle class.”

The time frames from 1870 to 1879 and 1890 to 1905 had several similarities in both cover images and internal content. When looking at the differences we are not looking at factors which have completely changed or disappeared in the second fifteen year span, but rather what new elements were introduced. For both decades, the majority of recorded activities on the cover of *Harper’s Bazar* were standing, sitting and walking with a total of 100 images or 86% in 1870 to 1879 and 95 covers or 66% in 1890 to 1905. When subjects

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on the cover were not standing, sitting and walking the remaining activities illustrated varied between the time periods. The frequency of bicycling and other outdoor activities increased as well as the variety of different activity options.

An example of a new activity found from 1890 to 1905 was the presence of women walking alone in public parks. From 1870 to 1879 if a woman was shown outdoors, she was usually accompanied by other women, and they appeared to be in their own home gardens or patios or at a public beach. In the second fifteen years of this study, 1890 to 1905, the number of times women were shown walking in public parks increased dramatically.

One of the most striking and noticeable differences between the cover images of the 1870’s compared to the covers images of the 1890s to 1905 is the difference in group structure among the women. Groups of women accompanied by children all but disappeared in the second half of the research. Women appeared alone on the cover of Harper’s Bazar a total of 21 times from 1870 to 1879 compared to a total of 93 times from 1890 to 1901. This dramatic increase in a single illustrated woman dominating the cover of Harper’s Bazar may be further evidence of the more independent New Woman. A single individual woman standing tall and confident on the cover was a noticeable change from the demure groups of women which had previously been the norm on the covers. The covers of the selected months in the 1870s featured more illustrated group settings where adult women interacted and catered to children (see figures 1 & 2). Whereas the 1870s featured 129 group covers featuring more than one woman, the 1890s featured only 51. The increase in single women on the cover as opposed to groups may also relate to dressmakers desire to copy popular garment designs as they appeared on the cover of fashion magazines. With the increased

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226 Public parks were recognized in this study by buildings on the edge of the park, fenced in trees, benches and paths, and other people in the background.
name recognition of French designers such as Charles F. Worth, Jacques Doucet, and others, American dress makers were able to focus on particular models and styles featured in greater detail on the covers of magazines. Designs accredited to Worth appeared numerous times on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* in the first half of the 1890s.

Another important difference between the two time periods was the presence of children on the covers. The number of children shown in the later decade was significantly lower than the earlier one. Between the years 1870 to 1879, there were 61 *Harper’s Bazar* covers which featured children interacting with women. These covers often had a group of women and one or two children. Some covers featured women gathered around a new baby or holding a baby while other women visited and smaller children played nearby. From 1890 to 1901, children appeared on the covers of the selected months a total of four times. One such cover was the July 27, 1895 issue which featured a woman walking outdoors with one female child. This is a large difference, however it does not mean that women were devaluing children or lessening their interaction with them. Rather, the decrease in children on the cover could suggest that the cover images designed to catch the eye of the reader were moving away from group and family settings and focusing on the individual woman as she stood alone on the cover of *Harper’s Bazar*. The sharp decrease in the number of children may also provide evidence of fashion shifting towards an individualistic focus in the midst of the rise of consumerism. Women began to increasingly see themselves as a consumer towards the turn of the century. Cover images of the 1890s imply a single consumer, which left women in a new sphere of consumption. Further evidence to support this idea is that the total number of group images for the later decade also declined.
The items held in women’s hands such as clothing accessories, pets, sporting equipment, etc. do not vary in regards to type of object or frequency, between the two decades. There is however a difference in the size of pet dogs and parasols held on the cover of *Harper’s Bazar*. From 1870 to 1879 women were most often featured holding small dainty accessories such as parasols, while in comparison to 1890 to 1901 the size of parasols noticeably increased (see figure 1 and figure 11). While this may be a mere change in fashion, the difference in size does has an effect on the way in which the woman on the cover is perceived by the reader, with cover images from 1890 to 1905 eluding to New Woman ideals of confidence and a strong physical presence in her environment. Similarly the pets illustrated on the cover of *Harper’s Bazar* differed between decades. While the majority of pets on covers from 1870 to 1879 were small and can be considered indoor “lap dogs”, the April 18, 1891 cover of *Harper’s Bazar* (see figure 14) features a large masculine dog. The change in pet size and type may reflect the changing ideas of acceptable femininity.

