‘Destructive but sweet’: cigarette smoking among women 1890 – 1990

Rosemary Elizabeth Elliot

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University of Glasgow
Centre for the History of Medicine
MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit

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Abstract

Despite the vast literature surrounding tobacco use, there is little work looking at the question of smoking among women in a historical context. The work which has been done on women and smoking has largely looked at the issue from a sociological viewpoint. In addressing this gap, I have drawn from both disciplines to explore the history of smoking among women from 1890 until the end of the 20th century and to historicise existing sociological literature on women and smoking. I have aimed to integrate women into the history of tobacco more generally and to explore women's own interpretations of smoking in the past. In doing so, I have focused on the relationship between smoking among women and the socio-cultural position of smoking in Britain from the 19th century until the end of the 20th. I have also explored the relationship between smoking and the changing social position of women.

Drawing on archival material from a variety of sources and interviews with epidemiologists and health professionals, I have shown the changing, often ambiguous, public discourses surrounding smoking from the late 19th century until the end of the twentieth. I have also shown, through oral history interviews with women aged between 40 and 85, how these discourses have shaped individual women's interpretations of smoking in their lives and the personal experiences of smoking which they recollect.

What I have found is that the social meaning of smoking has undergone a series of redefinitions over this period. The advent of the cigarette in the 1880s and its subsequent popularity in the decades following was crucial to this. From having been a recreational pastime, suited to certain times and occasions, in the nineteenth century, smoking permeated every aspect of public and private life for most of the twentieth. The First World War was pivotal in this expansion, as smoking, particularly cigarette smoking, was defined as a necessity to men's lives, both at the Front and at home. Its increasing prevalence in the interwar period and the priority accorded to tobacco supplies during and immediately after the Second World War served to reinforce the idea that smoking was integral to every day life.

However, the social meaning of smoking was gendered. In the late 19th century, smoking was predominantly a male habit, a visible delineator of gendered social space. The proliferation of the cigarette in the early 20th century resulted from its growing popularity among men. Smoking only became integral to every day life for men. Consumption among women remained negligible until the interwar period and only began to increase substantially during and immediately after the Second World War. From the nineteenth century onwards, smoking held quite different social meanings for women than men, reflecting a gendered understanding of human nature and women's position within that. Nonetheless, it was again the cigarette which was key in expanding tobacco use among women.

Seen as a symbol of women's emancipation in the 1890s by both its adherents and its detractors, cigarette smoking became associated with sophisticated femininity in the 1920s and 1930s, embodying new ideals and new opportunities. However, smoking among women also met with resistance and the debate which surrounded it, both in the 1890s and the interwar period, reflected a deeper disquiet about social and economic change. Resistance to the spread of smoking among women focused on women's role as wife and mother and the question of smoking among women was seen as a social and moral, rather than an individual one. Nonetheless, the economic and social dislocation of Second World War, the positive discourses from advertising and the media which had surrounded smoking previously, and the centrality accorded to tobacco by the government of the day contributed to an increasing number of women smokers from the 1940s onwards. In the second half of the twentieth century, more women smoked in a wider range of circumstances, reflecting the adaptability of the cigarette and its role in an increasingly diverse range of femininities.

From 1950 onwards, the social meaning of smoking underwent a further redefinition as it was increasingly associated with lung cancer and other chronic diseases. The association was made initially in the male population, reflecting the prevalence of smoking in previous decades, and the gendered nature of the epidemiological case against smoking was reflected in press coverage and health education material of the time. It was not until the risks of smoking to the unborn child were realised that women were considered in their capacity as mothers. There was not sufficient epidemiological evidence to make the connection between lung cancer and other

diseases in a female population until 1980. By this time, the gender gap in smoking prevalence was narrowing and girls and young women were the fastest growing group of smokers.

Smoking was further redefined in the last decades of the twentieth century as the health risks of passive smoking were realised. From being a sociable habit, smoking was increasingly seen as an anti-social one as regulations and legislation restricted smoking in public places. Smoking, and increasingly the smoker, were stigmatised as smoking was seen to be a threat to health, both one's own and to that of others. At the same time, the cigarette continued to be used as a symbol of sophistication and cool in fashion pages and movies, reflecting the way in which the meaning of smoking has been surrounded by ambiguity for much of its history.

Frontispiece: *Vogue*, December 1954.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis grew out of a conversation with my father, a life-long cigarette smoker, after he had recently given up cigarettes for health reasons. We were out for a walk and he was smoking a cigar, a habit he still has to this day. Smoking was part of his life, something which he had grown up with and something he was, and is, loathe to give up completely. We were discussing changing attitudes towards smoking over his life time and it was this conversation several years ago which sparked my own interest in the subject.

This conversation occurred at a time when I was about to begin my MPhil dissertation in the History of Medicine and was looking for a suitable subject. Through my research for that dissertation, I became aware of the relative lack of material on women and smoking. However, it was Marguerite Dupree who encouraged me to go on to do a PhD and to apply for the necessary funding. Her help and support at this stage and since have been invaluable.

Kate Hunt of the MRC agreed to co-supervise my research and I have enjoyed working with both her and Marguerite. Kate and Marguerite have provided excellent supervision throughout, each bringing her own expertise to the project and providing a constant source of support and encouragement. I could not have completed it without them – they have both been brilliant. It is difficult to do justice to that in the space I have here.

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welcomed me to their seminars and meetings and provided a lively forum for debate and discussion. Everyone there has been friendly and I have appreciated the opportunity to participate socially as well as academically. I would particularly like to thank Graham Hart for his help with my proposal for the ethics committee and Carol Emslie for reading and commenting on a draft of this thesis. The MRC SPHSU also provided help with some of the transcription. I would also like to thank Phil Wilson of the Department of General Practice for his invaluable help and advice on the oral history section of the project and Graham Smith for his comments and suggestions.

I would also like to thank the Wellcome Trust for providing funding and research costs for the three years this PhD has taken to research and write. During this time, I have met a lot of great people through conferences and research trips and I owe a good deal to conversations and comments at various stages. Although I can't mention everybody here for reasons of space, I would particularly like to thank Amanda Amos Allan Brandt, Virginia Berridge, David Harley, Matthew Hilton, Penny Tinkler, and Odette Parry, who have all taken the time to talk to me about their research and mine. I am also grateful to the Wellcome Trust for funding a week long oral history course in Oxford, run by Paul Thompson and Rob Perks, which I attended in October 1999.

I have also been helped at various stages by archivists and librarians throughout Britain and in the United States and I would like to acknowledge staff at all the organisations listed in Table Two. I would particularly like to thank Mike Barfoot, Ken Grossi and Ted Teodoro for sending me material and Ed Mormon for his help and hospitality at the New York Academy of Medicine. I would also like to thank Nadav Davidovitch for chauffeuring me round Boston, for lunch and for getting me to Allan Brandt's office on time. I would also like to thank the Elizabeth Roberts Archive, Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex and Qualidata at the University of Essex for access to oral history material and personal testimony.

I owe a great debt to everyone who agreed to be interviewed for this research. Sir Richard Doll and Sir Richard Peto kindly gave up their time to discuss their involvement in epidemiological research into smoking and health. David Player, Alison Hillhouse, Yvonne Bostock and Eileen Crofton also provided interesting

accounts about their involvement in SHEU and ASH Scotland respectively. Hilary Graham and Bobbie Jacobson also agreed to be interviewed about their respective work on smoking among women and were also generous with their time. Godfrey Fowler also met me to discuss his work in smoking cessation. Several of those I interviewed also lent or gave me material relating to smoking and health and that was also helpful.

I would also like to thank the women who agreed to be interviewed for this research. Many of those I interviewed were busy themselves and I appreciated them giving me their time. It was their comments and discussion which provided the real insight into what smoking actually meant to women. I would also like to thank the non-smokers who responded to my letter but were not interviewed. The subject of my research was such that it also invited comment in more informal settings, from friends, acquaintances and strangers, which continually made it interesting.

Doing a PhD is a very good way to pare down your social circle but I have managed to retain some family and friends and to meet and make more. I would like to express thanks here to my parents for practical help and for encouraging me to follow an academic path, and to my sisters Emily and Abigail. I would also like to thank Andrew, Isobel and Oscar, who gave me 'Rosie's room', a home from home, when I was doing research in London and made my time off from the archives good fun. I would like to thank Lynn and Krista for their support and friendship over the last three years. I would also like to say thank you to Stephen Patnode for being such a star at the AAHM and for keeping me sane with his e-mails and sardonic wit. Chris Magill's e-mails have also provided a source of encouragement. Thank you also to Norman and Christina for welcoming me into their family.

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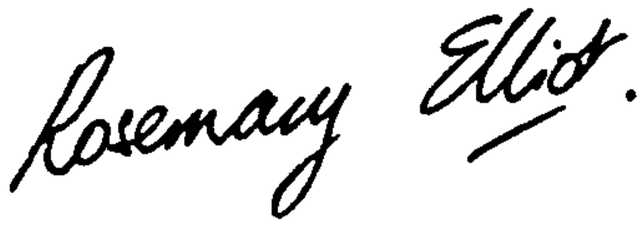
DECLARATION

This thesis has been composed entirely by myself,
and the work on which it is based is my own.



Rosemary E. Elliot

Abbreviations

ASH	Action on Smoking and Health
BAT	British American Tobacco
BECC	British Empire Cancer Campaign
BMJ	*British Medical Journal*
Cancer SAC	Cancer and Radiotherapy Standing Committee
CCHE	Central Council for Health Education
CHSC	Central Health Services Council
COMOTAS	Committee for Monitoring Agreements on Advertising and Sponsorship
CRC	Cancer Research Council
ETS	Environmental Tobacco Smoke
GHS	*General Household Survey*
GRO	General Register Office
HEBS	Health Education Board for Scotland
HEC	Health Education Council
INWAT	International Network of Women Against Tobacco
ISCSH	Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health
ITCo.	Imperial Tobacco Company
MO	Mass Observation
MRC	Medical Research Council
NAAFI	Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes
NHS	National Health Service
NSN-S	National Society for Non-Smokers
NYPL	New York Public Library
PRO	Public Record Office
RCP	Royal College of Physicians
SCOTH	Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health
SHEG	Scottish Health Education Group
SSLC	Standing Scientific Liaison Committee
TAC	Tobacco Advisory Council
TMA	Tobacco Manufacturers Association
TMSC	Tobacco Manufacturers Standing Committee
TRC	Tobacco Research Council
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WHO	World Health Organisation

Table I: Chronological framework

This chronological list is intended to provide an easy point of reference for some of the key events discussed in this thesis.

1883	The Bonsack cigarette machine was acquired by Wills Ltd.
1901	American Tobacco Company (ATC) took over Ogden's Ltd., Liverpool.
1902	'The Great Tobacco War' as ATC assaulted the British market. British tobacco Companies responded by forming the Imperial Tobacco Company, an amalgamation of 13 different companies.
1908	The Children's Act, 1908, banned the sale of tobacco to children under 16 years old.
1926	Several firms outside Imperial, including Gallaher, Godfrey Phillips and Carreras Rothman, formed the Tobacco Trade Advisory Committee in order to stop traders undercutting the manufacturers' recommended prices.
1933	The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 reiterated the terms of the 1908 Act.
1939	An article linking tobacco and carcinoma of the lung was published in Germany by Franz Hermann Muller of the University of Cologne.
1940	The Tobacco Manufacturers' Advisory Committee and the Tobacco Distributors Advisory Committee were formed to advise the Board of Trade on measures to ensure that cigarette and tobacco supplies were maintained. This role ended in 1958 but the industry kept the TAC as their industry trade association.
1947	The Medical Research Council commissioned a study on lung cancer by A. Bradford Hill and Richard Doll.
1950	Doll and Hill published their first report on the association between smoking and lung cancer.
1952	Doll and Hill published their second report on smoking and lung cancer.
1954	The Minister of Health, Ian MacLeod, made a statement in the House of Commons on smoking and lung cancer. Doll and Hill published the preliminary results from a prospective study of 40 000 doctors.
1956	The tobacco companies formed the Tobacco Manufacturers' Standing Committee (TMSC). Doll and Hill published another report from the study of 40 000 doctors.
1957	The MRC published a report on smoking and lung cancer.
1962	The Royal College of Physicians published their first report on smoking

	and health.
1963	The TMSC became the Tobacco Research Council following the opening of its research facility at Harrogate.
1965	Television advertising for cigarettes was banned under the terms of the 1964 Television Act.
1968	The Health Education Council (HEC, later Health Education Authority, (HEA)) was formed in England and Wales and the Scottish Health Education Unit (later Scottish Health Education Group (SHEG) and then Health Education Board Scotland (HEBS)) was formed in Scotland.
1971	The Royal College of Physicians published their second report *Smoking and Health Now*. Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) was set up in London. The first voluntary agreement between the government and the tobacco industry was made on advertising and labelling. Health warnings were added on packets. The Standing Scientific Liaison Committee (SSLC) was set up.
1973	The Department of Health and Social Security began to publish tar and nicotine 'league tables' on a biannual basis and packets began to identify a brand's tar group (The lowest tar yield was 4mg, the highest was 38mg. The average tar yield was 20.6mg). The Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health (ISCSH) replaced the SSLC. ASH Scotland was set up in Edinburgh.
1974	Second voluntary agreement between the tobacco industry and the government on advertising and labelling, strengthened the health warning on tobacco packets and advertising.
1975	First report of the ISCSH.
1977	Another voluntary agreement was concluded between the tobacco industry and the government. The tobacco companies agreed not to introduce any new brands of cigarettes with more than 22mg tar and not to raise existing brands above this level. Third report of the RCP was published.
1978	An article in the BMJ linked passive smoking to disease. The Tobacco Research Council was incorporated into the Tobacco Advisory Council.
1980	Another voluntary agreement was concluded with the tobacco industry to reduce tar yields to below 15mg. Second ISCSH report.
1981	Bobbie Jacobson's book *The Ladykillers* was published.
1982	Two further voluntary agreements between the tobacco industry and the

	government.
1983	Third RCP report on smoking and health looked at the risks of smoking to women and the risks of passive smoking. Third report of the ISCSH also looked at passive smoking.
1984	New voluntary agreement between the government and the industry to revise tar group structure.
1985	Department of Health and Social Security issued guidelines about smoking in the workplace.
1986	Another voluntary agreement was concluded between the government and the tobacco industry on advertising and sponsorship. The Committee for Monitoring Agreements on Tobacco Advertising and Sponsorship (COMATAS) to monitor the agreement. *The Protection of Children (Tobacco) Act* made it illegal to sell any kind of tobacco to children; this had previously applied only to smoking tobacco.
1988	ISCSH fourth report recommended lower tar and nicotine limits and more emphasis on the dangers of passive smoking.
1991	Cigar and pipe tobacco commercials banned on TV. Oral snuff was banned under Section 11 of the *Consumer Protection Act.* RCP report *Smoking and the Young.* *Tobacco Products Labelling (Safety) Regulations* - required tar and nicotine levels to be printed on all packets under EU Directive 90/239/EEC.
1992	White paper *Health of the Nation.* Publication of the Smee Report reviewing the evidence on the effect of advertising bans. Commons Health Select Committee recommends banning advertising *Cigarettes (Maximum Tar Yield)(Safety) Regulations 1992* under EU Directive 90/239/EEC.
1994	The TAC became the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association (TMA) in order to reflect its role as a trade association, representing the industry in negotiations with government and other authorities.
1998	White Paper *Smoking Kills.* Report of the Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health.
2000	Select Committee on Health report *The Tobacco Industry and the Health Risks of Smoking.*

Introduction

'Twere better, perhaps if we parted!
'Twere better we had never met!
But now you are part of my lot, dear,
Destructive, but sweet, cigarette!

This verse is taken from a discussion about smoking entitled 'Should Women Smoke?' published in *The Ladies Realm* in 1900.[1] The title of the discussion indicates the novelty of the issue. Mrs Hugh Fraser, and her contemporaries, were writing at a time when smoking among women would appear, from manufacturers' figures and contemporary literature, to be neither commonplace nor widely accepted. Yet, as the need for discussion on the subject indicates, it was not unknown.

The verse, which opened Mrs Hugh Fraser's contribution to the discussion, summed up the ambivalence in her mind about smoking among women and the ambiguity surrounding the cigarette itself. Mrs Hugh Fraser continued,

> the subject (smoking among women) seems to have two sides which should be separately dealt with – namely, smoking as it affects women themselves, and women's smoking as it affects the family and Society.

For Mrs Hugh Fraser, smoking among women was not just an individual, but a social question. The advice she offered encouraged her readers to consider both their role in the family and their social standing when deciding whether or not to smoke. The destruction referred to in the verse related not only to health, but to reputation; the sweetness referred not only to tobacco, but to the potential for social interaction, stimulation and solace. The essence of the cigarette, and the discussion which surrounded it, was both confusing and contradictory.

It was also gender-specific. The author, Mrs Hugh Fraser, later referred to her sons and their (male) friends smoking without comment, while other participants in the

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[1] H. Fraser (Mrs.) Should Ladies Smoke? *The Ladies Realm*, 7 (1900) p. 518.

discussion referred to husbands, male friends and men in general who smoked as the norm. For women, it was another matter. Smoking among women incited comment precisely because, at the end of the nineteenth century, it was rarely done. Smoking was seen to be predominantly a masculine habit.

The immediate concern of Mrs Hugh Fraser and her contemporaries was the extent to which smoking was compatible with dominant notions of femininity, a question which will be addressed later in the thesis. However, what the discussion shows more widely is the extent to which smoking, or not smoking, had become linked to expressions and understandings of gender by the end of the nineteenth century. It is this connection which forms the central argument of this thesis. As cigarette smoking grew from a novelty pursuit adopted by a minority of women at the beginning of the twentieth century to a habit enjoyed by nearly half the female population several decades later, the association of smoking with expressions of gender continued to be paramount.

This thesis sets out to examine the history of smoking among women in Britain from the end of the nineteenth century until the end of the twentieth. It is divided into three parts. The first part comprises chapters one and two, which introduce the background and outline my methodological approach. The second part, chapters three to five, presents the discourses which have surrounded women and smoking between 1890 and the present day. It draws on archival research and interviews which I conducted with key epidemiologists and health professionals. The third part, chapters six and seven, looks at the ways in which those discourses have shaped individual women's understanding and expression of their smoking behaviour. It draws on interviews which I carried out with women smokers, non-smokers and ex-smokers. The thesis as a whole seeks to locate the question of smoking among women both within the context of changing understandings of women's position in society and within the framework of the history of tobacco more generally.

Historical scholarship has already shown that changing understandings of gender roles and social expectations of women over the twentieth century resulted in divergent,

sometimes competing, ideals of femininity.[2] These could also be influenced by factors such as age, class, race and sexuality.[3] What I want to argue in this thesis is that the role of the cigarette as an expression of those femininities meant that smoking developed multiple social and personal meanings for women. Those meanings were, as Mrs Hugh Fraser had noted in 1900, not just an individual matter, but something perceived to affect the family and society in general. With the development of the epidemiological case against smoking in the 1950s and subsequent links between smoking and foetal and child health, this aspect assumed increased relevance. Later concerns about passive smoking merely served to reinforce the fact that smoking was a social, as well as a personal, matter. It is the diverse social and personal meanings which smoking held for women in the twentieth century and the extent to which such meanings were gender-specific which this thesis sets out to explore.

The starting point for the research was the fact that consumption trends indicated clearly gendered patterns of smoking prevalence throughout the twentieth century.[4] While levels of smoking among men began to increase dramatically from the late 1880s onwards with the advent of the cigarette, it was not until the mid-1920s that smoking among women became both numerically significant and increasingly visible in the media. The cigarette smoking flapper was captured in art and literature, while the seductive smoking siren graced the screen. It is these images which dominated the popular consciousness, and the initial starting point of my thesis was to be 1925. Yet, as the discussion quoted above shows, the issue predates the Roaring Twenties and the roots of later controversies can be found in earlier periods. 1925, I realised, was an artificial starting point. 1890 is no less artificial, but it does at least indicate that the

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[2] D. Beddoe *Back to Home and Duty: Women between the Wars* (London: Pandora, 1989); J. Lewis *Women in England 1870 – 1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change* (Sussex: Wheatsheaf, 1984); P. Summerfield '"The Girl that makes the thing that drills the hole that holds the spring...": discourses of women and work in the Second World War' in C. Gledhill and G. Swanson (eds.) *Nationalising Femininity Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); P. Tinkler *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England, 1920 – 1950* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995); D. Thom *Nice girls and rude girls: women workers in World War One* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998).