The most significant difference between Harper’s Bazar from 1870 to 1879 compared to 1890 to 1901 is the change in internal content within the magazine. Topics such as sewing, homemaking, entertaining, social news, etiquette, and raising children remained in *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1905, but were now intermingled with updated topics. New topics such as sports, women’s clubs, law and politics, among others, changed the internal content. Previous beliefs which suggested that women and men reasoned in completely different ways and therefore should have separate responsibilities and interests were challenged by the presence of articles relating to politics, law, home repairs, and women’s careers in the second time frame in *Harper’s Bazar*. Some topics which were present in *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879 increased in frequency from 1890 to 1905, such as women’s college and education.
In many cases the content of such articles did not strongly push women into or away from college education, but rather merely reported on college events, sororities, sports, events, and etiquette. The increased presence of college related articles in itself is enough to suggest that Harper’s Bazar felt the need to address college related topics to its readers, and provided further evidence that women’s college education was becoming more common among upper-middle class American women.

Whereas cartoons from 1870’s depicted women’s employment in a mocking or fearful way there were several cartons from 1890 to 1905 which promoted or encouraged women’s work. The True Woman idea that women who worked outside of the home were less respectable than those who remained in the home was challenged by articles in Harper’s Bazar from 1890 to 1905 which addressed working women and their concerns. In a January 17, 1874 cartoon entitled “Native: Lady-Like Independence”227 scared helpless women were left without a job when hard-times occurred. In comparison, in a July 18, 1896 cartoon in Harper’s Bazar entitled “In the Near Future”228 (see figure 21) an employer stated, ‘Before deciding upon your salary, I would like to see a photograph of your brain. Have you one about you?’ Type-Writer: ‘Certainly. I never would have applied for the position without that!’” The level of education a young lady received, opportunities for employment, and the positive tone of women working outside of the home were key differences between the ideas of the True Woman and New Woman.

The expectation of marriage was similar in the True Woman and New Woman periods, however the manner in which the women were expected to approach dating differed. The young ladies in many 1870 to 1879 cartoons were portrayed mingling with suitors in

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227 “Native: Lady-Like Independence” Harper’s Bazar, January 17, 1874, 56.
228 “In the Near Future,” Harper’s Bazar, July 18, 1896, 352.
balls and parties whereas the New Woman could be seen courting men alongside beaches without chaperones or riding bicycles. The New Woman was often portrayed teasing, flirting and having multiple suitors competing for her affections. The joke of many cartoons was the fact that the young women had several beaus, said no to proposals and become engaged several times during the course of a summer. This may also suggest that young women were considered flightily or frivolous and not to be taken seriously depending on the interpretation of the cartoon. Teaching young girls that their major focus and duty in life was to marry and have a family was not changed by the New Woman but what was shifting was the way girls could approach courting, what was acceptable, and what activities and sports boys and girls could do together to became acquainted.

True Woman beliefs that strenuous work outside of the home or basic exercise was dangerous for women were called into question as *Harper’s Bazar* featured several articles and clothing promotions for sports and general exercise. The vast majority of references to women’s sports and exercise seemed to dispute previous notions that it was proper and safer for women to remain primarily inside of the home. Women had several options for sporting costume, and had specific garments designed for athletic activities, a major difference compared to True Woman era outdoor clothing which was limited to bathing suits, riding habits, and the occasional gymnastic suit for young girls. Girls’ gymnastics was one of the few activities found in both 1870 to 1879 and 1890 to 1905 issues of *Harper’s Bazar*. There was however a notable difference in the way gymnastics was portrayed between the two periods. The tone and approach to women’s gymnastics was considerably different from that of the 1870’s. Only one reference to gymnastics was found in *Harper’s Bazar* from the

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229 Cogan, *All American Girl*. 
1870s and this depicted gymnastic suits for girls 4-6 years old, 8-10 years old and 10-12 years old, featuring three different styles of dress for each age group. Within the 1890’s there were references to children’s gymnastic suits as well as gymnastics suits for women. This attitude was very different from previous notions of “True Womanhood” and women’s limited physical strength. Interestingly, archery and walking were the only athletic or sport-like activities featured in Harper’s Bazar articles in the earlier period. Articles covering women’s sporting events were not found in 1870 to 1879 issues of Harper’s Bazar. College sport articles were also not found from 1870 to 1879, making this a significant difference between the two time frames.

News and reports of women’s club were indeed more prevalent in the second period of the study, but there was still a cautious approach to such articles and evidence of True Woman values appeared in the articles. For example, the article by Cynthia Westover Alden “International Woman’s Congress” \(^{230}\) may have given readers their first account of an international women’s movement club, but also stated “The ambition to be better wives and better mothers was universally recognized [at the congress] as the very highest form of ambition for women.” \(^{231}\) The article further stated, “Many scholarly women were present as women, not as scholars. Many eloquent women were present as women, not as orators” \(^{232}\) as if this made the proceedings of the congress less threatening to Harper’s Bazar readers. We can see the New Woman present within this article, but there is still limitation to how she is presented to American readers.

Evidence that the editorial content of 1890 to 1905 women’s magazines was changing can be seen through the change in advice columns. As the New Woman rose in society and became increasingly recognized within the culture, new questions of behavior and etiquette arose. As the New Woman began to change what was well established, some women readers consulted magazines for advice on these new topics. One such traditional question arose in *Ladies Home Journal* and was answered by Editor Edward Bok. The column read “Shall These Girls ‘Obey’?” and called into question if the word “obey” should be omitted from marriage vows after two young readers wrote questioning the use of the word. Advice columns such as this one provide evidence that readers were beginning to question aspects of their daily lives. This change in the second time frame of the study 1890 to 1905 suggested the effects of the New Woman were recognized in women’s magazines.

*Harper’s Bazar* did not appear to have the same anti-new woman tone that *Ladies Home Journal* seemed to have, based on the editorials written from 1894-1897 by Editor Edward Bok. *Harper’s Bazar* rarely directly addressed the New Woman but rather implied her presence through increased mention of sports, clubs, education, legal and political articles and the shifting content of the cover images. Edward Bok for *Ladies Home Journal* refused to accept that the New Woman was gaining influence and often referred to her as a passing fad. An example of this would be in the October 1897 issue of *Ladies Home Journal* when he wrote, “The disappearing ‘new woman’ fallacy has left behind some strange echoes” further calling the women who don’t approve of the word “obey” as “unhappy women.”

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was a noticeable difference in the tone each magazine had when discussing the New Woman and her effect on society.

Few Charles Dana Gibson sketches were found within the pages of Harper’s Bazar from 1890 to 1905. Although Gibson’s illustrations were most popular in *Life* magazine, the researcher expected to find a few illustrations from this widely recognized illustrator. Within the fifteen year span (1890 to 1905) only one internal Gibson illustration appeared in the selected months for *Harper’s Bazar*. Within *Ladies Home Journal* however, Gibson illustrations appeared more frequently including a full cover illustration on the April 1895 issue. Considering the more positive tone of *Harper’s Bazar* magazine to the New Woman it is surprising that she does not appear more within its covers.
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION:

In summary, this study examined *Harper’s Bazar* cover images and internal content from 1870 to 1879 and 1890 to 1905 to determine the degree in which the images and content changed in association with changing True Woman and New Woman ideology. As one of the oldest consecutive running women’s magazines in the United States, *Harper’s Bazar* provided significant and insightful information on American women’s history and culture. Since ideas of separate spheres were rooted in American culture, the disruption and change of such a system was important to study. The study utilized the method of content analysis to systematically collect, analyze, and interpret cover images and internal content for the months of January, April, July, and October. This method provided an objective, systematic, and unbiased manner in which to analyze large quantities of evidence. Further, this research was important because it provided evidence to support the notion that fashion magazines reflected societal ideals for women during the late nineteenth century. Through construction of fashion images and illustrations, magazines of the late nineteenth century portrayed a desirable lifestyle to its readers. Additional primary material in *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Godey’s Ladies Book* were also analyzed to provide supplementary evidence of the feminine ideals in American periodicals.