[3] R. Shoemaker & M. Vincent (eds.) 'Introduction', in *Gender and History in Western Europe* (London: Arnold, 1998); J. W. Scott 'Women's History' in P. Burke *New perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

[4] N. Wald et al. *UK Smoking Statistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); A. Bridgewood *et al. Living in Britain: results from the 1998 General Household Survey* (London: The Stationery Office) pp. 116 – 113.

history of women smoking in twentieth century Britain begins in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

However, it was not until the Second World War and the decades immediately following that women began to smoke in numbers anywhere near male consumption figures. Between 1948 and 1975, smoking prevalence fluctuated between 36 and 45 per cent of women.[5] Daily consumption also increased over the period – the average number of cigarettes smoked per day by women in 1949 was seven, by 1979, it was seventeen.[6] In other words, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the pattern and prevalence of smoking among women seem to be qualitatively and quantitatively different from what had gone before. Although it was still somewhat less than men, who smoked an average of fourteen cigarettes per day in 1949 and around twenty per day in the 1970s, the gap had narrowed.[7]

What is also obvious from consumption trends is that, as the health risks of smoking were established and disseminated from the mid-twentieth century onwards, smoking prevalence began to fall first and faster among men (Fig. 1). Tobacco consumption did not begin to fall among women until more than a decade after the publication of the Royal College of Physician's Report on Smoking and Health in 1962.[8] Moreover, even after the publication of the Royal College of Physician's Report, fewer women gave up smoking in later life than men and those who started smoking did so at a younger age than previously. The result was that by the last decade of the twentieth century, the gender difference in smoking prevalence had all but disappeared. By 1998, the *General Household Survey (GHS)* showed that 28% of men and 26% of women were current cigarette smokers.[9] The gender difference in daily consumption remained narrow, with men smoking 16 and women smoking 13 cigarettes a day.[10] In

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[5] Wald et al.*UK Smoking Statistics* p. 19.
[6] Wald et al.*UK Smoking Statistics* p. 11.
[7] Wald et al.*UK Smoking Statistics* p. 11. These figures are taken from the Tobacco Advisory Council figures. From 1974, the *General Household Survey* (*GHS*) also estimated the consumption of cigarettes per smoker. The *GHS* figures show a similar gender disparity, but consumption estimates for both sexes are slightly lower as the *GHS* figures have not been sales-adjusted. The discrepancy is greater for men than women.
[8] Royal College of Physicians *Smoking and Health: a report of The Royal College of Physicians on smoking in relation to cancer of the lung and other diseases* (London: Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd, 1962).
[9] *GHS* p. 123.
[10] *GHS* p. 130.

addition, among adolescents and young women aged between 16 and 19, the gender pattern was beginning to be reversed.[11] From having been predominantly a masculine habit at the beginning of the twentieth century, smoking had become something equally likely to be taken up by women.

The gendered disparity of patterns of tobacco consumption raise questions about why smoking had assumed gendered connotations in the nineteenth century and how these changed in the twentieth. Other questions which arise are when and why women took up smoking in larger numbers, the role which smoking played in their lives and the extent to which smoking, or not smoking, was a way in which different groups of women could define themselves within a shifting set of social ideals throughout the twentieth century. In addressing these questions, gender, as both a category of historical analysis and a constituent of social relations, is seen to be crucial. Gender in both senses is based on the idea of difference between the sexes, which is understood in this thesis to be both socially constructed and individually negotiated.[12] It is constructed, as Joan Scott has argued, through 'culturally available symbols that evoke multiple (and often contradictory) representations...(and) normative concepts that set forth interpretations of the meanings of the symbols'.[13] My thesis will argue that tobacco, and the cigarette in particular, was one such symbol, with multiple representations and a corresponding set of interpretations. As such it could be appropriated by either sex as an expression of, or challenge to, prevailing understandings of gender.

The role of smoking as a symbol of gender emerged during the research process. When I started, my intention was to focus largely on oral history testimony from different generations of women in order to explore the changing relationship between smoking and identity among women in twentieth century Britain. I wanted to see how awareness of the health risks had affected both the behaviour of, and attitudes towards, women smokers. The research was motivated firstly by consumption patterns which indicated clearly gendered patterns of smoking prevalence and secondly by the

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[11] *GHS* p. 123; Department of Health *Smoking Kills: a white paper on tobacco* (London: the stationery Office, 1998).
[12] R. Shoemaker & M. Vincent (eds.) 'Introduction', in *Gender and History in Western Europe* (London: Arnold, 1998).

need to address this in a historical context. However, the existing literature surrounding smoking reflected consumption trends. The fact that until relatively recently, smoking was predominantly a masculine habit shaped the historical record accordingly. While much had been written on the growth, manufacture, production and distribution of tobacco, its market had been seen as largely composed of men. It was only within the last two decades of the twentieth century that smoking among women became an important focus of sociological enquiry. This reflected changing trends in smoking prevalence and the fact that women smokers were seen to have their own particular issues and motivations. Chapter One presents a summary of the relevant historical and sociological literature. It illustrates the need both to incorporate women smokers into the history of tobacco more generally and to historicize recent sociological work. The history of tobacco is a gendered history and women have always had their own issues and motivations relating to tobacco use.

However, there was an immediate problem with relying on oral history testimony to look at the history of women and smoking in Britain. As recent scholarship on oral history has argued, individual testimony is both shaped and informed by the discourses which surround it and by the interview process itself.[14] Given the relative absence of women smokers from the history of tobacco more generally, existing literature on women and smoking in Britain was insufficient to fully understand the discourses surrounding women and smoking in the twentieth century. Although it was obvious from consumption trends and what material there was that there were gendered differences in the social meaning of smoking, there was no body of work discussing the ways in which smoking was socially constructed differently for men and women and the context in which this took place. Moreover, the question of identity in connection with women and smoking related to the ways in which individuals or groups interpreted specific discourses and negotiated them in particular historical settings. In order to understand the role of smoking in the construction of female identities, at either a social or a personal level, it was necessary to understand the discursive context in which they were formed.

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[13] J.W. Scott 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis' in J.W. Scott (ed.) *Feminism and History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp. 152 – 80.

Chapter Two discusses the archival research I carried out in order to explore the social meanings of smoking for women from 1890 until the present day. This has been addressed from a number of different angles, reflecting the main groups or actors which I saw to be key in constructing the many social meanings of smoking. These were the tobacco industry (through advertising and sponsorship, product development and employment patterns), the media (through cinema representations of smokers, fashion plates, television images and press coverage more generally), medical and epidemiological opinion, the anti-smoking lobby and government policy (health education campaigns, fiscal policy and regulatory legislation). These groups produce and contribute to the multitude of discourses surrounding smoking; discourse being understood as the common assumptions underlying particular language use, with language being used in its widest sense to encompass visual communication, such as imagery.[15] This work focuses not only on the discourses surrounding women and smoking, but also on the context in which such discourses were employed and how they reflected wider gender roles. The way in which the various discourses surrounding smoking relate to each other and to the individual smoker is shown in Fig. 2.

The archival research outlined in Chapter Two draws on material relating specifically to tobacco use among women, such as marketing and advertising material, articles and pamphlets from those opposing the habit, and contemporary literature, illustrations and correspondence. It also draws on a wide range of sources relating to tobacco use more generally, including trade journals, medical journals and government reports. The range of sources consulted is summarised in Table I at the end of Chapter Two. This research was supplemented by nine interviews which I carried out with key epidemiologists and health professionals. Both the archival research and the interviews form the basis for the second part of the thesis, Chapters Three to Five, which illustrates the diverse, and often contradictory, discourses surrounding women and smoking over the twentieth century. These discourses are located both within the framework of developments in the tobacco industry more generally and in the context

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[14] S. B. Gluck and D. Patai (eds.) *Women's Words: the feminist practice of oral history* (New York, London: Routledge, 1991).
[15] D. Layder *Understanding Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1994) p. 97.

of changing understandings of women's social position. They also provide the necessary background in which to locate personal narratives about smoking.

Chapter Two then goes on to discuss the methodology for the personal narratives I collected in the form of oral history interviews with 26 women aged between 40 and 85. Data from these interviews form the basis of the third part of the thesis, Chapters Six and Seven. Chapter Two explains the way in which the material was gathered and analysed and discusses the theoretical issues surrounding the use of oral history more generally. The rationale behind these interviews is also explained. The interviews focus on the experiences of women growing up during and immediately after the Second World War, as this was the period which witnessed the largest and most substantiated increase in smoking among women in the twentieth century. Seventeen of the women were born before 1935. However, nine women of a younger generation, born between 1950 and 1960, were also interviewed for a point of comparison. The older women thus grew up before the health risks were widely known and the younger women grew up when much of the research had been publicised, although the question of awareness is a debatable one. Given the multiple social meanings which smoking held for women, I was concerned to see the extent to which the meaning smoking held for individual women was shaped by prevailing discourses surrounding smoking. I also wanted to explore the role of smoking in personal identity and the factors affecting this. Chapter Two goes on to expand the use of gender as a category of analysis to explore the way in which identities are subjectively constructed from gendered public discourses. The first part of my thesis, Chapters One and Two, thus explains the background and approach to the thesis in more detail than is possible in the introduction.

The rest of the thesis is approached chronologically from the late nineteenth century until the present day. In the second part of my thesis, Chapter Three nominally covers 1890 to 1918 but goes back further in order to provide some essential background and context to the ensuing discussion about smoking among women. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, it explores the reasons why tobacco smoking had assumed such gendered connotations and the ways in which this was played out in public and private spaces. As the Hon. Mrs Henry Chetwynd noted in her contribution to the above-mentioned discussion in *The Ladies Realm*:

> The question as to whether women should smoke can best be answered by saying it depends on the *how* and the *when*, and the *where* and the *why* (author's italics).[16]

This thesis will argue that prevailing gender norms and the social class of the smoker shaped the how and the when, the where and the why smoking was acceptable among women, if at all. Smoking, or not smoking, could be used by individuals or groups as a symbolic means of conforming to, re-interpreting or openly challenging prevailing social norms and, I will argue, this was part and parcel of a wider debate surrounding woman's role in society at the end of the nineteenth century. Chapter Three examines material from the 'New Woman' debate of the 1890s through to the Suffragette movement of the 1900s, as well as evidence surrounding smoking by less prominent groups of women. It aims to explore diverse attitudes towards women smoking, the origins of those attitudes and the extent to which different groups of women did smoke. It also looks at anti-smoking material, arguing that this similarly reflected gendered social norms. Moreover, opposition to smoking, reflected in anti-smoking material and general social comment, expressed deeper fears about what the spread of smoking, be it among men, women or children, was seen to symbolise.

This discussion of the gendered nature of smoking is set against changes in the tobacco industry more generally. The advent of the machine-made cigarette in the 1880s, changes in the structure of the industry in the early 1900s, developments in marketing and advertising and a proliferation of cheap brands over the same period saw smoking increase in popularity among men. Cigarettes were more convenient and easier to smoke, they were less smelly and less messy than pipes or cigars and crucially, they were more addictive than any other form of tobacco consumption. In addition, the First World War served to establish the cigarette as the most popular form of tobacco consumption among men. Chapter Three argues that, as a necessity for the troops which could be purchased by those back home, the cigarette became a symbol of patriotism and unity. It linked the civilian population and the armed forces

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[16] H. Chetwynd (The Hon. Mrs.) 'Should Women Smoke?' *The Ladies Realm* 7 (1900) pp. 515 – 6.

across geographical distance and social class, in a way which had gendered dimensions.

Chapter Three looks at the effect of these developments in the tobacco industry and the impact of war on patterns of smoking. It explores the ways in which the cigarette was used to reinforce, and at the same time challenge, traditional gender positions. Chapter Three argues that cigarette smoking became an established practice for men during the First World War, a symbol of heroic masculinity encouraged by government policy, whilst traditional antipathy to women smokers remained largely in force. Nonetheless, the dislocation of war did lead to a blurring of gender boundaries on a number of levels. For some women, for example, the opportunity to work in male occupations led to the adoption of traditionally male pursuits, for others, buying and sending cigarettes to loved ones brought them into the traditionally male preserve of the tobacconists. Chapter Three looks at reactions and responses to the realignment of gender roles which this suggested.

The crucial point of Chapter Three is that the prevalence of smoking among men increased, the quantity consumed increased, and conventions surrounding where smoking was appropriate crumbled in the first decades of the twentieth century. This process was accelerated by the war. It was, I argue, this social and spatial expansion of the habit among men, and its increasing visibility in public and private space, which created the necessary climate for women to take up smoking in greater numbers in the interwar period.

Chapter Four explores the extent to which different groups of women did begin to smoke more openly in the interwar period, the circumstances in which smoking was perceived to be acceptable and what smoking among women symbolised. It examines the contradictory images of femininity presented at this time by different public discourses surrounding smoking and explores the ways in which they reflected both changing understandings of gender and resistance to those changes. The outgoing flapper, the glamorous movie star and the use of the cigarette in advertising as a symbol of the changing social position of women presented on one hand an image of sophistication, chic and independence, while the rhetoric and imagery employed by the anti-smoking campaigners, on the other hand, focused on the deviation from

idealised notions of womanhood and woman's role as wife and mother. Chapter Four suggests that such representations reflect the prevailing social and cultural milieu as women moved out of the home, found an increasing role in public life and were increasingly faced with contrasting life choices. They also reflect the instability of women's social, economic and political role in society. Despite the increase of the habit among men and the increased cultural presence of the cigarette in the interwar period, smoking among women still required a complex negotiation of gender boundaries. Smoking, or not smoking, was a way of conforming to or challenging those boundaries and the ambiguities surrounding the habit evident in *The Ladies Realm* discussion in 1900 continued to be present well into the twentieth century.

Despite the increased visibility of women smokers in advertising and the movies and the proportionately greater numbers of women who were taking up the habit by the Second World War, the prevalence of smoking among women remained numerically small. Questions over the social spaces and circumstances in which female smoking was acceptable – 'the how and the when, the where and the why' – remained. The last part of Chapter Four looks at when this began to change, arguing that it was the experience of the Second World War which caused gendered social conventions to begin to crumble. During the last years of the war and in the decade immediately following, per capita consumption among women more than doubled, a proportionately larger increase than among men. This suggests that just as World War One served to establish cigarette smoking among men, World War Two had a similar effect on female consumption. Women still smoked fewer cigarettes than men, but in the years following the war, both the percentage of women who smoked and the amount they smoked increased. In the decades, following the war, the cigarette was portrayed in advertising, fashion and the media as a symbol of luxury and glamour in a time of austerity. Alongside more traditional masculinities, such imagery celebrated sophisticated femininity. As stated earlier, smoking prevalence among women hovered between 36 and 45 per cent of the population from the end of the Second World War until the mid 1970s.

Despite the increased prevalence of women smokers, however, the legacy of the association of smoking with masculinity in the first half of the century continued to dominate arguments about smoking in the second. Chapter Five begins by looking at

the social position of smoking immediately after the Second World War and goes on to describe the epidemiological case developing against it. It argues that both the research into smoking and health and the way in which those research findings were disseminated to the public were shaped by gendered understandings of smoking prevalence. The fact that more men smoked and that male smokers started smoking earlier in life, were likely to smoke more and had started smoking in large numbers at least a generation before women meant that the epidemic of tobacco related disease was more advanced and therefore more visible in men. The group most at risk from smoking related disease, in epidemiological terms at least, was perceived to be men over 35, a conclusion which was echoed in the medical and mainstream press. However, this was not just a question of epidemiological practice. Chapter Five highlights the social, political and economic reasons why women smokers were seen to be less important in the public health picture.

While the question of smoking and health was shaped by understandings of gender, the cigarette itself continued to be used as an expression of gender, reflecting a diverse range of femininities which echoed the ambiguities of earlier decades. Mrs Fraser's contention in 1900 that 'women's smoking... affects the family and Society' assumed increased relevance. When research into smoking and health focused on women in the 1970s, it concentrated on woman in her capacity as mother, stressing her responsibilities in that role. The ways in which smoking 'affect(ed) women themselves' did not become a focus of enquiry until at least a decade later. Chapter Five looks at the reasons why women smokers came to the fore in this period, focusing on sustained and vocal lobbying from anti-smoking groups such as Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). This is located within a wider feminist movement to get women's health issues onto the political agenda and is seen to be motivated by an awareness of health inequalities more generally. Since the early 1980s, the question of inequality has dominated sociological enquiry, as the focus of attention of research on women and smoking has shifted onto the experiences of women in lower socio-economic groups, particularly single mothers. In this context, smoking has increasingly been understood as a way to cope with poverty and gendered demands.

This is not the only image, however, and Chapter Five also explores the range of social meanings which continued to be attached to tobacco smoking during the 1960s

and 70s. What is apparent in this period, however, is the increasing focus of the tobacco industry on those femininities, both directly and indirectly. As pressure grew to respond to the health risks of smoking, the government and the tobacco industry produced a series of voluntary agreements, part of which resulted in the so-called product modification programme. Chapter Five argues that this resulted in the creation of a cigarette – filtered, longer, slimmer, milder – which was seen as feminine in conception. At the same time, internal industry documents indicate a recognition that the female market was the growth area and the desire to exploit that market. Images from advertising targeted women, emphasising fun, freedom and financial well-being, while the presence of the cigarette in fashion shoots, movies and television more generally ensured that the cultural resonance of the cigarette as a positive commodity for women continued largely unchecked, despite the growing awareness of the health risks.

The question which arises in Chapter Five is the way in which awareness of the health risks of smoking affected the social meaning of smoking and the extent to which this was gender-specific. In the same way as the epidemiological case against smoking was influenced by understandings of gender, I want to suggest that responses to it were also gendered. For men, the decision whether to smoke or not remained largely one of individual medical choice. It was not until the effects of environmental tobacco smoke began to be uncovered that men's smoking became a social and moral problem. The emergence of the risks of passive smoking largely negated the arguments of individual rights which had been the mainstay of the tobacco industry until then. The question of smoking, or not smoking, had become, as Blake Poland has argued, one of collective social responsibility, subject to restrictive legislation.[17] However, concerns over social decay, effects on motherhood and the health of the nation, and the corresponding social censorship which had previously surrounded smoking, to a greater or lesser extent, mean that smoking has always been a social and moral question for women. External regulation and legislation merely serves to restrict or remove the element of choice in 'the when (and) the where' smoking takes place. What this chapter then suggests, drawing on Poland's thesis, is that legislation not only impacts disproportionately on lower social classes but on women as well, in

[17] B. Poland 'Smoking, Stigma and the Purification of Public Space' in R. A. Kearns and W. M. Gesler (eds.) *Putting Health into Place*, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press 1998) pp. 208 – 225.

particular those of a lower socio-economic status with dependent children, who are most likely to be smokers. Censured for putting children at risk by smoking at home with children, women are also discriminated against in public places, such as shopping centres, supermarkets and cinemas by not being allowed to smoke or stigmatised if they did. One hundred years on, smoking retains its gendered connotations and these are still played out in public and private spaces.

In the third part of my thesis, Chapter Six focuses on individual women's experiences of smoking as expressed in my oral history interviews from the 1930s until the present day. It begins by exploring the way in which the anti-smoking climate at the turn of the twenty-first century has affected memories of smoking in the past, leading interviewees to portray an almost blanket acceptance of smoking in the post-war years. The interviewees framed this past acceptance in terms of lack of knowledge of the health risks and used the general acceptance of smoking to explain, and often to justify, behaviour which is now perceived to be a medically and morally wrong lifestyle choice. Chapter Six argues that it is necessary to deconstruct this notion of widespread acceptance to understand the way in which smoking, or not smoking, was used by individual women in particular personal and social situations, and the extent to which this was influenced by gendered understandings of appropriate behaviour. It explores 'the how and the when, the where and the why' smoking took place on a personal level and how this changed for different women over the second half of the twentieth century.