This study proposed the following research questions:

1. In what ways was the “True Woman” portrayed on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar*?
   
   Is there a pattern in the ways in which the cover images and internal content portray this conception of the image of women? If there is a pattern, does it reflect a promotion of the “True Woman” ideal?
2. In what ways was “New Women” portrayed on the covers *Harper’s Bazar*? Is there a recurring pattern in the ways in which the cover images and internal content portray this image of women? If there is a pattern does it reflect a promotion of the “New Woman” ideal in American society?

3. Does the frequency of the “True Woman” and the “New Woman” portrayals through cover images and written content in *Harper’s Bazar* provide evidence of this shifting ideology regarding women in American society?

Through this research I found that the idea of the Victorian True Woman was in fact portrayed on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879 through the frequency of group settings with children and through editorial content. The primarily focus of editorial content was on topics considered traditionally feminine, such as childcare and embroidery. The absence of sports, exercise, and other activities associated with the New Woman indicated that the majority of cover images and internal content from 1870 to 1879 corresponded with preconceived notions of True Woman ideology. In regards to a pattern or theme within the covers, the vast majority of *Harper’s Bazar* covers from 1870 to 1879 focused on groups of women interacting with children in a traditionally domestic indoor or outdoor environment. Although the majority of the data collected from *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879 reflected the True Woman lifestyle and ideology, there were examples of the New Woman beginning to make her presence in the magazine. This reflected the argument that the 1870’s was primarily still a True Woman era but was transitioning to reflect the emerging New Woman in society.

The New Woman was evident on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1901 and was clearly portrayed from 1890 to 1905 in the internal editorial content. Cover images
no longer included women attending to children but instead were replaced by one woman standing very confidently on the cover of the magazine or in pairs. The increased presence of sports such as tennis, boating, bicycling, golf, and others provided evidence that women had increased the variety and frequency of outdoor and athletic activities. Physical strength and ability was marked by several secondary sources as definite characteristics of the New Woman supporting the idea that the New Woman was present in Harper’s Bazar. Editorial interest in women’s clubs, legal issues and politics also supported the existence of New Woman interests within the magazine. Increased attention to young women’s college education was another important element which indicated New Woman ideas within Harper’s Bazar. Ideas of separate spheres in which women dwelled primarily inside the home were blatantly challenged by women attending college alongside men and entering the workforce in greater numbers. It is unclear whether the numerous images of the New Woman were an intentional promotion on the part of the Harper’s Bazar writers and editors or a mere reflection of naturally occurring social changes. There is little uncertainty, however, that images of the New Woman and behavioral patterns surrounding her were indeed present in Harper’s Bazar from 1890 to 1905.

The frequency of the True Woman and the New Woman portrayals through cover images and written content in Harper’s Bazar provided evidence of the shifting ideology regarding women in American society. This study found that although the 1870’s chiefly provided evidence of the True Woman, occasional New Woman references were present suggesting that the transition was already beginning to occur. This study also found that both True Woman and New Woman portrayals were heavily intermingled throughout the 1890’s
and into the 20th century. This suggests that rather than a drastic transformation, a slow shift in women’s roles took place.

The idea of the New Woman emerged in society and challenged the pre-conceived ideas of the True Woman in the late 19th century. The New Woman represented a strong, healthy, and active woman who sought her own enjoyment and satisfaction. As the Gibson Girl remarked to the Steel Engraving Lady “The question now is, not ‘What does man like’ but ‘What does woman prefer?’” As the New Woman ideal took hold in society we can see her presence emerge in woman’s publications such as Harper’s Bazar.

Overall there is evidence to suggest that the idea of the New Woman changed the way in which women were portrayed on the covers of this popular fashion magazine. The presence of the New Woman was also noticeable in the internal content of the magazine. Women were illustrated as participating in a wider range of activities, with mixed company in greater frequency in the later decade compared to the first. Women were also depicted on the covers standing alone than in groups or with children more often in the later decade than the earlier one. The frequency in which women were shown outdoors compared to indoors also increased in the later decade, reflecting women’s increased presence outside of the home. It is difficult to determine if this portrayal of the New Woman was a conscious effort made by the editors or a natural reflection of what was already occurring in society.