This chapter suggests that for the older group of women interviewed, smoking was primarily a social phenomenon in the years following the Second World War. It was seen more as a way of fitting in on social occasions and of portraying a particular image to the world, rather than as a habitual or addictive behaviour. Interviewees used cigarettes to facilitate relationships, on a personal and a professional level, in a way which was about asserting themselves as women and fitting in with men. Smoking was also used to symbolise economic and social maturity. Chapter Six explores the ways this was expressed in terms of contemporary public discourses and the extent to which it can be seen to be a result of gendered social expectations. It goes on to discuss when and why such social conventions crumbled. Interview material from the

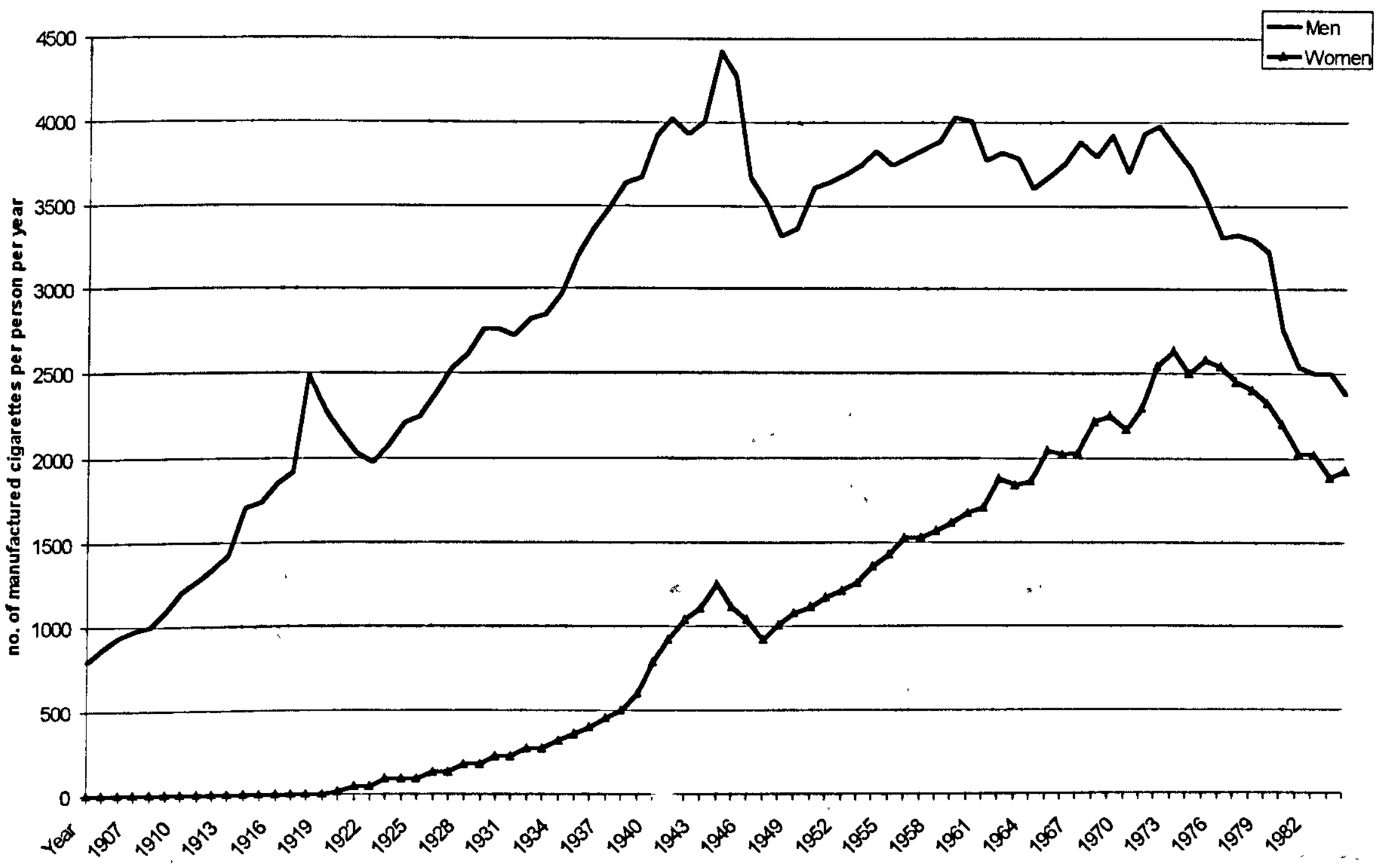
younger women suggests that, while smoking still symbolised social and economic maturity, the boundaries to be negotiated were age, rather than gender, specific.

This overwhelmingly social perception of smoking is then contrasted with the notions of dependency and addiction which become apparent during discussions of later periods in the older interviewees' lives and which are apparent throughout the interviews with the younger women. Chapter Seven goes on to explore the extent to which this is a result of changing understandings of smoking in relation to health and the increasing importance of addiction in public discourses surrounding smoking. It begins with a discussion of the ways in which interviewees became aware of the health risks of smoking and how this has influenced their perceptions of smoking and smokers. The interview material suggests there has been a reconstruction of smoking in popular perception as a threat to the individual and society, in marked contrast to earlier perceptions of it as a generally accepted, and desired, social lubricant. Chapter Seven shows the ways in which, for interviewees, smoking became something which had to be rationalised or controlled, both personally and socially. This could be effected either through self-imposed changes in behaviour or by publicly imposed regulations governing where smoking was permitted. This chapter explores the additional pressures placed on women in this context, as many interviewees were aware of the extra responsibility they faced as mothers.

However, what is also apparent throughout Chapter Seven is the ambivalence which continues to surround smoking. Despite awareness of the health risks and acknowledgement of the widespread disapproval of the habit, those interviewees who smoked at the time of interview and those who had smoked in the past showed an appreciation of the perceived psychological and physiological benefits of smoking. It was seen as a stimulant and a sedative, as a symbol of friendship and a delineator of personal space, it was used as a solace in times of stress or sadness and as a reward for achievement. It was also a dietary aid. The personal meanings which smoking held for these women were as multiple and contradictory as the diverse social meanings of the habit. The verse employed by Mrs Hugh Fraser in 1900 could equally have been used to describe the feelings of female smokers a century later. The cigarette remained something which was seen as both destructive and sweet.

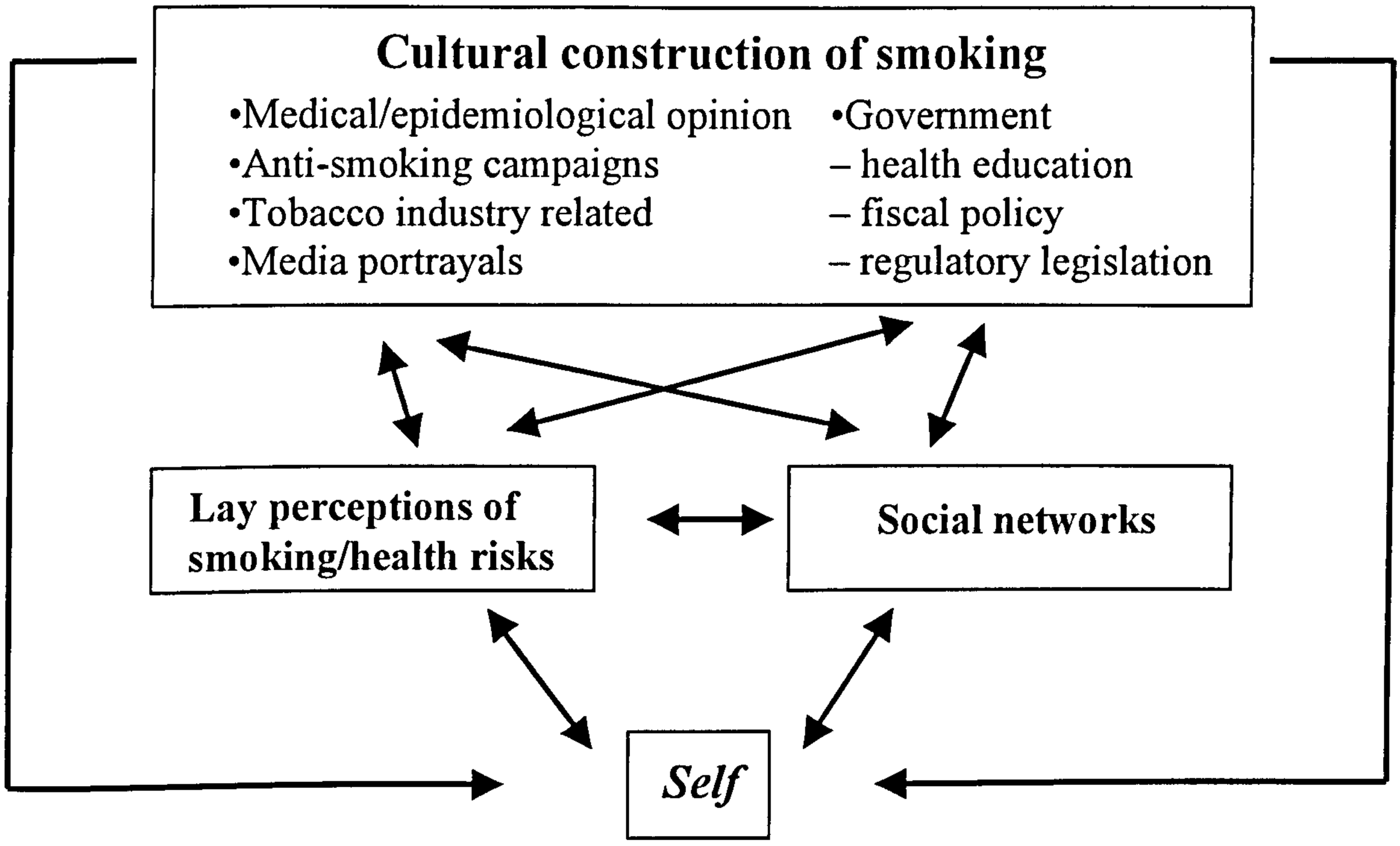
Fig. 1: Annual per capita consumption of manufactured cigarettes (1905 - 85)

(men and women aged 15 and over)



Source: N. Wald et al *UK Smoking Statistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 13

Fig. 2: Factors affecting social meaning of smoking



Part One

Background and context

Chapter One: Tobacco leaves and papers

Whatever else it may be, tobacco is something which motivates people to write. As Jerome Brooks wrote in his introduction to the Arents collection in 1937,

> the most universal of the social habits adopted by man, and the plant upon which it depends (together with its appendages and associations) have had innumerable commentators: chiefly the botanists who classify the living organism of root and stalk and leaves in its numerous varieties; the economists who record the vast commercial enterprises and fiscal systems which developed from the satisfaction of this strange appetite of man; the sociologists who consider the various uses of tobacco in relation to man – an animal who smokes; and the archaeologist, the philologist, the scientists, the plain historian and others, each concerned with an especial aspect of the subject.[1]

Containing over 1000 items when Brooks was writing, the Arents collection was, and remains, the single largest collection in the world on the history, literature, botany and pharmacology of tobacco. It has since been supplemented by a representative collection on other aspects of the subject, more pertinent to our understanding of tobacco today, such as smoking and health, tobacco manufacture and marketing and government policy.[2] What is contained in the Arents collection, however, is but a fragment of that which has since been written on tobacco the world over in light of the hazards it is now known to pose to health.[3]

Tobacco has incited comment because, ever since its introduction into Europe as an addition to the pharmacopoeia, it has had economic, political, medical, moral and social relevance. Its importation, manufacture and sale over the centuries has created

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[1] J.E. Brooks 'Introduction', in *Tobacco: its history illustrated by the books, manuscripts and engravings in the library of George Arents* (New York: Rosenbach and Co., 1937) pp. 3 – 4.
[2] *Tobacco: a catalogue of books, manuscripts and engravings: acquired since 1942 in the Arents Collection at the New York Public Library: from 1507 to the present* (New York: New York Public Library 1958 – 1969); *http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/arents.html.*
[3] Medline, for example, lists nearly 60 000 citations on all aspects of smoking for the period between 1996 and 2001.

wealth for individuals, companies and governments.[4] That wealth has in part been spread through communities by the creation of employment and by acts of philanthropy.[5] The use of tobacco in various forms has become part of our cultural iconography, from the effete dandy taking snuff in the 18th century, to the cigar smoking gentleman in the 19th.[6] It is also short hand for status and class. Pipes and cloth caps symbolise the working classes, cigars the gentlemen of the smoking room, while cigarettes are seen as the democratising equaliser.[7] The socio-economic gradient of smoking prevalence today links the cigarette with poverty and limited social opportunity, and gendered patterns of consumption reflect prevailing gender norms.

Much of the cultural resonance which smoking has had in the past remains to this day. Sharing a pipe or a cigarette has long been seen as a gesture of friendship and hospitality, and as a way of breaking the ice with strangers.[8] It has also been seen as a symbol of both personal and social identity – inferring status, fashion, rebellion or risk-taking respectively.[9] It also has psychological benefits – as a relief from stress, as a way of managing anger and as a stimulant when necessary.[10] Smoking is a way in which individuals define themselves and others.[11] Brands also hold a widespread

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[4] C. M. Peters *Glasgow's Tobacco Lords: an examination of wealth creators in the eighteenth century* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1990; M.D. Read *The Politics of Tobacco: policy networks and the cigarette industry* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996); In 1998-9, the government received £8207 million from tobacco revenue; the forecast for 2000-1 was £7100 million. Select Committee of Treasury *Second Report IV Alcohol and Tobacco Smuggling* Parliamentary Papers 1999 - 2000, HC 53.

[5] British Association for the Advancement of Science *Handbook of the Industries of Glasgow and the West of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1901) p. 268 gives the example of Stephen Mitchell, a tobacco manufacturer in Glasgow, who founded the Mitchell Library, a public library. The Player's archive at Nottingham Record Office (hereafter referred to as Player's) DD PL 7/19/13 – 17 gives some idea of the kind of sponsorship deals the industry has been involved in more recently and of employment patterns.

[6] R.D. Altrick *The Presence of the Present: topics of the day in the Victorian novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991) pp. 240 – 274; Schivelbusch, W. *Tastes of paradise: a social history of spices, stimulants and intoxicants* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992) trasl. David Jacobson p. 121.

[7] Brooks 'Introduction' p. 172-3; R. Kluger *Ashes to Ashes: Americas hundred year cigarette war, the Public Health and the Unabashed Triumph of Philip Morris* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997) p. 63. To quote Kluger: 'By the second decade of the (twentieth) century, the cigarette was becoming the smoke of choice in high as well as low society, as testified to by the press reports on the sinking of the great ocean liner Titanic on its maiden voyage in 1912; many of the tuxedoed male passengers were said to have awaited their watery graves while drawing stoically on a cigarette'. *Punch* regularly used types of smoking material to as short-hand for the class of the subjects of its cartoons. For example, see *Punch's Almanac* 1871, *Punch* January 18th 1890 for contrasting images of cigar and pipe smokers.

[8] C. Madge & T. Harrison *First Years Work by Mass Observation* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1938).

[9] B.D. Poland 'Smoking, Stigma and the Purification of Public Space' in *Putting Health into Place*, edited by R. Room and W.M. Gesler (Syracuse, New York: University Press, 1998) pp. 208 – 225.

[10] H. Ashton and R. Stepney *Smoking : psychology and pharmacology* (London: Tavistock, 1982).

[11] R. Elliot 'Growing up and Giving up: smoking in Paul Thompson's '100 Families'' *Oral History* 29:1(2001) pp.73 – 84.

historical and contemporary social significance – Marlboro Man as the American dream, Woodbine as the British Depression.[12] Increasing awareness of the health risks has provided a new perspective – the studies relating smoking and lung cancer provided a blueprint for epidemiologists studying the effects of lifestyle factors on health, while the desire to know why people start and maintain smoking in spite of knowledge of long term health risks provided the imperative for research by sociologists and health professionals. Governments and politicians have increasingly been concerned with reconciling the health implications with the fiscal advantages of a smoking population.

Despite awareness of the health risks and current hostility to smoking and smokers in public places, the 1998 *GHS* showed that over a quarter of the adult population remained cigarette smokers. This figure was largely constant through the 1990s, suggesting that smoking prevalence has levelled out.[13] The desire for tobacco is such that, while hiking taxes to price tobacco out of smokers' reach, the government is also forced to spend millions on anti-smuggling measures as illegally imported tobacco makes up an increasing percentage of the market.[14] However, government action on tobacco is a relatively recent phenomenon – it was not until the election of New Labour in 1997 that Britain finally responded to European Union pressure to restrict advertising and to launch a comprehensive anti-smoking programme. Continued use of tobacco in the second half of the twentieth century is therefore the story of the dissonance between knowledge and behaviour on both an individual and a government level. The reluctance of successive governments to respond aggressively to the problem has been documented on a number of levels showing the structural limitations of the foundling National Health Service (NHS), the liberal ethos of British society and the political interests invested in keeping tobacco legitimate.[15] The

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[12] R. Rijkens *European advertising strategies : the profiles and policies of multinational companies operating in Europe* (London: Cassell, 1992) pp. 109 – 120.
[13] A. Bridgewood *et al. Living in Britain: results from the 1998 General Household Survey* (London: The Stationery Office) (hereafter *GHS*) p. 116.
[14]Health Committee *Second Report: The Tobacco Industry and the Health Risks of Smoking* Parliamentary Papers 1999 – 2000, HC 27 – 1, para. 201 – 230; Select Committee on Treasury *IV Alcohol and Tobacco Smuggling* Parliamentary papers 1999 – 2000, HC 53 para. 46 – 153; A. Gillan 'Gangs cash in as cigarette prices soar' *The Guardian* 8 May 2001.
[15] M.D. Read 'Policy networks and issue networks: the politics of smoking' in D. Marsh and R.A.W. Rhodes *Policy Networks in British Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); M. Calnan 'The Politics of Health: the case of smoking control' *Journal of Social Policy* 13:3 (1984) pp. 279 – 296; G.T. Popman 'Government and Smoking: policy making and pressure groups' *Policy and Politics*

factors which encourage people to start and to continue smoking have also been amply covered. Books on how to give up weigh down the shelves and organisations such as ASH, the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) and Quit keep the subject in the public eye.

This chapter cannot attempt to cover the thousands of articles, books and papers which have centred on these issues nor can it begin to look at the scientific arguments and debates which have surrounded smoking and addiction. What it will do is review the existing literature relating to the history of tobacco in Britain, focussing on the developments and controversies which have shaped both the social position of smoking in Britain over the last four centuries and the way in which the history of tobacco has been written. This provides the necessary background, albeit briefly, to locate the debates surrounding women and smoking within the framework of the history of tobacco use more generally and indicates the continuity of debate surrounding tobacco use over the centuries. This chapter then goes on to look at the questions raised by the material which does exist on the history of smoking among women, before going onto look at the implications of recent sociological work for considering smoking among women in the past.

The history of tobacco

The history of the importation of tobacco from the Americas, its changing position and uses in society and the impact of the Bonsack cigarette machine on both the mode and the manner of consumption have all been well-documented by a number of authors from the 19th century through to the present day.[16] Other writers have looked at the growth and impact of multi-national tobacco companies on the popularity of

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9:3 (1981) pp. 331 – 347; V. Berridge 'Science and Policy: the case of post-war British Smoking Policy' in S. Lock, L. Reynolds and E.M. Tansey *Ashes to Ashes: The history of smoking and Health* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998) pp. 143 – 162.

[16] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. Wills and the Development of the UK Tobacco Industry* (London: Methuen 1973) pp. 143 – 50, 226, 232; E.G. C. Beckwith *A History of John Player and Sons* Player's DD PL 7/5/1 (undated); H. Cox *The Global Cigarette Origins and Evolution of British American Tobacco* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 4, 27, 29, 31, 48, 52 – 3; M. Hilton *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800 - 2000: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) pp. 84 – 86; C. Tate *Cigarette Wars: the triumph of the little white slaver* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 11 – 16.

smoking both in Britain and world-wide.[17] Similarly, the fact that the use of tobacco has never gone uncontested has also been discussed by historians of tobacco. Various authors have shown that the medical properties of tobacco were immediately challenged and were soon secondary to its value as a recreational drug.[18] In addition it has been shown that the recreational use of tobacco has similarly met with medical, religious and moral opposition in a string of controversies dating from James I to the 20th century.[19] Medical opposition grew throughout the nineteenth and early 20th century as physicians and scientists sought a causative link between smoking and a myriad of diseases from general paralysis to lung cancer.[20] However, it is generally agreed that the cigarette has proved to be the catalyst in the debates surrounding tobacco. This provided both increased sales and cultural capital as its popularity grew and increased opposition on moral grounds in the short term and medical grounds in the long term as levels of lung cancer increased. The discovery, and substantiation, of a link between smoking and lung cancer and coronary heart disease in the 1950s was just the starting point, as the cigarette in particular and smoking in general have since been linked with a whole litany of chronic diseases.[21] Since then, smoking has been labelled a deviant behaviour, and, with the discovery of the health effects of passive smoking, it has increasingly been legislated out of public space.[22]

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[17] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. Wills*; H. Cox *The Global Cigarette*; R. Kluger *Ashes to Ashes: America's hundred year cigarette war, the Public Health and the Unabashed Triumph of Philip Morris* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

[18] J.E. Brooks 'Introduction' p. 46 – 52; J. Goodman *Tobacco in History: the cultures of dependence* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993) pp. 59 – 89.

[19] J. Best 'Economic Interests and the Vindication of Deviance: Tobacco in Seventeenth Century Europe' *The Sociological Quarterly* 20 (1979) pp. 171 – 182; J.E. Brooks 'Introduction' p. 55 – 65, *Vol. One* 381 – 3, p. 401, p. 405, p. 407; D. Harley 'The Beginnings of the Tobacco Controversy: Puritanism, James I, and the Royal Physicians' *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 67 (1993) 28 – 50; L. Harrison 'Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered: a note on the fate of the first British campaign against tobacco smoking' *British Journal of Addiction*, 81 (1986) pp. 553 – 558.

[20] R.B. Walker 'Medical Aspects of Tobacco Smoking and the Anti-Tobacco Movement in Britain in the Nineteenth Century' *Medical History* 24 (1980) pp.391 – 402; M. Hilton *Constructing Tobacco: Perspectives on Consumer Culture in Britain 1850 – 1950* PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 1996 pp. 223 – 260; M. Hilton *The Disease of Tobacco Smoking and its Cure.* Paper given at Birmingham University November 24th , 1999. Unpublished.

[21] R. Doll 'Uncovering the effects of smoking: historical perspective' *Statistical Methods in Medical Research* 7 (1998) pp. 87 – 117; R. Doll *Tobacco: A medical history* Select Committee on Health Minutes of Evidence, Appendix One, Parliamentary Papers 1999 – 2000 HC 27 – II.

[22] R.J. Troyer and G.E. Markle *Cigarettes: the Battle over Smoking* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983); G.E. Markle and R.J. Troyer 'Smoke Gets in your eyes: Cigarette Smoking as Deviant Behaviour. *Social Problems* 26:5 (1979) pp.611 – 625; E. Nuerhing and G.E. Markle 'Nicotine and Norms: the Re-emergence of a Deviant Behaviour' *Social Problems* 21 (1973) p. 513 – 525; B.D. Poland 'Smoking, Stigma and the Purification of Public Space' pp. 208 – 225.

The most comprehensive history of tobacco is provided by the material in the Arents collection. It has been brought together in a five volume work by Jerome Brooks, published in 1937.[23] Through his introduction he charts the reactions and responses to tobacco in the four centuries preceding his work, drawing together the common threads of the moral and medical debates surrounding tobacco use and the impact of war and social change on tobacco. More recently, authors such as Jordan Goodman and V.G. Kiernan have charted the history of tobacco from its use by native American Indians in the 15th century to its use in the West today.[24]

Brooks was writing in the late 1930s when the social position of smoking was such that he could describe the use of tobacco as "the most universal of social habits adopted by man".[25] The epidemiological case against smoking had not yet been made and what concerns there were about smoking were muted. While his introduction provides a comprehensive and enlightening synthesis of material on tobacco from around the world, what he presents is a narrative of progress, focusing on the economic value of tobacco to governments, communities and individuals and the psychological and physiological benefits of tobacco to individuals. His story of the spread of the recreational use of tobacco in its variously fashionable forms is largely one of inevitability. The triumph of the cigarette as the most popular form of tobacco consumption is seen as symbolic of the increasing pace of society 'as the culminating industrial revolution merged with the advancing mechanical civilisation'.[26] In his analysis, each mode of tobacco consumption is seen as representative of the age in which it was employed and the cigarette is seen as the apogee of this, just as the 'advancing mechanical civilisation' was seen as the apogee of human progress. In a less celebratory way, Goodman similarly sees the cigarette as the result of a process of 'cultural accretion', influenced by changes in marketing and production and by economic necessity.[27]

However, despite the progressivist tone of the work, Brooks does draw out, to a limited extent, the social, religious and political factors which influenced reactions

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[23] J.E. Brooks 'Introduction'.
[24] J. Goodman *Cultures of Dependence*; V.G. Kiernan *Tobacco: a history* (London: Hutchison Radius, 1991).
[25] J.E. Brooks 'Introduction' p. 3.
[26] J.E. Brooks 'Introduction' p. 172.

and responses to tobacco use at various stages over the period. His work, and the documents he both presents and bases it upon, shows the continuity of thought surrounding tobacco use and informing the controversies which have dogged its history. These controversies have been expanded upon by more recent historians, keen to see a connection between attitudes towards tobacco today and the medical and moral debates which have surrounded it in centuries previously. The most obvious example of that is the discussion surrounding James I's *Counterblaste to Tobacco*,[28] which is perhaps the most well-known early piece of anti-tobacco sentiment. This has formed the centrepiece for a number of articles on the position of tobacco in the early modern period which explore the economic, social and political implications of the introduction of tobacco into the Western world.[29] These are worth reviewing briefly because they show the roots of the debates which surround tobacco use in the following decades. But what they also show is the way in which these medical, moral and economic debates were the product of particular historical circumstances, a fact which is as true of later controversies. In this sense, tobacco becomes the focal point, and expression of, wider tensions.

In a short, but illustrative paper on the introduction of tobacco to Europe, Harrison, for example, charts the course of tobacco use from an addition to the pharmacopoeia to a more widely used recreational drug.[30] In doing so, he outlines the controversy which surrounded that transition, focussing on the late 16th and early 17th century. Tobacco was incorporated into the pharmacopoeia by De Goes and Jean Nicot, both of Portugal, and it is Nicot's name which has been given to the plant and its active ingredient, nicotine. It's uses were publicised by Nicolas Monardes, a Spanish

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[27] J. Goodman *Cultures of Dependence* p. 245.

[28] James I *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (London: 1604) George Arents Collection, New York Public Library (hereafter referred to as Arents Collection) no. 68.

[29] J. Best 'Economic Interests and the Vindication of Deviance; J.E. Brooks 'Introduction' p. 55 – 65, *Vol. One* 381 – 3, p. 401, p. 405, p. 407; D. Harley 'The Beginnings of the Tobacco Controversy'; L. Harrison 'Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered'.

[30] This is extremely well-documented elsewhere, as the desire to explain the origins of tobacco is one which runs through much of the literature surrounding tobacco from the nineteenth century to the present day. M. Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* Ch. One, footnote 16 gives a comprehensive list of late 19th century journal articles concerned with tobacco, p. 38. Books on the subject include H. Brewer *Revelations of Tobacco: a prize essay on the history of tobacco, and its physical action on the human body* (London, 1870), H.W. Cleland *On the History and Properties chemical and medical of Tobacco* (Glasgow, 1840), T. Shew *Tobacco: its history, nature and effects on body and mind* (Stoke-on-Trent, 1853); W. Koskowski *The Habit of Tobacco Smoking* (London: Staples Press, 1955); G.L. Apperson, *The Social History of Smoking* (London: Ballantyne Press, 1914); Brooks 'Introduction'; Goodman *Cultures of Dependence.*

physician, who claimed that it could be used to effectively treat over 16 disorders. His work was translated into English in 1577 and the use of tobacco in medical treatments in England dates from then. [31]

Despite the medical reasons for its importation, tobacco was increasingly used recreationally, a practice which, Harrison notes, was condemned on moral, economic and health grounds.

Morally, because tobacco was believed to induce a form of drunkenness, which was sinful, and because tobacco drinking had become the symbol of a dissolute way of life: brothel keepers adopted the pipe as a sign to hang outside of their houses. Economically, because the importation of goods from the Spanish West Indies was being blamed for the "shortage of coin". And on health grounds because tobacco was a powerful drug which should only be used under medical supervision.[32]

In Harrison's analysis, it was the medical arguments which dominated the controversy over tobacco in the early 17th century. Citing Edmund Gardiner, author of the *Trialls of Tobacco*, a contemporary review of the debate, Harrison argues that opponents to tobacco gained the upper hand and 'the belief that smoking was responsible for premature death and disability led to demands for prohibition'. However, Harrison does not indicate that Gardiner was talking about excessive use of tobacco, a point which is relevant given 19th century emphasis on the need to use tobacco moderately.[33] Harrison goes on to explain why the fiscal responses of the Stuart government failed, making a clear political point about tobacco legislation today.

While there was certainly much discussion about the medical properties of tobacco in the early 17th century, Harley has argued that the controversy surrounding tobacco was much less about therapeutics than about the struggle for supremacy between different strands of Protestantism. His paper is a plea for historians of medicine and

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[31] N. Monardes *Joyfull Newes out of the newfound world* (London, 1577) trans. John Frampton.
[32] Harrison 'Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered' p. 554.
[33] Arents Collection no. 96.

tobacco to recognise not only the medico-moral context of the tobacco debate, but also to locate that debate within the specific historical circumstances in which it occurred. He notes that tobacco was not used recreationally until its introduction to the court of Elizabeth I, an action commonly attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh, but which Harley ascribes to the lesser known Thomas Harriot, the court's advisor on mathematics and navigation.[34] Through the association with Raleigh, the recreational use of tobacco came to be associated with irreligion and free-thinking in the minds of Puritan reformers, qualities also ascribed to Raleigh by his political enemies. Opposition to tobacco use, along with brothels and alehouses, was a cause in which both radical and moral Puritans could unite in a common desire to reform society. With the accession of James I (or James VI in Scotland), the cause became a crusade. Harley argues that it was both James I's political and moral hatred of the Raleigh – Northumberland circle, and also his desire to assert the values of Calvinism on 'decadent' English society that motivated his dislike of tobacco. His concern was, Harley asserts, 'more for the body politic than for the body natural'.

> Smoking sprang from the sins of lust and drunkenness destroying bodily and financial resources that should be used to support 'the honour and safetie of your King and Common-wealth.[35]

Harley fails to note, however, that notions of social responsibility were also expressed at a more immediate level, as James not only criticised the behaviour of the smoker, but condemns the effect of polluted air on those around the him.

> Is it not both great vanitie and uncleanness, that at a table, a place of respect, of cleanliness, of modestie, men should not be ashamed, to sit tossing of *Tobacco pipes*, and puffing of the smoke of tobacco one to another, making the filthy smoke and stinke thereof, to exhale athwart the dishes and infect the aire, when very often, men that abhorre it are at their repast? [36]

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[34] D. Harley 'The Beginnings of the Tobacco Controversy' p. 30. See also Arents Collection no. 36
[35] D. Harley 'The Beginnings of the Tobacco Controversy' p. 45.
[36] Quoted by D. Harley 'The Beginnings of the Tobacco Controversy' p. 45.

In 1604, James I added an extra tax to the already existing duty on tobacco in an attempt to reduce consumption. He made a distinction between 'Persons of good Calling and Qualitye', who took the drug as a 'Physicke to preserve health', and those 'ryotous and disordered persons of a mean and base Condition' who spent their time and money on tobacco 'not caring at what Price they buye that Drugge'.[37] This not only reinforced the distinction between tobacco as a medicinal herb and its uses as a recreational drug, but made a moral judgement about smokers who were seen to misappropriate both time and money in pursuing their habit. Such ideas were echoed in later anti-smoking material and it is also interesting to note in this context Harrison's recognition of the similarity of attitudes towards drinking and smoking at that time. Indeed, as Schivelbusch notes in a more wide-ranging book on intoxicants in history, smoking used to be known as drinking smoke or drinking tobacco due to the similarity in effects it caused.[38] Both were seen as causes of degeneracy, and excess was attacked. As Harrison has noted, high taxes on tobacco priced it out of reach of the less well-off, but merely reduced the better off to 'moderation'.[39]

In many senses, the questions surrounding tobacco evident in the early 17th century controversy pre-figure later debates surrounding smoking, especially in the definition of tobacco use as a social and moral problem. However, the difference in the 17th century, as Best has argued, was that tobacco was vindicated, that is, it was redefined as a respectable or legitimate behaviour.[40] This occurred when governments which had previously been legislating against tobacco redefined it as a revenue-producing substance. The irony of this is that it was tobacco's most vigorous and well-known opponent, James I, who showed the economic value of tobacco as a legitimate product.

However, medical, moral, political and economic arguments continued to be used against tobacco in ways which reflected the climate of the time. Tobacco use became an issue in the 19th century, for example, with the growth of the temperance

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[37] Harrison 'Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered' p. 555.
[38] Schivelbusch *Tastes of paradise* p. 97.
[39] Harrison 'Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered' p. 555.
[40] J. Best 'Economic Interests and the Vindication of Deviance' p. 175.

movement and renewed interest in the medical effects of tobacco.[41] The debate which raged in the pages of *The Lancet* in 1856 following Samuel Solly's denunciation of tobacco use as a cause of general paralysis was part of a wider discussion about the medical effects of tobacco use in the mid-19th century. The general consensus seemed to be that moderate tobacco smoking would do no harm. Despite this, there was also a vocal anti-tobacco movement driven by Protestant evangelism and allied with the temperance movement. Smoking was linked with drinking and seen as a cause of secondary poverty. On a wider scale, tobacco production and consumption was seen to be an immoral use of land and capital. The question of smoking among juveniles had been a concern for much of the second half of the 19th century, but in the early years of the 20th it gained immediacy with the availability of cheap cigarettes. Juvenile smoking also became a political issue as part of wider concerns about physical deterioration in the aftermath of the Boer War.[42]

Gender and smoking in history

It is the contention of this thesis that much historical commentary has focused on smoking as a masculine habit. This can be seen largely as a result of the fact that smoking among women was, to a large extent, a censured habit until the 20th century. It was only in the last decades of that century that smoking was more widely recognised as a female as well as a male issue. As this chapter will go on to show, much of the work which has been done on the history of smoking among women sees it either as secondary to that among men, or as part of a wider feminist movement focusing on the exploitation of women by various interest groups or from a sociological perspective more concerned with the current position of women smokers. Such work is undoubtedly valid. However, it leaves room for a social history of smoking among women, which sees smoking among women as a distinct phenomenon, albeit one integrated into the history of smoking more generally.

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[41] R.B. Walker 'Medical Aspects of Tobacco Smoking'; Hilton *Constructing Tobacco* pp. 229 – 260; M. Hilton and S. Nightingale 'A Microbe of the Devil's Own make': Religion and Science in the British Anti-Tobacco Movement 1853 – 1908' in Lock, Reynolds and Tansey *Ashes to Ashes* pp. 112 – 3.

[42] M. Hilton (1995) "Tabs", "Fags" and the "Boy Labour Problem" in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1995) pp. 586 – 607.

Despite the redefinition of tobacco as a legitimate substance at the beginning of the 17th century, its use was only legitimated for certain sections of society. Brooks, for example, draws attention to women smokers as the exception rather than the rule. He relates the tale of Raleigh introducing smoking to the court of Elizabeth I and the fact that she then made the countess of Nottingham and all her maids smoke a whole pipe between them. Brooks suggests that this tale is not as apocryphal as it may seem as some ladies at court were known to smoke occasionally.[43] However, he also gives other examples from contemporary material which suggest that women, on the whole, were averse to smoking.[44]

Throughout the material in the Arents collection, the discussion of tobacco and smoking is in relation to its effects on men. That Brook called tobacco one of the 'most universal of social habits adopted by man' is not merely a figure of speech but representative of the fact that smoking was predominantly a masculine pastime. It was, as Schivelbusch notes, from its introduction into Great Britain, a symbol of patriarchal society. Women smokers were objects of caricature and it was not until the late 19th century that smoking among women began to be seen in public as a symbol of their emancipation.[45] Even then, it can be argued that women smokers remained objects of caricature and subject to ridicule.[46]

The masculine nature of smoking in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is exemplified in the work of Matthew Hilton, who has recently published a book on the position of smoking in popular culture.[47] A development of his PhD thesis which looks at the different influences on the consumption of tobacco from 1850 – 1950[48], Hilton has expanded his work to encompass the post-1950 period, which has seen the development of the epidemiological case against smoking. Hilton sees smoking as central to individual and group identity from the 1800s until now. However, he locates the root of that identity in what he describes as 'the specific liberal notion of the self

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[43] J.E. Brooks *Tobacco: its illustrated history* Vol. I no. 49 p. 342.
[44] For example, Benjamin Jonson's *Every man out of his humour* (London 1600) in which the lady, Saviolina, cannot be induced to take some tobacco by her gallant companions. Arents Collection no. 59
[45] Schivelbusch *Tastes of Paradise* p. 120.
[46] See, for example, *Punch* (1895) p. 282, (1896) p. 282.
[47] M. Hilton *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800 - 2000: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
[48] M. Hilton *Constructing Tobacco: Perspectives on Consumer Culture in Britain 1850 – 1950* (PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 1996).

promoted by bourgeois gentlemanly smokers of the mid-late nineteenth century', or, 'within a specific cohort of the male population'.[49] How this group viewed their smoking has, according to Hilton, provided 'the dominant meaning of tobacco which has come to be shared by other social groups in later periods'.[50] Early advertising and literature on tobacco was aimed at the Victorian bourgeois male. While later advertising for mass-produced cigarettes attempted to capture a much wider market, the focus of Hilton's thesis is on the creation of diverse masculine identities within this framework. There is, to my mind, a certain tension inherent in subsuming the bourgeois liberal ethos of individuality and the dictates of the mass market under one umbrella. However, Hilton achieves this synthesis by relating the hierarchies he sees in the smoking practices of Victorian gentlemen to the smoking practices of different groups of men in the interwar period, showing both the continuation of an 'elite' smoking culture and the diversity evident in working class smoking habits.

Much of Hilton's analysis is reliant on a critique of advertising material and on popular images of smoking from the 19th century through to the inter-war period, supplemented by evidence from Mass Observation's work on smoking in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He also includes discussion of more recent male heroes, such James Bond. From this, he looks at the range of masculine identities which could be constructed through what he calls the shared experiences of the cigarette, an analysis which takes the first five chapters of the book. Women are dealt with in chapter six, thus indicating the way in which women's smoking has been seen as separate from, and secondary to, men's in the history of smoking. Such a construction is partly justified by the fact that there was a strong disapproval of women's smoking until the twentieth century, and partly because, as Hilton puts it, there is a lack of primary sources commenting on the prevalence of the habit among women. He argues that, in order to provide a comprehensive account of the issue through the 20th century, one would have to conduct a specifically directed oral history project.[51] This suggests that his evidence, drawn from a wide range of sources, can be used to talk about smoking among men, but not about smoking among women. He has after all managed to write the rest of his book on the position of smoking in constructions of masculinity without

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[49] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* p. 2.
[50] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* p. 2.
[51] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* p. 157 fn. 5.

interviewing a single male smoker. Hilton's book, therefore, both elucidates and contributes to the problem of the position of women in the history of smoking. It is in itself an illustration of the way in which smoking has been constructed predominantly as a masculine habit by both contemporary actors and historical commentators for much of the 20th century.

This bias has, to a certain extent, been the result of prevailing social trends, which are reflected in earlier work by G.L. Apperson and A.E. Hamilton. Both wrote in the early decades of the 20th century and focus their attention on the growth and development of the habit among men. However, they both add a chapter on women near the end to accommodate what was then a new trend. Apperson reviews various sources which contain references to women smokers, drawing again on the tales of smoking in the court of Elizabeth I. Otherwise his evidence is sparse, and he concludes that 'during the seventeenth century, smoking was not fashionable, or indeed anything but rare, among the women of the more well-to-do classes, while among women of humbler rank it was an occasional and in some districts a fairly general habit'.[52] The class distinction prevails into the eighteenth century, with women of the lowest classes being portrayed as the most common smokers. In Fielding's *Amelia*, for example, a women of low character is described as 'smoking tobacco, drinking punch, talking obscenely and swearing and cursing'.[53] Although his own approach to the subject is liberal, Apperson notes that, at the time he was writing in 1914, 'there are still a good many people nowadays who are shocked at the idea of women smoking'.[54]

Hamilton offers less discussion on the history of smoking among women in his chapter on the subject, concentrating more on prejudices extant in the Victorian era and what he terms the 'renaissance of social smoking among women of high social rank in England' at the end of the 19th century. He refers to the prevalence of the 'twenty gasper girl' as a sign that the habit was becoming increasingly 'proletarian'.[55] While he is undecided as to whether he is witnessing a passing fashion or the beginning of a long term trend, his conclusion leaves no doubt as to the uneasiness with which he and other social commentators viewed this social trend.

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[52] Apperson *The Social History of Smoking* p. 212.
[53] Apperson *The Social History of Smoking* p. 213.
[54] Apperson *The Social History of Smoking* p. 222.

> Throughout the history of tobacco in this smoking world we find a sprinkling of references to women smokers in Europe, culminating in a general acceptance of the fact that their number is vastly increasing in England and America since the World War. ..The sociological significance of the custom, its effect, if any, upon health, ethics, morality, and the fundamental mores of humanity, are yet to be written…The coming of the cigarette into fashion among English and American women, however, is an innovation fraught with significance as concerns temperance and excess. With all due respect to the preachers, lay and secular, who harbinger a total wreckage of our civilisation if women take to smoking, it behoves us to watch the new experiment with considerable confidence that the natural conservatism of womankind, plus its generic sensitivity to all things that threaten its buoyancy and health, will swing toward reasonable moderation in the new flirtation with death.[56]

The reasons why smoking among women was viewed with such uncertainty, and seen to have potentially dire consequences, will be discussed in Chapter Two. Suffice to say here, the uncertainty was confined to smoking among women.

The idea that smoking was predominantly a masculine habit is reflected in British social surveys on smoking prevalence. In 1968, in the first large scale social survey undertaken by the Ministry of Health in order to inform anti-smoking campaigns, McKennel and Thomas noted that, until the Second World War, smoking among women was very much a minority habit.[57] Moreover, they argued, from data collected by the Tobacco Manufacturers Standing Committee (TMSC), that many women did not take up the habit until later in life. This was in contrast to the smoking patterns of men, who tended to take up the habit in adolescence. What they found, however, was that since the Second World War, the pattern of female smoking had been transforming to resemble that among men, as women increasingly took up smoking at

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[55] A.E. Hamilton *This smoking world* (New York, London: The Century Co., 1927) pp. 179 – 181.
[56] A.E. Hamilton *This smoking world* pp. 196 – 8.

a younger age. The rate at which adolescent girls were taking up smoking, they concluded, was continuing to accelerate as successive age-groups reached adolescence, although at the time of the survey there was still a disparity of two or three years between boys and girls in onset of smoking. McKennel and Thomas offered little explanation for this trend, suggesting only that the increasing number of women smokers in the Second World War produced a social acceptance of smoking among adult women which had not previously existed. This suggestion was qualified by the acknowledgement that this acceptance was still limited to certain situations and contexts.[58]

In 1969, the Ministry of Health followed McKennel and Thomas's study with one on smoking among schoolboys.[59] This was again part of a programme of research which was carried out in order to inform anti-smoking campaigns. The fact that the study was confined to boys reinforced the idea that smokers were predominantly male. As Elkind wrote in 1985,

> by the mid-Sixties, the onset of smoking occurred during adolescence in men and women alike, but the schoolgirl smoker was sufficiently unusual for a national study of children's behaviour to be confined to boys.[60]

As I will argue in Chapter 4, the decision to confine this study to boys had little to do with smoking prevalence and everything to do with financial restrictions and gender bias. However, the idea that smoking was, even then, predominantly a masculine habit has dominated much writing and research on the subject. As recently as 1996, Amanda Amos still felt the need to call for more attention to be paid to women smokers and to stress that smoking control policies needed to be gender-specific and gender-sensitive.[61]

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[57] A.C. McKennell and R.K. Thomas *Adults' and adolescents' smoking habits and attitudes: a report on a survey carried out for the Ministry of Health* (London : H.M.S.O., 1968).
[58] McKennell and Thomas *Adults' and adolescents' smoking habits* p. 19.
[59] J.W. Bynner *The young smoker : a study of smoking among schoolboys carried out for the Ministry of Health* (London : H.M.S.O., 1969).
[60] A. Knopf Elkind 'The Social Definition of Women's Smoking Behaviour' *Social Science and Medicine* 20:12 (1985) pp.1269 – 1278.