Women in society were not completely abandoning their former way of life but rather expanding their reach to include activities and areas of interest previously considered off-limits. When looking for the True Woman and the New Woman in Harper’s Bazar we are

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not looking for the moment in which the Gibson Girl replaces the Steel-engraving Lady within American women’s magazines. Rather we see the process of the Steel-engraving Lady slowing growing stronger and tanner as she rides her bicycle and plays golf with her brother and father. At the end of the day however, she would still return home to care for her home and her children, and in this aspect the Gibson Girl and the Steel-engraving Lady became blended together in Harper’s Bazar.

**Further Research Questions**

After examining the results of this study several extensions into the research may be proposed. Additional research could be conducted to examine every month for the decades as opposed to comparing only a few. This would give further evidence to support the noted changes in the selected months studied. The data of Harper’s Bazar could be further compared to similar magazines of the time such a Ladies Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, Woman’s Home Companion, McCall’s or the Delineator. If research found a similar change in content for supplementary magazines it would lend further evidence that the idea of the New Woman was frequently depicted on women’s magazine covers and internal content. Research could also be conducted on the different illustrators and artists that contributed to the cover art and writers and editors for the internal content and articles. Research into the editors of the various women’s magazines such as Edward Bok and others would provide important insight into the editorial content of women’s magazine and the message behind the magazine.

**Limitations**

A significant unforeseen limitation within this research was the failure to gather cover image information from 1901 to 1905. Since there was no cover information to collect from
1901 to 1905 additional New Woman data could not be obtained to further support the research. Information pertaining to internal and editorial content was fully gathered and analyzed but cover images were not. For this reason the data referring to New Woman era editorials was more complete than cover image data. This unanticipated restriction served to prematurely end the cover image data collection and analysis. This restriction may be addressed in future studies by expanding the breath of the study to include other women’s magazines which provided consistent covers until 1905.
Figure 1 Example of steel-engraving lady marked by small frame and rounded shoulders, downcast eyes, petite delicate hands small mouth, and attending to children. Cover images from 1870-1879 often featured women in groups attending to children. *Harper’s Bazar* July 8th 1871
SWIMMING in a heavy surf is one of the most fatiguing physical performances that can be attempted. Men who are expert at all water exercises, and who are athletic and muscular in build, are obliged to put forth their best efforts to cope successfully with the great waves which surge in upon many of our sea beaches, and it is not to be wondered at that women generally find the task an impossible one. For this reason women who enjoy swimming usually prefer still-water bathing, where they may practise the art in comfort. But at a large number of the seaside resorts this cannot be obtained, and the visitors must content themselves with the surf. There are a few women who, by reason of exceptional strength and long practice, are able to battle with the waves until they get out beyond the "break" line. Once there the work is easier, though by no means deprived of all difficulty and danger. At most of the beaches which are much visited there is a line of barrels or buoys anchored a certain distance off shore. Beyond these it is not permitted to the bathers to go, and men and life-boats are at hand to enforce this rule and to rescue any person who may have become exhausted. Life-lines, of course, are also provided, leading from the shore to the line of buoys.

If a woman is ambitious to swim in the surf, she should better be satisfied to attain that end gradually. (This, by the way, is taking for granted that she is already a good still-water swimmer, for a rough sea is not the place in which to learn conveniently the first principles of the exercise.) It is better, then, for the first two or three days, merely to accustom one's self to enduring the merciless pounding of the waves; to make little swimming trials when there is a brief lull in the surf, and to learn to face the breakers fearlessly and plunge into them head first as they approach. For this is what must be done when one starts to swim out towards the buoy line.