It is undoubtedly the case that smoking *was* predominantly a masculine habit until the latter half of the 20th century. Although it has been argued that the early statistics are open to question,[62] the general trend in smoking figures shows that smoking among women was numerically insignificant until the 1920s, when women began to smoke manufactured cigarettes in increasing numbers.[63] The explanation generally offered for this is that smoking among women became increasingly socially acceptable during the First World War and in the inter-war period, an impression borne out by reference to advertising and media images of women smokers.[64] Hilton's chapter on smoking among women has expanded these ideas emphasising the centrality of changing notions of respectability. In his analysis, the history of smoking among women is one of commercial products being used to break down dominant social norms.[65] A key factor in his analysis is that expanding employment opportunities gave women independent incomes, while the portrayals of smoking in the cinema provided the example of what to spend those incomes on, although his chronology is vague.[66] This is prefigured by the actions of the New Women of the 1890s who used smoking as a way of asserting independence in a culture which traditionally saw women's smoking as a sign of deviant sexuality and wanton morality. However, his discussion of this does not do justice to the ambiguous position of smoking, both in the 'New Woman' debate, nor among less prominent groups. Moreover, while Hilton does note the disparity between attitudes and behaviour, he does not extrapolate that disparity to the difference between portrayals and behaviour, especially in his discussion of smoking in film. He assumes rather that the prevalence of smoking on screen reflects the influence such portrayals had on women's behaviour.[67]

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[61] A. Amos 'Women and Smoking' *British Medical Bulletin* 52/1 (1996) pp. 74 – 89.
[62] M. Hilton *Consuming the Unrespectable: the female smoker in Britain 1880 – 1950.* Paper given at The History of Consumption as Social History: the 19th and 20th centuries in cross national comparison Berlin 2 – 4th June 1994.
[63] N. Wald *et al. UK smoking statistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
[64] I Waldron 'Patterns and Gender Differences in Smoking' *Social Science and Medicine* 32/9 (1991) pp. 989 – 1005; Knopf Elkind 'The Social Definition of Women's Smoking Behaviour' p. 1269; A. Marwick *Britain in the century of total war: war peace and social change 1900 - 1967* (London: Bodley Head, 1968); Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* p. 149 - 50; H. Graham *When Life's a Drag* (London: H.M.S.O., 1993).
[65] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* pp. 138 – 162; this chapter develops ideas expressed in his earlier paper on women and smoking (1994) and his thesis (1996).
[66] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* pp. 147 – 150.
[67] For example, his assertion that 'These sophisticated representations of smoking were a significant influence on many female smokers, as many Mass Observation panellists were prepared to admit' is

The role of advertising has previously been picked up by feminist writers such as Bobbie Jacobson and Lorraine Greaves, who have suggested that the tobacco industry exploited ideas of equality and economic freedom among women, pitching their product at a new generation of emancipated women.[68] The link of smoking with emancipation and equality has been made more strongly in the United States than this country. The story of the 1929 Easter day parade where several prominent debutantes marched with cigarettes in hand as 'torches of freedom' is the best known example.[69] More recently, the Virginia Slims campaign slogan, *You've Come a Long Way, Baby*, has served to reinforce the connection.[70]

Since I began the research for this thesis, Penny Tinkler at the University of Manchester has also begun work on smoking among girls and young women from the 1920s until the present day. Her publications from this research address the role of cigarette advertising in a historical context. She looks in particular at the ways in which smoking was constructed as a feminine practice in popular magazines in the interwar period.[71] There has also been recent work which has begun to look at the effects of portrayals of smoking in the movies on smoking prevalence.[72]

However, despite the centrality of media images in explanations of women's smoking, statistics show some disparity between the images portrayed in movies and advertising and actual consumption. Debate surrounding women's smoking and the presence of women smokers occurs in the historical record before advertising specifically began to target them. However, despite this, smoking among women remained a negligible part of overall tobacco consumption until the last years of the Second World War, when it grew to over a third of men's. It is only then that female smoking was recorded as anything more than a minority habit. By 1948, figures from the tobacco industry

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footnoted by one example of a Mass Observation respondent, and I haven't been able to find any more in my own analysis of Mass Observations material.

[68] B. Jacobson *The Ladykillers: why smoking is a feminist issue* (London: Pluto, 1981); L. Greaves *Smokescreen: Women's smoking and Social Control* (London: Scarlet Press, 1996).

[69] Tate *Cigarette Wars* p. 105.

[70] Kluger *Ashes to Ashes* pp. 315 – 7.

[71] P. Tinkler "Red tips for hot lips': advertising cigarettes for young women in Britain, 1920-1970' *Women's History Review* 10:2 (2001) pp. 249-272; P. Tinkler 'Rebellion, Modernity, and Romance: Smoking as a gendered practice in popular young women's magazines, Britain 1918-1939' *Women's Studies International Forum* 24 :1 (2001) pp. 1-12.

suggest that over a third of women smoked. Between then and 1975, when smoking rates overall began to decrease, smoking prevalence fluctuated between 36 and 45 per cent of women. The overall decrease was accounted for by the fact that prevalence among men began to fall earlier and more steeply than among women. Moreover, as stated in the introduction, daily consumption increased among those women who did smoke.[73] Such figures suggest that the real, and sustained, growth in cigarette smoking among women occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War. Women were smoking more and from an earlier age. However, much of the literature surrounding the history of smoking among women focuses on the earlier part of the century, and images of flapper girls and movie stars predominate. There is little or nothing addressing the experiences of the generation of women who started smoking during or immediately after the Second World War, when patterns of smoking began to resemble those among men. Hilary Graham has highlighted the role of the war in changing women's experiences of smoking, as women entered public houses and the armed forces, both places where smoking was prevalent.[74] However, her discussion of this is necessarily brief, forming as it does, the introduction to a sociological work on the patterns of smoking among women in the early 1990s, rather than being part of a comprehensive work on the history of smoking among women.

Gender and smoking in sociology

Graham's work is, however, indicative of the way in which the question of smoking among women has been seen as a contemporary sociological issue, rather than a historical phenomenon. Its genesis lies in a larger movement to address women's health issues in the mid-1970s. The question of smoking became crucial in the late 1970s and 1980s when the health risks of smoking to women began to be both appreciated and addressed. By this time the concern was that smoking among women, especially teenage girls and young women, was overtaking that among men.[75] In

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[72] T.F. Stockwell and S. A. Glantz 'Tobacco use is increasing in popular films' *Tobacco Control* 6 (1997) pp. 282 – 284; M. McCarthy 'Tobacco's long time adversary takes on Tinseltown' *The Lancet* 358 (2001) p. 44.

[73] Wald et al. *UK Smoking Statistics.*

[74] H. Graham *When Life's a Drag* pp. 3 – 9.

[75] E. Goddard *Smoking among secondary school children in England in 1988: an enquiry carried out by Social Survey Division of OPCS on behalf of the Department of Health* (London: H.M.S.O., 1989); D. Lader and J. Matheson *Smoking among secondary school children in 1990: an enquiry carried out*

addition, fewer women than men were giving up smoking in later life.[76] As the figures given in the introduction suggest, smoking was no longer seen as a symbol of masculine identity, but a more specifically female problem.[77]

What has also become apparent is that the gender disparity has been replaced by a class difference, which also has gendered implications. In 1958, data from the tobacco industry showed that the percentage of men and women who smoked manufactured cigarettes was broadly similar in all social classes.[78] However, while the percentage of men who smoked began to fall across the board in the years following publication of the Royal College of Physicians Report in 1962[79], among women smoking prevalence only fell in the higher social classes.[80] Among those in the lower socio-economic groups, smoking rates continued to rise and did not start falling until the mid-1970s, and still stand at least twice those of women in professional groups. When the *GHS* began to collect figures on smoking prevalence in 1974, smoking among women in the so-called 'manual' group averaged out at 45%. Among women in the non-manual group, it was 38%. By 1998, the figures had become 31% and 21% respectively, a disparity which is more striking if one compares women in the professional group with those in the unskilled manual group – 14% as compared to 33%.[81] Moreover, women in lower social classes tend to smoke more cigarettes on a daily basis than those in the higher social classes, 14 cigarettes per day as compared to 9.[82] This pattern is mirrored among men. Although smoking rates have fallen across all social classes, men in the lower social classes still smoke three times as much as their professional counterparts.[83]

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by Social Survey Division of OPCS on behalf of the Department of Health, the Welsh Office and the Scottish Home and Health Department (London : H.M.S.O, 1991).

[76] A. Bridgewood et al. *Living in Britain: results from the 1998 General Household Survey* (London: The Stationery Office) p. 116 (hereafter *GHS*).

[77] 'Alarming rise in girl smokers' *The Herald* 9 September 1999.

[78] The exception to this is women in social class VI, a heterogeneous group whose members are described as unoccupied (including for example, married women with unemployed husbands, divorcees and widows with no occupation). Their smoking rate is about half of the other social classes. Wald et al.*UK Smoking Statistics* p. 57.

[79]Between 1958 and 1971, the percentage of men who smoked fell overall, from 58 to 51, but this decline was greatest in social class I, where the prevalence fell from 54% to 37%.

[80] Wald *UK Smoking Statistics* p. 62.

[81] *GHS* p. 127.

[82] *GHS* p. 131.

[83] *GHS* p. 127.

However, what caught the most attention in the last decade of the twentieth century was the association between smoking, domestic caring roles and living in materially disadvantaged circumstances, a situation disproportionately affecting women. Hilary Graham has explored the relationship between social disadvantage, dependent children and smoking rates[84], while Alan Marsh and Richard Dorsett have looked in particular at lone mothers, where smoking prevalence is as high as 80%.[85] Such work has gone beyond conventional indicators of class to explore material factors which directly affect women's everyday lives.[86] There are socio-economic differences in the rate at which women give up smoking in pregnancy.[87] This has been a focus of government targets, given the reproductive implications of smoking during pregnancy,[88] and much research into smoking among women has focused on its consequences for others – from the impact of smoking on foetal birthweight to the continued impact of passive smoking on childhood health.[89] Factors such as socialisation into smoking and the influence of parental smoking on smoking habits have also been considered.[90]

The reasons why women take up smoking have also received a lot of attention in recent years. A particular focus in sociological as well as historical work has been the impact of advertising. While the influence of advertising on both onset and maintenance of smoking remains a subject of debate, it is undoubtedly the case that

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[84] H. Graham 'Women's Smoking and Family Health' *Social Science and Medicine* 25:1 (1987) pp. 47 – 56; H. Graham 'Gender and class as dimensions of smoking behaviour in Britain: Insights from a survey of mothers' *Social Science and Medicine* 38:5 (1994) pp. 691 – 698.

[85] R. Dorsett and A. Marsh *The health trap : poverty, smoking and lone parenthood* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1998).

[86] H. Graham and S. Hunt 'Women's smoking and measures of women's socio-economic status in the United Kingdom' *Health Promotion International* 9:2 (1994) pp. 81 – 88; A. Ellaway and S. Macintyre Does where you live predict health related behaviours?: a case study in Glasgow *Health Bulletin* 54:6 (1996) pp. 443 – 6.

[87] A. Oakley 'Smoking in pregnancy: smoke screen or risk factor? Towards a materialist analysis' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 11:4 (1989) pp.311 – 335.

[88] Department of Health *The Health of the Nation; a strategy for Health in England* 1991/92 Cmd. 1986 Section 2.17, B. 19 – 21; Department of Health, Scottish Office, Welsh Office and Northern Ireland Office *Smoking Kills: a white paper on tobacco* 1998/99 Cmd. 4177.

[89] N. R. Butler, H. Goldstein and E.M. Ross 'Cigarette Smoking in Pregnancy and its influence on birthweight and perinatal mortality' *British Medical Journal* 2 (1972) pp. 127 – 130; N.R. Butler and H. Goldstein 'Smoking in pregnancy and subsequent child development' *British Medical Journal* 4 (1973) pp. 573 – 575; F.D. Martinez, M. Cline and B. Borrows 'Increased Incidence of Asthma in Children of Smoking Mothers' *Pediatrics* 89:1(1992) pp. 21 – 26.

[90] A. Charlton 'Children and Smoking: the family circle' *British Medical Bulletin* 52 (1996) pp. 90 – 107; Green, G, Macintyre, S., West, P. and Ecob, R. 'Like parent like child? Associations between drinking and smoking behaviour of parents and their children' *British Journal of Addiction* 86 (1991) pp. 745 – 58.

women have been targeted by advertising campaigns to varying degrees from the late 1920s until now. A recent survey of 83 women's magazines across Europe found that smoking was variously associated with 'glamour, sophistication, fun, romance, sexual attractiveness, sport, sociability, relaxation, youth, emancipation, femininity, rebellion, risk-taking and being slim'.[91] The images were overwhelmingly positive and were lent credibility by the status of the magazines. As the British editor of *Vogue* said in response to the survey, publication of a cigarette advertisement in her magazine was 'as good as a stamp of acceptability'.[92] Moreover, the authors of the survey note, several magazines also used smoking as a prop in fashion shoots. Only a fifth of the magazines had carried an article on the health effects of smoking in the previous year. The importance of magazines to women, and therefore the importance of the question of cigarette advertising and promotion in them, is seen to lie in the fact that they have traditionally been seen as a source of information for women. They are also likely to be passed around and so have a higher readership than circulation figures might suggest. In addition, as Amanda Amos and Bobbie Jacobson have argued, the fact that women who read such magazines over a period of years develop a close relationship with them and are more likely to trust and to value the information they get from magazines than other media sources.[93] As a result,

> women's magazines have an important agenda-setting role in defining ideas about health and the causes of ill-health.[94]

Another important factor being researched is the link between smoking and weight. In a society which has a 'cultural fixation of female thinness', being thin is seen as equally, if not more, important than being academically or professionally successful and as a necessary pre-requisite of being sexually attractive. A 1998 study by the Cancer Research Campaign (CRC) found that not wanting to put on weight was the

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[91] A. Amos, C. Bostock and Y. Bostock 'Women's magazines and tobacco in Europe' *The Lancet* 152 (1998) pp. 786 – 7; this survey repeated a survey done in 1990 which had similar findings. A. Amos and Y. Bostock 'Policy on advertising and coverage of smoking and health in European women's magazines' *British Medical Journal* 304 (1992) 99 – 101.

[92] A. Amos 'Creating a global tobacco culture among women' in *Smoke Free Europe: a forum for networks* (Helsinki: Finnish Centre for Health Promotion, 1997) p. 116.

[93] A. Amos and B. Jacobson ' When smoke gets in your eyes: cigarette advertising policy and coverage of smoking and health in women's magazines' in *Smoking out the barons : the campaign against the tobacco industry : a report of the British Medical Association Public Affairs Division* (Chichester: Wiley, 1986) pp. 99 – 137.

[94] A. Amos and B. Jacobson 'When smoke gets in your eyes' p. 105.

main reason women gave for continuing to smoke, despite the fact that research has shown that giving up smoking is unlikely to have a big impact on one's figure. The CRC study was taken up by *Company* magazine which ran an article quoting women who smoked to keep thin and advising of the dangers. As one women interviewed enthused,

> I'm thrilled! I went down from a 14 to a size 12 without dieting. So now when I feel hungry I have a fag instead of dieting.

She was largely unconcerned about the long term dangers, continuing,

> it's more important to control my weight than worry about what might happen in twenty years time.[95]

The idea that smoking keeps you slim is reinforced by celebrities who are seen cigarette in hand in the pages of the press and in the media more generally. Kate Moss is a prominent example, but the phenomenon is such that it has been christened the 'Supermodel Diet'.[96]

Given that most long term smokers now start by the age of 18,[97] many patterns observed in adult smokers have their roots in adolescence. Teenagers' attitudes towards, and perceived images of, smoking are seen to be crucial to the long term patterns and prevalence of smoking. As a result, a large body of literature has grown up exploring the factors surrounding the onset of smoking among adolescents. The relative influence of parental smoking and peer group smoking has been explored,[98]

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[95] K. Buchanan 'Are you dying to lose weight?' *Company* (June 1999) pp. 61 – 64.
[96] From an article in *Celebrity Bodies* in the Guardian Newspaper Archive.
[97] Royal College of Physicians *Smoking and the Young* (London: The Royal College of Physicians, 1991) p. 43.
[98] B.P. Bewley, J.M. Bland and R. Harris 'Factors associated with the starting of cigarette smoking by primary school children' *British Journal of Preventative Medicine* 28 (1974) pp.37 – 44; R.G. Rawborne, C.A.Keeling, A. Jenkins and A. Guz 'Cigarette smoking among secondary schoolchildren in 1975: it's prevalence and some of the factors that promote smoking' *Health Education Journal* 38 (1979) pp.92 - 9; L. Chassim et al 'Changes in Peer and Parent Influence During Adolescence: Longitudinal versus Cross-sectional Perspectives on Smoking Initiation' *Developmental Psychology* 22 (1986) pp. 327 – 334; M. Murray, S. Kiryluk and A.V. Swan 'Relation between parents' and children's smoking behaviour and attitudes' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 39 (1985) pp.169 – 174; L. Michell and P. West 'Peer pressure to smoke: the meaning depends on the method' *Health*

the impact of socio-economic background and academic expectations has been analysed,[99] the ways in which young people are socialised into smoking – by watching adults, learning appropriate behaviour and by advertising – have all received a lot of attention,[100] usually with the implicit aim of understanding smoking initiation and maintenance and assessing the way best to prevent it. Gender has been a significant factor in this, given that, from the mid-1980s onwards, girls were seen to be taking up smoking faster than boys. The connection with body weight, for example, is known to affect teenage girls more than boys. Research in the mid-1980s has shown that more female regular smokers are likely to agree with the statement 'Smoking keeps your weight down' than boys or non-smokers.[101] What is key among all of this research is that smoking is seen predominantly as a social activity, determined by social factors and social expectations. It is seen as a marker of adolescent social identity, within the framework of social and familial networks and shaped by wider socio-cultural influences.[102]

As the onset of smoking in adolescence is generally seen to be a relatively recent phenomenon among women, it is debatable whether the factors ascribed to female teenage smokers – friends of the opposite sex, low academic achievement, leisure time spent outside the sphere of family and school[103] - can also provide a valid explanation for the onset of female smoking behaviour in the past. The extent to which smoking was a marker of adult social identity among women in the past has

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Education Research 11 (1996) pp.39 – 49; L. Michell 'Pressure Groups: Young people's accounts of peer pressure to smoke' *Social Sciences in Health* 3 (1997) pp. 3 – 17.

[99] J. Revill and C.G. Drury 'An assessment of the incidence of cigarette smoking in fourth year schoolchildren and the factors leading to it's establishment' *Public Health, London* 94 (1980) pp.243 – 60; L. Michell 'Loud, sad or bad: young people's perceptions of peer groups and smoking' *Health Education Research* 12 (1997) pp.1 – 14.

[100] L. Baric and C. Fisher 'Acquisition of the smoking habit' *Health Education Journal* 38 (1979) pp. 71 – 6; M. Blaxter *The Health of the Children: a review of research on the place of health in cycles of disadvantage* (London, 1982); A. Charlton 'Children's advertising awareness related to their views on smoking' *Health Education Journal* 45 (1986) pp.75 – 78; P.M. Fisher and others (1991) 'Brand logo recognition by children aged 3 to 6 years. Mickey Mouse and Old Joe the Camel' *Journal of the American Medical Association* 266 (1991) pp. 3145 – 8; G.B. Hastings, P.P. Aitken and O. MacKintosh *From the billboard to the playground* (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 1993); S. Chapman and B. Fitzgerald 'Brand Preference and advertising recall in adolescent smokers: some implications for health promotion' *American Journal of Public Health* 72 (1982) pp. 491 – 494; A. Amos 'Youth and Style magazines: hooked on smoking' *Health Visitor* 66 (1993) pp. 91 – 93.

[101] A. Charlton ' Smoking and Weight Control in Teenagers' *Public Health* 98 (1984) pp. 277 – 281.

[102] B. Lloyd and others *Smoking in Adolescence: images and identities* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[103] T. Piepe and others 'Girls, Smoking and Self Esteem' *Health Education Journal* 47 (1988) pp. 83; L. Michell *Pressure groups*; B. Wearing, S. Wearing and K. Kelly 'Adolescent women, identity and smoking: leisure experience as resistance' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 16 (1994) pp. 626 – 643.

largely been left unanswered, as most histories of smoking among women are brief and overly reliant on images from advertising, the media and, to a much lesser extent, literature. While the question of the role of smoking in social identity has been taken up by sociologists such as Hilary Graham in the 1980s and 1990s, there is no comparable work looking at the role of smoking in the past. Moreover, given that the current class gradient among female smokers has emerged relatively recently, it is debatable whether explanations centering on women's domestic role and/or material disadvantage provide adequate explanations for women's smoking behaviour in the past. What is apparent throughout the twentieth century is a pattern of smoking prevalence which has moved through male to female, rich to poor. In Britain, in the space of a few decades, the image of a woman smoker has moved from being one of glamour and liberation to one of poverty and inability to cope. However, the perceived absence of any sources pertaining to the experiences of women and the reasons why they smoked before the late 1970s means that it is difficult to discover whether the glamorous liberated image was merely a construct of the film and tobacco industries or whether it reflected women's own interpretations of smoking. Nonetheless, the changing social construction of smoking among women, from being socially prohibited to being a symbol of glamour and liberation, to being associated with material disadvantage begs the question of whether the role smoking in individual female identity has also changed.

The question of the relationship between women's smoking, their identity and wider social reactions to women's smoking was taken up in 1996 by Lorraine Greaves as part of a larger project carried out by the International Network of Women Against Tobacco (INWAT). Her book, *Smokescreen*, addresses the history of smoking among women before going onto discuss material from 35 one-to-one interviews and a focus group with self-identified feminists, abuse survivors and First Nation Women in Canada.[104] The premise of her book, as stated in the introduction, is to bring forth women's own interpretations of smoking and the position it holds in their lives. In doing so, she aims to get beyond the usual explanations of targeted advertising campaigns and/or women's liberation which are used to explain women's smoking behaviour. However, while the book makes a valuable contribution to work on

[104] L. Greaves *Smokescreen.*

women and smoking, it offers a rather inconsistent view of women's smoking from a historical point of view. In her introduction, Greaves correctly questions the impact of advertising on women's smoking on the grounds that it implies women are passively duped by marketing. However, her historical account relies on the different ways in which women were targeted in advertising to explain the social meaning which smoking held for women throughout the century. Moreover, her contention, akin to Bobbie Jacobson's, that the tobacco industry has exploited women and women's liberation for marketing purposes throughout the century denies women any agency in the decision to smoke. The crux of her argument, however, seems to rest on the premise that women's lives and identities are much more complicated now than in the past. She argues that the 'rather simplistic... interpretation of equality, used to explain and justify women's increasing smoking rates in the 1920s and 1930s cannot be used in the 1990s. Her study therefore focuses on the experiences of women in the mid-1990s. What she does not do, however, is question that 'interpretation of equality' which forms the basis for her own explanation of women's increasing smoking in the 1920s and 1930s. If, as she argues, women's own interpretations of smoking are central to understanding how and why smoking takes root now, then surely they are also central to understanding how and why it took place in the past.

Thus, despite this large literature, there is still a need to integrate the history of smoking among women into the history of tobacco more generally, seeing it not just as an afterthought or as secondary to smoking among men, but as central to the socio-cultural position of smoking in Britain from the 19th century to the present day. There is also a need to look at the role which smoking played in women's social identity over the same period, by exploring women's own interpretations of smoking. The structure of the thesis reflects these two objectives. The second part looks at the ways in which smoking among women was portrayed in contemporary discourses from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, exploring a variety of archival sources from tobacco industry archives through to archival material from ASH. The third part will concentrate on oral history interviews with 26 women aged between 40 and 85 at the time of interview. Before going on to the second and third parts of the thesis, the last chapter in part one will discuss the archival sources consulted for Part Two and outline the methodology and rationale used for Part Three.

Chapter Two: Sources and methodology

The question which faces any historian using gender as a category of historical analysis is how difference, either in practice or meaning, emerges in the first place. In the context of the thesis, what is important is the way in which the cultural symbolism surrounding smoking, and its interpretation, acquired gendered connotations. What I have explored through the archival research for this thesis are the ways in which smoking was constructed differently for men and women and the social context this took place in. Given the focus of the thesis on women, I was also concerned to explore the role of smoking in different constructions of femininity.

The groups seen to affect the cultural construction of smoking are the tobacco industry, the media, medical and epidemiological opinion, the anti-smoking lobby and various departments of government (Fig. 2). These groups by no means extend unified opinion, either over time or at the same period in time. Within the medical profession, for example, there was not unanimous agreement in the 1950s over the causal association between smoking and lung cancer. Nor should the components of these groups be seen as exclusive entities. For a good deal of the 1960s and 1970s, representatives of the tobacco industry sat on government sponsored enquiry boards, for example. Similarly, anti-smoking groups glean much of their information from the medical profession and epidemiological evidence. The cultural construction of smoking is therefore the result of the interaction of these interest groups, both in the messages they are putting out and the way in which those messages are interpreted. This was explored through archival research and a survey of contemporary newspapers and literature. Given the chronological scope of the thesis, it was necessary to focus some of the research onto particular time periods. I have used this chapter to explain where this has been done and why particular periods were chosen. The specific archival sources used for each chapter are summarised in a table at the end of this chapter.

Archival research

The tobacco industry

I examined developments within the tobacco industry, as well as the discourses surrounding smoking which they produced, from a selection of sources which were seen to best reflect the different aspects of involvement in the manufacture and sale of tobacco. I looked at material deposited by tobacco companies themselves, such as Player's[1], who produced some of the most popular brands of cigarettes for the first half of the twentieth century, as well as material about Cope's, a late 19th century tobacco producer, held in the papers of John Fraser (1836 – 1902) at the University of Liverpool archives.

I also drew on material from British American Tobacco (BAT) which was available on-line. BAT was forced to make a substantial number of documents public because of the Minnesota litigation and the company's American roots.[2] The original material is held in Guildford, but as I was given a six month lead time for gaining access, I drew on the electronic records. Material from the American tobacco company, Brown and Williamson, a subsidiary of BAT, is also archived electronically on-line. I found that this provided a good insight into marketing and sales techniques in the past few decades, especially in the targeting of women and ethnic or minority groups. Howard Cox has written an excellent history of the growth and development of BAT, but his work focuses on structural and managerial questions, rather than on who was consuming BAT's product.[3] The material he draws on comes from a private company archive in Southampton and his book only goes as far as 1945, before the position of the tobacco industry was compromised by growing awareness of the health risks.

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[1] Material deposited by Player's is held in Nottingham City Archives.

[2] *http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/industrydocs/*
These documents relate to litigation between 1994 and 1998 (State of Minnesota vs. Philip Morris Inc., et al). In the early 1990s, lawyers for the State of Minnesota began reviewing several million British American Tobacco documents. They selected around 7 000 documents which best related to the trial. Under the Consent Judgement settling the Minnesota trial, British American Tobacco Ltd was required to maintain a depository at Guildford. The ruling also stipulated that, with the exception of commercially sensitive material relating to blending and formulae, the repository be open for access to the public for a period of ten years from February 1998. It opened to the public a year later.
Select Committee on Health *Second Report*: *The Tobacco Industry and the Health Risks of Smoking* HC 27-1 paragraph 233.

[3] H. Cox *The Global Cigarette: Origins and Evolutions of British American Tobacco 1880 – 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Apart from this material, a bulletin produced by BAT to keep its employees serving abroad in touch with those at home is held in the British Library. Started in 1914, it became an in-house journal in 1920. I found this journal to be a fascinating source in itself, containing wartime correspondence as well as news about BAT employees and developments within the company.

I also drew on B.W.E. Alford's comprehensive account of the history of the Wills Tobacco Company.[4] This work draws on archival material from the Wills tobacco Company held at Bristol Record Office. His work is invaluable in understanding the growth and development of the tobacco industry in Britain. My own archival research concentrated more specifically, although by no means exclusively, on the Player's archive, as this company is less well-documented and their brands were particularly popular when smoking among women was beginning to increase. The Player's archives held a lot of material relating to the production, distribution and sale of tobacco as well as advertising and marketing material. They also held information on personnel, working conditions and company management. Most of the material related to the first half of the twentieth century, reflecting a greater caution in what was put in the public domain after the risks of smoking to health were known. The Player's archive also holds a number of volumes of newspaper clippings, relating to the progress of the company and to consumption in general, which were extremely useful. These date from the turn of the century through to the 1970s, although the later volumes concentrate almost exclusively on company development and sponsorship deals.

Private tobacco collections hold an equally varied range of material relating to tobacco, although they are more likely to hold anti-smoking material as well. One of the collections I looked at was the John Johnson Collection at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. This was particularly good for late 19th century material on smoking, as the collection holds a series of issues of *The Smoker* as well as a number of other articles and pamphlets relating to the subject. It also holds a large collection of trade cards and advertising material from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which I looked at. *The Smoker*, with its articles, cartoons, news and letters

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[4] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. Wills and the development of the UK tobacco industry* (London: Methuen, 1973)

on tobacco use, was both informative and witty and aimed to educate its readers about their habit and provide a sense of community among smokers. All of the material in the John Johnson collection provided me with a good insight into the way tobacco use was surrounded not only by physical, but also literary, paraphernalia. Much of the late nineteenth century material on tobacco relates, as Brooks suggested in his introduction to the Arents collection, to the botany of tobacco, its history, its manufacture and distribution and to commercial and economic aspects of this.[5] For the well-to-do smoker, tobacco use was seen as a recreational pursuit in a wider sense than just the consumption of tobacco. It was written about, it was read about and such material formed the basis of private collections. Hilton has argued that this rationalised consumption, making it more than an action of personal pleasure and 'into a public act of knowledge creation'.[6] Certainly, I found this evident in the collection of George Arents at the New York Public Library (NYPL), discussed in the previous chapter. Brook's edited catalogue provides some insight into the material held there, and I was also able to spend some time at the NYPL looking at parts of the collection. Unfortunately, this only allowed me to skim the tip of the iceberg of what is a valuable, interesting and extremely large collection. My research in the Arents collection focused on material dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries in particular, although I did look at some material relating to later in the 20th century.

Back in Britain, trade journals aimed at tobacco retailers give an insight into the main link in the chain of the production and distribution of tobacco. I focused on the *Tobacco Trade Review* and *Tobacco* in particular. They were concerned not only with marketing, but also with opinions and events at a more local level. Editorials show what the important issues of the day were for tobacco retailers, and these did not always correspond to the interests of the tobacco manufacturers. The *Tobacco Trade Review* also carried regular reports from different areas of the country, as well as details of court cases concerning tobacco. These ranged from prosecutions for illegal trading and under-age sales to smuggling and fraud convictions. Reports of trade social events and exhibitions and personal profiles give some idea of the people and ideas behind the marketing and show how the industry saw itself. My research

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[5] J.E. Brooks 'Introduction' in *Tobacco: its history illustrated by the books, manuscripts and engravings in the library of George Arents* (New York: Rosenbach and Co., 1937) pp. 3 – 4.

included a review of the *Tobacco Trade Review* from 1895 through to 1939. It became *The Tobacconist and Confectioner* in 1937, reflecting changes in the retail trade. After the Second World War, I looked at volumes relating to key years when reports on tobacco and health were published. These were 1950, when Doll and Hill published their ground-breaking report into smoking and lung cancer; 1954, when the Minister of Health made a statement in Parliament on the subject; 1957, when the Medical Research Council (MRC) issued a report,[7] followed by another Parliamentary statement; 1962 when the Royal College of Physicians Report on Smoking and Health[8] was published and 1971, when the second report of The Royal College of Physicians was published.[9] I also looked at the journal *Tobacco* for these years.

I explored the relationship between various departments of government and the tobacco industry through files held in the Public Record Office (PRO). Material from the late 1940s onwards showed the conflicting interests of the Ministries of Health and Education respectively and the Board of Trade. But it was difficult to follow this through properly because of the thirty year rule and because many of the documents have been 'bundled', that is, material older than 30 years old has been filed with much more recent material, thus preventing access. Nonetheless, minutes of meetings between different government departments and industry representatives, along with reports and correspondence provided me with a good indication of the way in which both the government and the tobacco industry approached the health issues surrounding smoking, until the late Sixties at least. I followed this through a review of published reports from various different committees set up to look at both the content and marketing of tobacco, for example, the Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health (ISCSH) and the Committee for Monitoring Agreements on Advertising and Sponsorship (COMOTAS). I also looked at periodic publications and reports by the Tobacco Advisory Council in its various forms. Submissions by Imperial Tobacco, British American Tobacco and what is now the Tobacco Manufacturers Association to the Health Committee in 2000 also provided valuable

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[6] M. Hilton *Smoking in Popular British Culture: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
[7] Medical Research Council *Tobacco Smoking and Cancer of the Lung. Statement by the Medical Research Council* (London, 1957).
[8] Royal College of Physicians *Smoking and Health: a report of the Royal College of Physicians* (London: Pitman Medical Publishing Co, 1962).

information on the way the tobacco industry saw its position, both in the past and more recently. Most of this material is dealt with in Chapter Five.

Government interests

Government concerns with tobacco before the late 1940s were largely fiscal or, in wartime, to do with ensuring supply and distribution. The exception to this was the 1908 Children's Act, which contained a section on juvenile smoking. I looked at the fiscal and wartime considerations and the run-up to the 1908 Children's Act through Parliamentary Papers held in the University of Glasgow library and the British Library. In addition, debate surrounding increases in tobacco duty also featured regularly in the trade and mainstream press, as did the question of tobacco supplies in war-time. I also looked at Parliamentary Papers and government commissioned reports to gain an understanding of the approach taken to the question of smoking and health in the second half of the twentieth century. In addition, the material examined in the PRO mentioned above in relation to the tobacco industry also provided me with a good idea of the ways in which different government departments approached the question of smoking and health. This research focused on files 'created by or inherited from', to use PRO parlance, the following departments or bodies: The Medical Research Council (FD)[10], the Ministry of Health (MH), the Board of Trade (BT), the General Register Office (RG), the Central Office for Information (INF), the Treasury (T) and the Department of Education and Science (ED). This research focused on the period between 1946 and 1968, although some material outwith this period was explored.

Medical and epidemiological opinion

Although current awareness of the risks of smoking to health developed from research carried out in Britain and America in the late 1940s and early 1950s, this was not the first time that the issue of smoking and health had been raised. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter One, voices had been raised against tobacco use for health reasons as early

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[9] Royal College of Physicians *Smoking and health now: a new report and summary on smoking and its effects on health* (London: Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd, 1971).
[10] The initials refer to the PRO's referencing for departments.

as 1601.[11] In my thesis, I am concerned to look at medical opinion about tobacco from the late 19th century onwards. This is not only to see the kind of concerns which were being raised, but also to explore what such concerns said about patterns and prevalence of smoking, in particular the extent to which such concerns were gender-specific and how they related to wider understandings of health. Medical discussion surrounding smoking in the nineteenth century dates from 1856, when, as discussed in Chapter One, a lecture by Samuel Solly, a surgeon at St. Thomas' Hospital initiated what became known as 'The Great Tobacco Question'. The lecture was on general paralysis, but Solly linked smoking and general paralysis before going on to state that he knew 'of no *single* vice which did so much harm as smoking'.[12] His lecture, published in *The Lancet*, spawned a debate in the letters pages of that journal which lasted well into the following year. This discussion, along with a book by John Lizars, an Edinburgh surgeon, was quoted extensively in subsequent articles and pamphlets by doctors on the subject. I consulted a substantial selection of these articles and pamphlets in the British Library and in the Special Collection at the University of Glasgow, as well as in the John Johnson collection and the Arents collection. These are listed fully in the bibliography.

In addition to looking at this material, I carried out a systematic review of smoking in the *British Medical Journal* (*BMJ*). This began as a study of responses to Doll and Hill's work in 1950 and developed to look at the way both that work and subsequent research was presented. In order to carry out this review, I went through every volume of the *BMJ* to see when and in what context smoking was discussed. The *BMJ* was also a good source because it carried notes on parliamentary discussions of smoking as well as editorial comment and letters from medical practitioners, which gave a good selection of opinion. This review spanned 1950 through to 1980. I then extended it to look at medical perceptions of smoking and health in the interwar period and during the Second World War and, in the interests of continuity, went back to 1900 and worked up to 1918. What this provided was a longitudinal overview of medical views on smoking and health, as represented in the *BMJ* from 1900 to 1980. This was

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[11] L. Harrison 'Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered: a note on the fate of the first British campaign against tobacco smoking' *British Journal of Addiction* 81 (1986) pp. 553 – 558.
[12] S. Solly 'Clinical Lectures on Paralysis: Lecture 1' *The Lancet* 2 (1856) p. 641.

supplemented by publications and pamphlets by individuals, which are listed fully in the bibliography.

Anti-smoking material

The anti-tobacco movement in Britain in the 19th century was formed of disparate, largely lay interests. The most well-known of its proponents was Thomas Reynolds, a former evangelical preacher, who became the Secretary of the Anti-Tobacco Society, established in 1853. Reynolds' fame stemmed from what became known as the 'The Cambridge Tobacco Riot', when an audience of cigar-smoking university men took badly to the contents of his lecture and let him know it.[13] I have drawn on the journal produced by the Anti-Tobacco Society as one source to examine anti-smoking feeling, as well as a considerable number of articles and pamphlets by individuals. Many of these pamphlets and articles originated with the Temperance movement and the connection of smoking with drinking is one which runs through a good deal of the material. There is also a strong similarity between anti-smoking material produced in the United States and Britain, stemming from the connections between the two movements. A lot of the material came from my research in the George Arents collection and I supplemented this by research in the New York Academy of Medicine, which also holds late 19th and early 20th century material to do with smoking in various different countries. By the end of the 19th century, juvenile smoking had become a particular concern in Britain and the United States and much of the material focuses on this, although the arguments echo earlier anti-smoking material aimed at men.

During this research I became interested in Lucy Page Gaston, the leader of the Anti-Cigarette League from its roots in Chicago in 1899 to her resignation in 1918, and I looked for her correspondence and other material to do with her. Although I could not find this surviving as a body of material, some of it existed, along with other anti-smoking material, in Oberlin College archives as part of another collection. Gaston's work and correspondence was interesting because of the similarities in tone and content to much British anti-smoking material of the period, particularly in its concentration on boy smokers.

The anti-smoking movement, such as it was, more or less disappeared after the passing of the 1908 Children's Act. This does not mean that nothing against smoking was published and periodic articles and tracts against the habit continued to appear. Formal organisation against smoking was resurrected in 1926 under the auspices of the National Society of Non-Smokers. As well as a series of pamphlets and tracts, the society produced a journal called *Clean Air*. The title sums up one of the main aims of the society, namely to assert the rights of non-smokers to smoke-free air. The society also campaigned against smoking among women and in 1930 an offshoot society, the Women's Non-Smoking Protection Society, was formed. I looked at a selection of material from both groups, along with correspondence which is held in the PRO in a file kept by the Ministry of Health.[14] While the impact of various anti-tobacco groups in terms of tobacco consumption was arguably minimal, the shifting focus of their arguments reflect the increasing smoking population over time – as they rail against smoking among men in the mid-nineteenth century, against juvenile smokers at the turn of the century and then against women in the interwar period. I was also concerned to look at the extent to which the content of their material was gender-specific and what it said about prevailing gender norms and the position of smoking within those norms.

Since the epidemiological case against smoking was established, the main group opposing smoking has been ASH which was set up in 1971 following publication of the second Royal College of Physicians Report. A Scottish branch was set up in 1973. I looked at a substantial amount of material relating to the work of ASH in the 1970s and early 1980s held in the Wellcome Contemporary Medical Archive Centre. This holds minutes, reports and correspondence relating to ASH and its various branches, as well as to its relationships with other bodies such as the Health Education Council (HEC) and the Scottish Health Education Group (SHEG). ASH Scotland also holds some material of historical interest, though a lesser amount and I also did some work there. The Health Education Board Scotland (HEBS), as SHEG has since become, also has an excellent library of recent and current material to do with smoking and

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[13] T. Reynolds *A memento of the Cambridge tobacco riot* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1854).
[14] Public Record Office (hereafter PRO) MH 55/960.

health education as well as a substantial collection of literature relating to smoking and health.

Media portrayals of smoking

My research of media portrayals of smoking was limited largely to representations of smoking in different women's magazines and mainstream newspapers. Matthew Hilton has discussed cinematic representations to a certain extent in his book[15] and I have not attempted to carry out a full survey of my own. The sheer volume of work this would involve puts it outwith the practical scope of this thesis. An internet site, *Smoking from all sides*, lists both the titles of movies and the female stars which have been portrayed smoking from 1916 until 2001 and the number of instances run into hundreds.[16] They increase each decade. Cinematic representations of smokers are undoubtedly important, and I have taken this into consideration. However, I have concentrated more on general trends and on well-known movies featuring smoking or actresses who smoked.