The only way to manage it is to stand in the water a little way out, facing the open sea. Watch the approaching "crasher," and dive into it resolutely just as the foam begins to curl along its edge, indicating that it is about to break. Once through this way you will have barely have time to shake the water out of your eyes and take breath before a second one is upon you. This must be met in the same way, and perhaps a third one. Two or three are usually all you will have to stand, because by the time these have broken over your head your strokes will have carried you beyond the point where the waves break. After that you will rise on the swell and ride the waves like a feather; but it is necessary to remember to swim with the head and shoulders as high as possible, to avoid swallowing water when the crests of the incoming waves meet you. This is contrary to the best principles of still-water swimming, and those who have been accustomed to swimming low, with just the nostrils above the water, will perhaps find it hard at first to change their habit. Coming in is easier, because one is borne along by the rush of the sea; but when well inshore one is likely to be submerged once or twice by a breaking "crasher."

It does not seem very practicable to me to try to swim out along the life-line. If one attempts to hold to this she has only one arm with which to push forward, and every bit of power she can use is necessary to force her progress. Then, if an exceptionally fierce wave hurls her backward, she is likely to be thrown hard against the rope, and will probably receive a more or less severe

Figure 2 Example of “The Outdoor Woman” column featuring Miss Beatrix Hoyt-Woman Golf Champion of the United States. Articles such as this one reflect “New Woman” values on exercise and sports. Harper’s Bazar July 24, 1897
Figure 3 Ivory Soap Advertisement in *Harper’s Bazar*. This advertisement directly referred to the “New Woman” and used the ideology of strength and fitness to sell Ivory Soap. *Harper’s Bazar* April 1, 1899
Figure 4 Cartoon depicting stereotypes of the “New Woman”. Each stereotype of the “New Woman” is accompanied by a short poem (see Appendix) to further explain and mock the type of woman. *The San Francisco Call* October 11, 1896 pg. 17
Figure 5 Charles Dana Gibson illustration of the “New Woman” as confronted by an older generation. The illustrated young woman appears healthy and athletic her hair is tossed about freely as if she had just returned from riding. Gibson’s illustrations of women known as the Gibson Girl became a visible symbol of the emerging “New Woman” at the turn of the century.
Figure 6 An example of the most common 1870's group structure and multiple domestic actives such as arranging flowers and attending to children. Harper's Bazar April 2nd, 1870
Figure 7 Costumes promoted by *Harper’s Bazar* for swimming. Sea side visits were one of the few outdoor activities women were featured participating in on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1870 to 1879, in addition, swimming was also featured from 1890-1901.

*Harper’s Bazar* July 13, 1872
Figure 8 A typical inner magazine page of *Harper's Bazar*. This section offered advice on how to create the latest style of bonnets and hats, and illustrated women and a young girl gathered indoors.

*Harper's Bazar* July 4th, 1874
Figure 9 Cartoon entitled “Native: Lady-Like Independence
Harper’s Bazar January 17, 1874

Figure 10 Cartoon entitled “Real Education”
Harper’s Bazar July 20, 1872
Figure 11 Cover of *Harper’s Bazar* illustrated a woman walking in the park with young women bicyclers in the background. *Harper’s Bazar* July 16, 1898
Figure 12 Man and woman skating together, this cover illustration shows the general expansion of women’s outdoor sports as well as the increase diversity of activities men and women could do together. Harper’s Bazar January 13th, 1900.
Figure 13 Cover image of *Harper's Bazar* featuring a women in her bedroom. Women's bedrooms was an environment previously unseen on covers from 1870 to 1879 but present from 1890 to 1901. *Harper's Bazar* April 11, 1891.
Figure 14 Cover image featured tall woman holding a large dog while walking outdoors. Harper’s Bazar April 18, 1891
Figure 15 Change in the stance and posture of women on the covers of *Harper’s Bazar* from 1890 to 1901. Women have a perceived element of confidence and self exertion. *Harper’s Bazar* April 23, 1893.
Figure 16 *Harper's Bazar* Cover illustration entitled “A Successful Catch”-Drawn by C. S. Reinhart. *Harper's Bazar* October 25, 1890
Figure 17 Example of the changing clothing styles for women as advertised in *Harper’s Bazar* May 5, 1896.
Figure 18 “A Cautious Girl” by W. B. Tilbert. The caption read “Mr. Goldthwaite. ‘Don’t you think you can learn to love me?’ Miss De Mure. ‘It depends how much you’re willing to spend on my education.’” This cartoon not only hints at the importance of women’s education, but demonstrates the notion that women approached marriage as a financial contract by entering into matrimony for money and social status rather than love. *Harper’s Bazar* July 3, 1897
Figure 19  An advertisement in *Ladies Home Journal* which used the concept of the New Woman and women’s suffrage to draw attention to products and further promote a company image. January 1895 *Ladies Home Journal*
Figure 20 Example of the S.H.& M company using the term “New Woman” in order to promote their products and increase sales. *Ladies Home Journal* June, 1895.
Figure 21 “In the Near Future” illustrated a stereotype “New Woman” figure applying for work in an office. *Harper’s Bazar* July 18, 1896