The women's magazines surveyed were chosen to represent different angles of the market. *Vogue* was the obvious choice, given its influence in both setting and portraying trends in fashion from its inception in 1916 to the present day.[17] It was very firmly aimed at the more affluent sections of society, with references to debutantes, house-maids and the officer classes. I also looked at *Miss Modern* and *Women's Own*, both of which were aimed further down the market. *Miss Modern*, founded in 1930 'for the real miss' was aimed at single working class girls, although some of its content suggests a more well-educated, middle-class reader.[18] *Women's Own*, on the other hand, was aimed at married women of the lower classes, featuring articles on home-making and thrift. These were obviously only a segment of the periodical literature aimed at women, and a fuller survey has been carried out by

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[15] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* p. 149.
[16] *http://www.smokingsides.com.*
[17] G. Howell *In Vogue: six decades of fashion* (London: Allen Lane, 1975).
[18] These distinction have been drawn out by Penny Tinkler in her book on magazines for girls and young women. P. Tinkler *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England, 1920 – 1950* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995).

Penny Tinkler at the University of Manchester.[19] What I was looking for were the ways in which cigarette smoking was portrayed in features, illustrations and fashion shoots. I did a review of *Vogue* between 1920 and 1939, of *Women's Own* between 1932 and 1939 and of *Miss Modern* between 1930 and 1940. Over the second half of the period, time constraints meant that I focused on the same years which I had chosen to look at in the trade press, namely 1954, 1957, 1962 and 1971.

I also looked at articles on and representations of smoking in the mainstream press. This covered all aspects, from reports on duty increases to opinions on women smoking in the letters pages. Newspapers also provided an invaluable source of information on tobacco advertising, as it was possible to see how such advertising was pitched, the images it employed over a period of time, and how this changed. I carried out a review of *The Times* which involved looking at all the instances in which smoking was mentioned and in what contexts between 1900 until 1950. This was done by using *The Times Index* looking for references to smoking and then looking at the relevant articles or letters on microfilm. I also looked at the *Daily Mail* from its inception in 1931 until 1950 by looking through issues on microfilm. I was primarily interested in advertising and illustrations relating to smoking. *The Times* was chosen because of its well-educated, respectable middle and upper class readership and its association with the British establishment.[20] It was seen to be influential in matters of the day. The *Daily Mail* was chosen because it was the first mass-circulation newspaper, almost a million by 1900, at a time when the circulation of *The Times* was 38, 000.[21] It aimed to provide a variety of news, features and photographs. It also carried a lot of advertising, which was useful for looking at the ways in which tobacco was marketed in that context. What made the *Daily Mail* particularly interesting was the fact that it was the first paper to actively cater for female readers and sometimes used illustrations of women smoking.[22] In addition, targeted surveys were done of the

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[19] P. Tinkler "Red tips for hot lips': advertising cigarettes for young women in Britain, 1920-1970' *Women's History Review* 10:2 (2001) pp. 249-272; P. Tinkler 'Rebellion, Modernity, and Romance: Smoking as a gendered practice in popular young women's magazines, Britain 1918-1939' *Women's Studies International Forum* 24 :1 (2001) pp. 1-12.

[20] B. Lake *British newspapers: a history and guide for collectors* (London: Sheppard Press, 1984) p. 97.

[21] Lake *British newspapers* p. 80. However, it is likely that the actual readership figures were higher, as newspapers would be read by more than one person and they were also held in libraries.

[22] Lake *British newspapers* p. 80.

Guardian, which was the *Manchester Guardian* until 1959, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Times*, again for the years 1950, 1954, 1962 and 1971.

A number of late 19th century publications were also looked at, including *The Ladies Realm* and *The Nineteenth Century*. Such journals were seen to be important not only because they provided a forum for discussion of social and political issues, but also because they provided the means for women to enter public debate about such issues.[23] Journalism was a growing profession for women, but more importantly, the device of anonymity allowed women to avoid possible discrimination when they contributed.[24] As *Punch* was known for its satirical comment on matters of the day, I also did a review of representations of smoking in *Punch* from 1871 through to 1900.

Other sources

I examined material held in the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex which provided an invaluable source for contemporary personal opinions of and experiences relating to smoking in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Of particular interest were surveys on smoking carried out by Mass Observation in 1937 and 1941 and various reports on smoking.[25] The material collected by Mass Observation is not unproblematic, for reasons which have to do with the aims and objectives of the group and its political agenda. However, I have looked at this material with the aim of understanding the ways in which smoking was seen to be a symbol of masculinity and femininity and its role in the construction of gender roles.

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[23] B. Onslow *Women of the Press in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000) p. 16.
[24] D. Rubenstein *Before the Suffragettes: women's emancipation in the 1890s* (Sussex: Harvester Press Ltd) pp. 86 – 7; Onslow *Women of the Press* pp. 66 – 7.
[25] The survey questionnaires were held in Topic Collection 63. The reports consulted were as follows: 290 *Women in Wartime* I, II and III; 520 *Women and Morale*, 776 *Smoking Trends: survey of male smoking habits*; 784 *Smoking Habits: supplementary reports*; 818 *Smoking Trends: pilot study on male smoking trends*; 979 *Smoking Comparisons: between 1937 and 1941 smoking habits*; 1598: *Martins Cigarettes: comparisons of brands, smoking habits etc.*; 1611 *Women in Pubs: social changes affected by war*; 1635 *Women in Public Houses: wartime changes in pub clientele*; 3037 *The pattern of smoking habits*; 3192 *Man and His Cigarette: smoking habits*; 335 *Wartime Saving and Spending*; 530 *Women and the War Effort*; 808 *Habit Change in Wartime.*

I have also looked at oral history material collected by Elizabeth Roberts at the University of Lancaster.[26] Roberts collected this material in order to look at family and social life in Barrow and Lancaster between 1870 and 1925 and in Preston between 1890 and 1940. Her respondents were asked about their memories of smoking and their responses provide an insight into smoking at the turn of the century. However, they also provide an insight into attitudes towards smoking at the time when Elizabeth Roberts carried out the research. One set of interviews (Barrow and Lancaster) was carried out in 1972/3 and the second in 1979 (Preston). In addition, I have analysed discussions of smoking in a set of life history interviews carried out by Paul Thompson and a team of researchers at the University of Essex in 1985 - 6.[27] Respondents were asked whether they smoked as part of the interview, but the most interesting material came from an analysis of when smoking was mentioned spontaneously, in what connection and the role it played in individuals lives. What was most striking was the effect of current knowledge about the risks of smoking not only on the recollection of smoking behaviour before health risks became known, but also in discussions of disease and death and the extent to which behaviour and lifestyle were seen to be responsible.[28] This was in marked contrast to Elizabeth Robert's material, where the health issues of smoking were not mentioned. The extent to which this was a product of the research process and the extent to which it reflected contemporary public discourses at the time of interview (some of Robert's interviews were carried out a full decade before Thompson's) is a matter for debate.

At various stages in my research, I have necessarily drawn on some of the same archival material used by other historians of tobacco, in particular, material from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and government records relating to, and newspaper coverage of, the risks of smoking and health in the 1950s and 1960s. This is partly because of the need to look at as many sources relating to the subject as possible, but more importantly, because of the need to provide a gendered reading of

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[26] This is held in The Elizabeth Roberts Archive in the Centre for North-West Regional Studies at the University of Lancaster.

[27] *Families, Social Mobility and Ageing: an intergenerational approach* (100 Families) Qualidata Reference: 01/96 – QDD/Thompson 7/100 FAM. The material is now held in the National Sound Archive, Accession No. C685.

[28] R. Elliot 'Growing up and giving up: smoking in Paul Thompsons' '100 families'' *Oral History* 29:1 (2001) pp. 73 – 84.

that material. Much of the material on women and smoking more specifically has not been discussed as yet in a historical context.

The material covered in this research is only part of the mountains of material relating to smoking. At the same time it is already too much to cover properly in this thesis. What I have focused on therefore is the evidence which relates most directly to the issues surrounding women and smoking which I have outlined in the introduction. It is necessary to show how, and why, smoking developed over this chronological period in order to understand the specific meanings which smoking held for women at any particular time within that and the historical questions one should be asking.

Expert opinion

The archival research exploring the social meanings which smoking held for women was supplemented by interviews with nine key epidemiologists and health professionals. This was in order to provide more information on the development of the epidemiological case against smoking and the ways in which the health risks of smoking were disseminated to the public. I interviewed Sir Richard Doll and Sir Richard Peto about their experiences of researching smoking and health and the impact of their work. Both explained the background to their research and the way it was carried out. Richard Peto illuminated the finer points of epidemiology and both the chronology and implications of his work, while Richard Doll took me back to the context and consequences of his original research with Austin Bradford Hill. I also met with Dr. Godfrey Fowler, who has been involved with smoking cessation work.

I interviewed several key figures in ASH Scotland and the SHEG in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Eileen Crofton and Alison Hillhouse gave a good insight into the background to ASH Scotland, to the issues which concerned it and the approaches which were taken, while David Player and Yvonne Bostock gave their views of the issue of smoking and health from their respective experiences in SHEG and the HEC. I also interviewed Bobbie Jacobson about her experiences in ASH London and the background, reactions and responses to her influential book on women and smoking, *The Ladykillers*. I also interviewed Hilary Graham, who produced important work on

smoking among women from the mid-1970s onwards, looking in particular at women's familial role and the relationship between smoking and disadvantage.

My oral history interviews

The importance of seeing public discourses surrounding smoking as gendered is not merely academic, but is a necessary pre-requisite for exploring the ways in which women interpret their own smoking behaviour. As feminist theorists such as Joan Scott have argued, gender not only contributes to social identity but determines the boundaries of social experience.[29] In other words, constructions and reconstructions of gender, and the ways in which they are represented, define social relations and appropriate social behaviour. These cultural constructions in turn define the way we think and are the means by which we express ourselves. As Scott has argued, no individual's account can exist independently of the discourses which inform it.[30] This necessarily has implications for the collection of oral history, or indeed any recounted experience. These implications have been drawn out by Penny Summerfield in her work on women in the Second World War and it is her intellectual approach which has informed and shaped the conceptual structure of this thesis.[31] It is therefore necessary to consider the relationship between public discourses and personal narratives before going on to discuss the interview material itself.

The contention that cultural constructions define the way in which we think and the way in which we express ourselves is necessarily problematic. As Penny Summerfield has argued, Scott's approach 'appeared to recommend the study of discourses about women, produced by powerful institutions, rather than women's worlds and actions themselves'. It denied agency, removing the means by which women could be seen to 'speak for themselves', a central focus of women's history from the 1970s onwards.[32] As Kathleen Canning puts it,

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[29] J.W. Scott 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis' in J.W. Scott (ed.) *Feminism and History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp. 152 – 80.
[30] J.W. Scott 'The Evidence of Experience' *Critical Inquiry* 17: 3 (1991) pp. 773 – 97.
[31] P. Summerfield *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: discourse and subjectivity in oral histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) p. 10 – 11.
[32] P. Summerfield *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* p. 10 – 11.

> Scott … leaves open the question of how subjects mediate, challenge, resist, or transform discourses in the process of defining their identities.[33]

The point Canning raises is that discourses are not fixed; they can be contested, transformed or demolished through agency. She argues that it is necessary to 'untangle the relationships between discourses and experiences by exploring the ways in which subjects mediated or transformed discourses in specific historical settings'.[34] In the context of oral history, Penny Summerfield has termed this process 'intersubjectivity'. In constructing a narrative of their past experiences, she argues that individuals 'draw on the generalised subject available in discourse to construct the personal subject'. What this means for oral history is that analysis and interpretation should take into consideration 'not only the voice that speaks for itself, but also the voices that speak to it, the discursive formulations from which understandings are selected and within which accounts are made'.[35]

Key to the idea of intersubjectivity is that of composure developed by Graham Dawson in his work on soldiers.[36] The term composure relates to the way in which one 'composes' an account of one's experience and in doing so, achieves personal composure by creating an acceptable self. Discourses are therefore drawn on selectively, with the purpose of producing an account (or memory) which is most compatible with the self.[37] To understand individuals' experiences, therefore, it is necessary to understand the cultural context in which they take place and the discourses which are being drawn upon to give those experiences social meaning and the way they are being used to create a sense of self. The question which arises in the case of smoking, and which the second part of my thesis sets out to address, is the way in which gendered public discourses surrounding smoking, the focus of the first part of the thesis, inform and shape interpretations of individual behaviour.

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[33] K. Canning 'Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn: Historicising Discourse and Experience' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19:2 (1994) p. 377.
[34] K. Canning 'Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn' p. 373.
[35] P. Summerfield *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* p. 15.
[36] G. Dawson *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994).

However, the question of agency remains problematic. Through much of the research for the first section of this thesis, it was apparent that smoking was not only constructed predominantly as a masculine habit through much of the period under discussion, but also many of the historical actors, be they government ministers, medical professionals, tobacco industry executives or media moguls, were, until relatively recently, male. Many of the constructions of female smokers were just that – constructions. In other words, the public discourses which have surrounded smoking for much of the period have generally originated from male dominated institutions. The problem inherent in an approach which suggests that individuals draw on such discourses to recount their experiences – and in doing so, present an acceptable version of the self - is that, whichever way you look at it, it denies women agency, not only in their experiences, but in understanding and expressing those experiences. Even if they are forming their own subjectivities, they are doing so within a constellation of discourses which are largely propagated by male dominated institutions.

What becomes key in this context is the argument that subjectivities are constituted through multiple discourses, subordinate as well as dominant, which have different meanings for different social groups. Moreover, as Summerfield has noted,

> since discourses tend to be multiple, contradictory and fractured, the narrator must also find words for what discourses marginalise or omit.[38]

Smoking among women may have been given meaning by different institutions, be it the tobacco industry or the health lobby, but the meaning which smoking held for women themselves has largely gone unexplored. The voices of women smokers, or non-smokers even, remain largely hidden from the historical gaze – there are no words therefore for what gendered discourses surrounding smoking marginalise or omit. The question is not only the ways in which individuals draw on such discourses to recount their experiences, but whether they do so at all and how they voice what is

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[37] P. Summerfield *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* p. 17 discusses the implications of Dawson's work.
[38] P. Summerfield *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* p. 17.

marginalised or omitted. The relationship between public discourses and individual agency, in both action and reconstruction of that action, is always going to be a subject of debate. However, without the voices of women smokers, questions of the impact of public discourses surrounding smoking on private attitudes towards smoking or the ways in which dominant ideologies of gender shaped individual behaviour cannot begin to be explored. There are therefore two purposes to the second part of my thesis – firstly, it aimed to give smokers voice to their own experiences of smoking and the ways in which they viewed their smoking behaviour from the 1930s until now. Secondly, it has allowed me to locate women's reported experiences of smoking within the wider cultural framework surrounding smoking, exploring the relationships between public discourses and individual agency.

The older generation of women chosen for this study were primarily selected because it was hoped that they would provide an insight into the experiences of the generation entering their adult years during and immediately after the Second World War. In other words, the women whom I interviewed grew up at a time when, as discussed above, there was a sustained growth of smoking among women which put it beyond the realm of a minority habit. It was envisaged that their experiences would provide some insight into the reasons why women started smoking during and immediately after the Second World War, what the social role of smoking was perceived to be and what wider social attitudes towards women smoking were. It was recognised that these women would only represent the viewpoint of the younger generation of women smokers from the period, as older women would no longer be alive. However, at the beginning of the interview, respondents were asked for their memories of their parents and grandparents to try and give some kind of impression of the behaviour and attitudes of older generations as regards smoking.

It was also recognised that findings could potentially be distorted by the fact that life-long heavy smokers were less likely to be alive, having suffered the health effects of prolonged smoking. The people I interviewed who still smoked were inevitably the survivors. This is essentially the case with any oral history study, however. It is especially pertinent in this instance, because of the possibility that having 'survived' a long-term smoking career without any ill-effects, or at least without dying, could distort respondents' views of, and reactions to, the health risks of smoking.

Nonetheless, it was thought that all the respondents would have equally valid memories and, given the nature of the subject, were likely to draw on the experiences of friends and family, who may have been affected by smoking related disease, into the discussion. The older women interviewed were also growing up before the health risks of smoking were widely disseminated and it was thought that they might also be well-placed to comment on growing awareness of the health risks of smoking and the ways in which this had affected their own smoking behaviour, irrespective of their smoking status at the time of interview.

Details of the interviewees are given in Appendix III. Names have been changed. Sixteen of the women were between 65 and 75 at the time of interview (born between 1925 and 1935). However, one woman, Jess, was 84 (born in 1916). She provided a fascinating discussion of her memories of smoking from her childhood in the 1920s until recent years. Her account was not only informative and interesting, built around personal experiences and anecdotes, but self reflexive; she was keen to analyse changes in habits and attitudes towards smoking as she recounted them. Her narrative provided a valuable insight into the changing social position of smoking over nearly eight decades, and the way one individual viewed such changes. For this reason, her interview has been used as a central thread running through the analysis of the interviews as a whole.

The interviews with older women were supplemented by a smaller number (nine) with women of a younger generation (born between 1950 and 1960). These women grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. By this time, the issue of smoking and health had been in the public arena for at least a decade. The intention was to compare the experiences of women growing up before health risks were known with those growing up afterwards. A further aim was to explore whether there were any differences in the onset of smoking, as regards age and social meaning.

At no stage were the oral history interviews intended to be representative of either the population now or the populations the two groups of women were drawn from. I have tried to ensure, however, that the respondents came from a variety of social backgrounds and had had varied experiences of smoking. The aim of this part of the thesis was to chart those experiences and the ways in which different women

responded to gendered constructions of smoking and the developing epidemiological case against it. Five of the respondents came from Dundee – on the east coast of Scotland – and were recruited through a further education college. One came from the north of Glasgow and the rest came from the southside of Glasgow and were drawn from a general practice there.[39]

The study was carried out with the permission of the Greater Glasgow Primary Care Ethics Committee and respondents were asked to fill in a consent form. Interviews were conducted in late June 2000 (for respondents in Dundee) and then from September to November 2000 (for respondents in Glasgow), in respondents' own homes – with one exception where the interview was carried out in the GP's surgery. Interviews lasted between half an hour and an hour and used a semi-structured questionnaire following a life history approach, which focussed on their smoking experiences within their life history.[40] The interviews were taped with the respondent's permission and transcribed. The interview transcripts were then analysed thematically and have yielded a wealth of material.

What I will focus on in this thesis however, in line with the objective of augmenting my archival account with the voices of women smokers, is the way in which interviewees themselves saw their smoking behaviour through the period and the ways in which they expressed this to me. In doing so, I want to suggest that this was affected very much by interviewees' awareness of the changing public discourses surrounding smoking across the period and the perceived need to explain individual behaviour within that context.

The fact that public discourses surrounding smoking have changed so much during the period under discussion was itself potentially a problem for data collection. Oral history is itself a reconstruction of the past and is influenced both by events which have happened since and by the necessity of communicating it in terms which can be understood in the present. We now live in a culture which has a predominantly anti-smoking ethos. It was a concern that this would override discussion of smoking in the

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[39] The letter which respondents received inviting them to participate in the study is shown in Appendix I.

[40] The interview guide is shown in Appendix II.

past, either inhibiting interviewees' willingness to associate themselves with smoking or else leading them to over emphasise the extent to which it was accepted in the past. The extent to which, and the ways in which, public discourses surrounding smoking at the time of interview influenced interviewees' discussion of smoking in the past is a focus of both chapters six and seven. It is also recognised that the interview was the product of a subjective relationship between myself and the interviewee which could be influenced by my own position as a researcher and by my own smoking status. I was worried that smokers would think that I, as a researcher into the subject, might be making moral and/or medical judgements on their behaviour. Therefore in both the preliminary letter (Appendix I) and the interview itself I stressed that it was an oral history project interested in women's experiences of smoking from a social, as opposed to a medical, point of view. I was also concerned that identifying myself as a smoker or non-smoker could affect the direction of the interview and/or the way in which experiences were framed. However, this mostly didn't come up and I suspect that this was because most interviewees assumed that I was a non-smoker. None of the interviewees smoked in front of me.

Table II: Archival material and sources consulted for this thesis

This table presents a summary of the archival material which informs each chapter. It is not meant to be exhaustive as a full list of documents consulted is given in the bibliography and footnotes.