The caption reads “Employer: ‘Before deciding upon your salary, I would like to see a photograph of your brain. Have you one about you?’ Type-Writer: ‘Certainly. I never would have applied for the position without that’
References


APPENDIX

Original poems corresponding to Figure 4.

THE SHOUTING FEMALE.

There's the raving and tearing new woman,
With her hat on one side like a boy's.
Who makes speeches on every occasion.
And who bolsters her logic with noise.
With her disheveled locks in the breezes,
See her gestures fantastic and queer;
While the multitude gazes and wonders,
Whether really we needed her here.
It was bard to be patient with male cranks,
With their eloquence ready to spout,
But it's harder to bear this new woman,
Who has nothing to do but to snout.

THE ATHLETIC GIRL.

Here you see the athletic new woman,
Who wears bloomers and wheels through the land
She can carry a gun on the hillside.
And aims to have "backbone" and "sand."
About freckles and sunburns she's careless,
But her muscle's her pride and her joy;
She can run, row and swim with her brother,
Who declares she's as good as a boy.
There's a place in the world for her muscle,
Let her be just as strong as she can;
If she will only smile like a woman
And make sunshine in life for some man.

LEARNED MAID.

This is only a student-new-woman;
Either doctor or lawyer she'll be.
There is nothing too deep to be fathomed,
By the size of her books you can see.
She admits that her brain is the lighter,
But in quality finer than ours;
And she claims equal rights in the college,
To develop
We admit she can learn this new woman;
And we never have doubted her right,
But this life is one wide field of battle,
And our learned young maiden must fight.

THE MANNISH GIRL.

There is still one more type of new woman,
though you might call her "him" at first sight;
For her coat, shirt, and hat, and stiff collar,
On her brother would look about right.
No, she doesn't go in for athletics.
Or to glean wisdom's grain from big books;
She cures not to be manly in nature,
She would just be a man in her looks.
It is neat', though it's fearfully ugly,
And perhaps she will find as she grows
That soft womanly folds and sweet graces
Fit a woman, as roseleaves a rose.
POLITICAL WOMAN.

Would you really call this a new woman?
We have loved some just like her for years;
They have helped us to bear all our burdens,
They have shared all our joys and our tears.
Don't you see her hands held out in pleading?
This dear creature is asking to vote,
she declares it a right, not a favor,
You should hear now much law she can quote.
We must yield to her sooner or later,
Let us hope this bad world she'll reclaim;
But if politics grow a shade blacker
Can you tell who'll be mostly to blame?

BACHELOR MAID.

“Is the bachelor maid a new woman?’’
Well, perhaps it is best, so to say;
'Tis the name that is new, not the maid
But it suits her to put it that way.
She could ne'er be persuaded to marry,
Never husband shall order her life.
As for children she never could stand them,
With their noise and perpetual strife.
Yes, dear bachelor maiden new woman*
The men are a despicable lot:
It may be you'd refuse to marry

THE WIFE.

Now, this last is the nicest new woman;
May her numbers increase everyday!
She's a trimly dressed, pleasant young person,
Who can talk in a sensible way.
She will fall deep in love and get married:
Of her home she'll be proud as a queen;
She will walk step by step with her husband
And with never a shadow between.
She will gather about her the children,
Who will run when they hear mother call,
And she'll sing lullabies in the gloaming—
"She's the old woman"— so are they all
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