Chapter	Relevant archival material or source	Content summary
Three	Player's archive	Documents relating to manufacture of tobacco, sales summaries, advertising material, including trade cards and labels, correspondence from the public, apprentice indentures and material relating to staff working conditions, volumes of newspaper cuttings, details of sponsorship deals and other related material
	Papers of John Fraser (1836 – 1902)	Editions of *Cope's Tobacco Plant* (March 1870 – January 1881) and the later series *Cope's Smoking Room Booklets* (1889 – 1893). Fraser's papers also include letters and draft contributions (both published and unpublished) from authors and artists working for Cope's, particularly, the writers Richard Le Galliene and James Thomson and the caricaturist John Wallace. The papers include examples of posters, cigarette cards, pamphlets and Cope's annual satirical Christmas card. The firm was involved in a dispute over copyright with John Ruskin and there is also a transcript of the shorthand notes of the trial.
	John Johnson Collection	Advertising material and trade cards from various manufacturers, documents relating to the Company of Tobacco Makers, copies of *The Smoker* and other pamphlets and articles relating to tobacco consumption, cigar labels and packaging. Most of the material dates from the late nineteenth century.
	George Arents Collection	Material relating to every aspect of tobacco growth, consumption and pharmacology from the late sixteenth century to the present day. I looked particularly at anti-smoking material in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Chapter	Relevant archival material or source	Content summary
Three (cont.)	New York Academy of Medicine	Books and pamphlets relating to tobacco use from various countries in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I looked specifically at anti-smoking material from the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany.
	The British Library	Books and pamphlets relating to tobacco use from the 16th century to the present day. I concentrated on the late 19th and 20th centuries.
	The British Library newspaper archive, Colindale	*The Tobacco Trade Review* (1890 – 1918)
	The Library of Congress, Print and Photographic Department	Images of smoking in the late 19th and early 20th century
	Glasgow University	Special Collections: nineteenth century pieces on tobacco use Parliamentary Papers: Committee reports relating to juvenile smoking, House of Commons debates during the First World War. *The British Medical Journal* (1900 – 1918), *The Lancet* (various), *The Times* (1900 – 1918), *Punch* (1871 – 1900). Various issues of other periodicals including *The Nineteenth Century*.
	The Elizabeth Roberts Archive, Centre for North West Regional Studies, Lancaster University	Social Life in Barrow and Lancaster 1880 – 1930 Preston 1890 - 1940
Four	Player's archive	As above
	British Library newspaper archive, Colindale	*The Mail*, *Vogue*, *Miss Modern*, *Women's Own* *Tobacco Trade Review*, *The Tobacconist and Confectioner* (after 1937)
	Public Record Office	Anti-smoking material and correspondence about smoking with the general public held by the Ministry of Health

Chapter	Relevant archival material or source	Content summary
Four (cont.)	British Library	Books and pamphlets relating to tobacco use during the interwar period. *British American Tobacco Bulletin*
	Glasgow University Library	*The British Medical Journal* (1919 – 1945), *The Lancet* (various), *The Times* (1919 – 1945) Parliamentary papers, in particular House of Commons Debates during both wars.
	Mass Observation Archive	File Reports and Topic Collection 63 – these covered the period 1937 – 1949. These are listed at the start of the bibliography.
	Elizabeth Roberts Archive	Social Life in Barrow and Lancaster 1880 – 1930 Preston 1890 - 1940
Five	Player's archive	As above
	British American Tobacco/Brown and Williamson electronic archives	Documents relating to the manufacture and sale of tobacco, in particular to the composition of tobacco and its effects on health. Also documents relating to the sale of tobacco to different groups, branding and marketing exercises.
	Public Record Office	The files consulted here are listed separately at the start of the bibliography.
	British Library	Material relating to smoking and health from the end of the Second World War to the present day. *The Hulton Readership Survey* Official government reports – these are listed separately in the bibliography
	The British Library newspaper archive, Colindale	*Tobacco*, *Tobacconist and Confectioner*, *Vogue*, *Women's Own*, *The Mail*, *The Express*, *The (Manchester) Guardian*

Chapter	Relevant archival material or source	Content summary
Five (cont.)	University of Glasgow	*The British Medical Journal* (1950 – 1980), *The Lancet* (various) *The Times* Parliamentary papers – in particular, House of Commons debates and Bills relating to tobacco use.
	Contemporary Medical Archives Centre, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine	Archived material from Action on Smoking and Health (1971 – 1985) – this also includes material from ASH Scotland and the Health Education Board. The type of material held ranges from anti-smoking material to correspondence and minutes. Charles Fletcher's papers.
	Interviews with experts in the field	

Part Two

Gendered discourses surrounding smoking

1890 – 1990

Chapter Three: 'Offending Women': the social position of smoking 1890 – 1918

> When all things were made, none was made better than Tobacco; to be a lone man's Companion, a bachelor's Friend, a hungry man's food, a sad man's Cordial, a wakeful man's Sleep, and a chilly man's Fire. There's no herb like it under the canopy of heaven.[1]

Although such sentiments did not go undisputed, the multifarious properties of tobacco had long been recognised and by the end of the 19th century, a plethora of literature existed about every aspect of its creation, from the tobacco field to the tobacconists. However, what is striking about tobacco is the gender and class associations its use had gained by this point. That tobacco is seen as a *man's* companion, friend, food, cordial etc was not merely linguistic convention, but an indicator of the way in which the use of tobacco had become symbolic of the prevailing understanding of gender norms. Smoking among women was just 'not done'.

The first part of this chapter will explore the reasons why discourses surrounding tobacco use had gained such gendered associations by the end of the 19th century and the extent which this was class bound. It will argue that the rhetoric and imagery surrounding smoking behaviour in the late 19th and early 20th century served to exclude women from the masculine sphere, both socially and spatially. This can be seen in both material promoting smoking and that opposing it. Although the origins, existence and implications of the doctrine of separate spheres for different classes and groups of women is a subject of much debate,[2] smoking arguably represented a clear delineation between the masculine world of work and economic reward (public) and the feminine world of domesticity, the home and family (private) which underpinned middle class Victorian society.[3] This delineation was grounded in contemporary

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[1] Advertisement for *Westward Ho!* April 1890, John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (hereafter JJC), *Tobacco* Box 1: Advertisement for *Westward Ho!* April 1890. The passage was taken from Charles Kingsley's 1855 work *Westward Ho!*

[2] A. Vickery 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A review of the categories and chronologies of women's history' *Historical Journal* 36 (1993) pp. 383 – 414.

[3] G. Pollock 'Modernity and the spaces of femininity' in G. Pollock (ed.) *Vision and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1988) p. 68; the public/private, masculine/feminine dichotomy is not taken here to be unproblematic, but merely to serve as a useful initial framework.

scientific understanding of gendered human nature and in this context the debate which developed around women and smoking at the end of the 19th century was part of a much wider discussion of woman's role in society.

However, the second part of this chapter will also suggest that any discussion of the growth of smoking among women in this period has also to be located within the framework of changes in the smoking habit more generally. As the industry underwent both technical and organisational changes, so too did the position of tobacco in society and its cultural meaning. From being a habit largely indulged in by men in the privacy of their own space and time for most of the 19th century, the advent of machine-made cigarettes and changes in marketing and consumption patterns meant that tobacco smoking then became ubiquitous in the first decades of the twentieth, spreading beyond the confines of the smoking room and into the public sphere. It was this proliferation of smoking among men and, correspondingly, the increased visibility of the habit which arguably created the necessary climate for smoking to become more widespread among women. The pivotal factor was the First World War. The growing popularity of cigarettes among the troops not only changed the status of smoking from luxury to accepted necessity, but involved women in the process of buying, packaging and sending that necessity. More obviously the war started a process of wider social change which impacted on gender roles. This places the discussion of smoking among women back within the wider framework of changing societal expectations and the place of different classes and categories of women within that. As this and the following chapter will show, such change did not occur without resistance and as a consequence of this, the rhetoric surrounding smoking among women throughout the period produced multiple, and often conflicting, discourses of womanhood. The way in which women interpreted these discourses was subjective, dependent just as much on class, geographic location, age and employment as on gender.

Smoking and gender

Smoking as a symbol of masculinity

Although many of the social histories of smoking published in the 20th century focus on the habit as a male pastime, the extent to which it had always been viewed as such is debatable and clouded by lack of evidence. Through the 18th century and early 19th century, snuff was the tobacco use of choice in fashionable circles and pipe smoking came to be regarded as a vulgar practice.[4] The advantage of snuff taking, apart from the fact that it had been given cache by its use in the French court of Queen Anne, was that it was odourless and did not involve spitting or expectoration, which were viewed as coarse and offensive to the female sex.[5] There is evidence to suggest that snuff was used by both sexes, although prevalence is impossible to guess.[6] However, such practices of tobacco use also seem to have been class-bound. Contemporary literature bears witness to the continued popularity of pipe smoking among the lower classes,[7] and to the use of chewing tobacco by sailors in order to avoid the risk of fire.[8] Occasional references to female pipe smokers in earlier centuries and the common image of the old lady sucking at her clay pipe in the 19th century suggest that pipe smoking among women was not unknown. The lack of evidence, however, means that any estimates of prevalence of pipe use among women would remain speculative.

What is apparent, however, is that with the introduction of the cigar to Britain in the 1820s in upper and middle class circles, there was not only a renaissance of the smoking habit but one which assumed very clearly gendered lines. Brooks relates the appearance of the cigar in England, a way of smoking previously associated with the

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[4] It was this which caused Dr. Johnson to lament in 1773 'Smoaking has gone out. To be sure it is a shocking thing, blowing smoak out of our mouths into other people's mouths, eyes and noses, and having the same thing done to us. Yet I cannot account why a thing which requires so little exertion, and yet preserves the mind from total vacuity should have gone out'. Arents Collection, no. 941; MacAuley also noted that, in the fashionable coffee houses of St. James' Park 'Tobacco in any other form than that of richly scented snuff was held in abomination' MacAuley, *The History of England* 1 (1848) p. 369.

[5] J. Goodman *Tobacco in History: the cultures of dependence* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993) pp. 81 – 3.

[6] W. Schivelbusch *Tastes of Paradise: a social history of Spices, Stimulants and Intoxicants* (transl. David Jacobson) (New York: Pantheon Books 1992) p. 121 – 130.

[7] Arents Collection, nos. 465, 700, 708, 822.

[8] J.E. Brooks *Tobacco: its history illustrated by the books, manuscripts and engravings in the Library of George Arents Jr.* Vol. 1 (New York: The Rosenbach Company, 1937) p. 162.

Spanish, to the experience of the Peninsular War.[9] Between 1808 and 1814, Spanish, Portuguese and British troops were involved in a series of battles and sieges against Napoleon on the Iberian peninsula. As sharing tobacco has long been a symbol of fraternity and friendship, it is likely that tobacco smoking was one way in which the leaders and the troops could show solidarity. The introduction of cigars to Britain was therefore originally associated with war, a predominantly male arena.[10] The association is evident in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, as cigar-smoking is a distinctive trait of the officer classes he depicts. George Osborne, for example, is shown using a cigar to destroy a love-letter from Amelia Sedley. Cigar smoking was therefore not only associated with military masculinity, but is also shown as a way of removing unwanted intrusions of femininity.[11] It was also associated with wealth. Cigars were an expensive and rare luxury, as they had to be imported.[12] As a result, their use spread first among the aristocracy.[13] In 1824, a German traveller noted that on occasion of dinner with the Duke of Sussex,

> after the ladies left the table, cigars were brought in, and more than one smoked, which I never before saw in England.[14]

The positioning of cigar smoking as a masculine behaviour was consolidated by the fact that it was indulged in after the ladies had withdrawn. However, despite the spread of the habit among the aristocracy, cigar smoking initially attracted criticism. The association of cigars with the wealthy aristocracy made them the desired

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[9] J.E. Brooks 'Introduction in *Tobacco: its history illustrated by the books, manuscripts and engravings in the library of George Arents* (New York: The Rosenbach Company, 1937) p. 167; This is also suggested by W. Koskowski *The Habit of Tobacco Smoking* (London: Staples Press, 1955) p. 26.
[10] L. Davidoff "Adam spoke first and named the orders of the world: masculine and feminine domains in history and sociology' in R. Shoemaker and M. Vincent (eds.) *Gender and History in Western Europe* (London: Arnold, 1998).
[11] W. M. Thackeray *Vanity Fair: a novel without a hero* (1847-8, London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1886) p. 121.
[12] The production of 'segars', as they were known, was subject to regulation under laws governing the manufacture of tobacco (Public Acts 1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 109, Section 9). In addition, there was a duty of 18s. per lb. levied on foreign cigars in 1824 (Public Acts 4. Geo. IV c.69), which was halved in 1826 (Public Acts 7. Geo, C. 48, section 35).
[13] Fairholt notes in his history of tobacco that while 26lbs. of manufactured cigars were imported in 1823, by 1830, that had risen to 250 000lbs. F.W. Fairholt *Tobacco: its history and associations: including an account of the plant and its manufacture , with its modes of use in all ages and countries* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876, 2nd edition) p. 219 – 220.
[14] Pückler Muskau, quoted by M.D. George *Hogarth to Cruickshank: social change in graphic satire* (London: Penguin, 1967) p. 172.

accoutrement of so-called 'gents' and 'swells'.[15] These were much satirised groups of men such as lawyers, clerks and bookkeepers with enough disposable income to adopt cheap versions of the affectations of the upper classes.[16] "Gents" smoked larger, cheaper versions of the cigar which were stronger smelling and allegedly made by discarded ends scavenged by children.

In the 1840s, cigar-smoking was given the Royal seal of approval by Prince Albert and this seems to have signalled the growth of the habit among the upper and middle classes. It remained firmly positioned as a masculine behaviour, an association also enforced by the royal household. When Prince Albert installed a smoking room at Osborne in 1845, for example, it was the only room which did not have an entwined V & A over the door, having instead a solitary A.[17] Queen Victoria was said to loathe smoking in any form and like her, ladies were supposed to detest the smell of tobacco smoke.[18] From the 1840s onwards, cigars were increasingly enjoyed by men, and moreover, they were enjoyed in the privacy of smoking rooms or gentlemen's clubs.[19] In this context, smoking fitted into the trend for what Girouard has termed an increasingly large and sacrosanct male domain in Victorian architecture[20] and *ipso facto*, in Victorian society. In the same way as the billiard room had increasingly become a male retreat,[21] the smoking room or club became part of the male realm. Etiquette frowned upon smoking in front of women and on smoking in public

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[15] R.D. Altrick *The Presence of the Present: topics of the day in the Victorian novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1991) p. 244.
[16] for example, this verse in *Punch*, 25 November 1843:

Gents! Gents! Ye are horrible things!
With your slang looking coats and gaudy rings,
Where shall a gentleman wander or dwell,
Horrible gents, but you come as well

... And the tobaccos' noisome scents,
Come from the mob of holiday gents,
Out on the river, leagues away,
Saileth the dense and filthy fume...

[17] M. Girouard *Victorian Country House* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) p. 25.
[18] E.C. Corti *A History of Smoking* (London: Harrap, 1931) p. 222.
[19] J.E.Brooks *The Mighty Leaf: Tobacco through the centuries* (London and Sydney: Alvin Redman Ltd, 1953) p. 204.
[20] Girouard *The Victorian Country House* p. 24 – 26.
[21] Billiards had not always been a man's game; as Girouard notes Byron and Lady Frances Webster had started an affair over it in 1813. Girouard *The Victorian Country House* p. 25.

places.[22] A critic of the habit in 1857 lamented the fact that 'puppies in the guise of officers and disguise of gentlemen puff their impertinence into ladies faces'.[23] In polite society, smoking was seen not only seen as a habit to be indulged in by men in private, but also as a recreational habit, suited to certain times and occasions. As Anne Charlton notes, in John Galsworthy's novel, *The Man of Property*, smoking among the upper and middle classes was

> confined to the men, who smoked cigars and occasionally cigarettes, when relaxing; for example, after the ladies had left at the end of dinner or at their Clubs.[24]

The smell was the ostensible reason, like the noise in the case of billiards, for removing the practice from shared space. However, the fact that this was done along gendered lines is indicative the way in which tobacco use became an expression of wider social mores. The smoking room was a visible sign of the separate spheres which men and women were expected to inhabit and smoking itself belonged firmly in the masculine sphere.

For much of the period, smoking habits also served to distinguish between classes. The pipe continued to be associated with, as Altrick has put it, 'men on the periphery of intellectual circles and reflective vicars, and, beyond them, with persons who fell into that capacious but amorphous class called by the Victorian's "the inferior orders of society"'.[25] George Eliot's reference to 'some rough-looking pipe-smokers or distinguished cigar smokers' in a description of an election crowd in *Felix Holt* captures the social distinction implied by form of tobacco use.[26] The distinction between the image of aristocratic cigar smoker and working class pipe smoker is obviously too clean cut to be historically accurate. Just as "gents" adopted cheaper versions of the cigar, quality tobacco and expensive pipes made their way into the smoking rooms and clubs of the more affluent. Tobacco use was, as Hilton has

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[22] G.L. Apperson *The Social History of Smoking* (London: Ballantyne Press, 1914) p. 200.
[23] Dr Budgett 'The Tobacco Question: Socially, Morally and Physically Considered' (1857), quoted by J. Lizars *Practical Observations on the Use and Abuse of Tobacco* (Edinburgh: George Phillip, 1859, 8th edn.).
[24] A. Charlton 'Galsworthy's images of smoking in the Fortsyte Chronicles' *Social Science and Medicine* 15A (1981) p. 633.
[25] Altrick *The Presence of the Present* p. 242.

persuasively argued, a matter of personal choice for the bourgeois gentleman. Throughout the 19th century, the tobacco industry catered to individual tastes for all classes of smoker.[27] However, there was a class distinction in smoking habits which was spatial – the working classes had less private space available to them, and therefore had to smoke either in public or in the presence of women. Such demarcations were reflected in the pages of *Punch* with cartoons showing upper class men in the privacy of their house or a smoking club smoking their cigars, and working class men outside smoking pipes.[28] Nonetheless, even in confined spaces, smoke could act as a visible delineator of social space, a fact which was recognised in both eulogies about tobacco and anti-smoking literature.[29] The time it took to smoke a pipe or cigar could provide a temporary escape from the realities of life, a fact which tobacconists themselves also began to cater for. An advertising pamphlet for Martin's Ltd, a tobacconists in London, for example, suggests that its lounge could become either a home from home, where smokers could relax and read the papers, or an extension of their commercial life, where they could write and receive correspondence.[30] In other words, smoking and smoking rooms provided a world where it was possible to get away from female company altogether.

The gender specific delineation of smoking between men and women, and between classes, was not only a spatial one, but also an intellectual one. The enormous plethora of literature and paraphernalia which grew up around the smoking habit in the mid – late 19th century as it became more popular has been characterised by Matthew Hilton as part of the prevailing bourgeois liberal context of smoking. This positioned smoking firmly within a specific cohort of the male population and saw it as an expression of specific tenets of liberal ideology, namely individuality and

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[26] George Eliot quoted by R.D. Altrick *The Presence of the Present* p. 240.
[27] M. Hilton *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800 – 2000: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 49 – 50.
[28] See for example *Punch's Almanac* 1871, *Punch* 18 January 1890. The cigar/pipe distinction is also important, as cigars were expensive, imported items and as such a luxury, whereas pipe tobacco, and clay pipes to smoke it in, was much cheaper. Pipe smoking was generally considered vulgar in the late 19th century, an idea which lingered on into the 20th century, according to Apperson. Apperson *The Social History of Tobacco* Chapter XII.
[29] See for example, M.W. Lawrence (Mrs) *The Tobacco Problem* (Boston 1885); H.P.Fowler *Our Smoking Husbands and What to do with them* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1879) and J. Parton *Smoking and Drinking* (London 1888).
[30] JJC *Tobacco* Box 1.

independence.[31] Books and articles discussing the cultivation, manufacture, history, scientific and pharmacological properties and economic relevance of tobacco moved what was essentially a private act of consumption in to the public worlds of science, technology, and history through the written word. Such literature allowed the smoker to educate himself about his habit and make rational informed choices about tobaccos and brands.[32] What may otherwise have been dismissed as an irrational, uneconomical indulgence became an informed and independent choice, central to the masculine identity and role. As a result, Hilton argues, consumption, typically constructed as passive, and therefore feminine, was legitimised for men in this context.[33] The paraphernalia surrounding tobacco and the product itself therefore catered for smokers' physical and intellectual needs. Through much of the literature and rituals surrounding tobacco use, it was portrayed as a matter for the discerning, educated individual. This fact, along with masculine construction of smoking, served to exclude women in a society which was inherently patriarchal in its distribution of power and knowledge.[34]

Trade journals reinforced the idea that tobacco use was predominantly a male preserve. In 1896, the *Tobacco Trade Review* advised it's readers that,

> a tobacconist should not leave his wife in charge unless he has taught her where things are and what they are called.[35]

A later article suggests that women behind the counter could be no more than 'a pretty, useful piece of feminine automatic machinery' who could not be expected to advise on 'the merits of a cigar, the flavour and strength of a tobacco, or the hygienic properties of a certain patent pipe'. Customers would know without being told that to

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[31] Hilton, *Perfect Pleasures*, p. 17 – 37.
[32] Hilton, *Perfect Pleasures*, p. 31.
[33] The extent to which the marketplace and consumption was gendered is discussed in V. de. Grazia and E. Furlough (eds.) *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (London: University of California Press, 1996).
[34] L. Davidoff and C. Hall *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780 – 1850* (London: Routledge, 1987); The fact that the consumption of literature about tobacco and the purchase of attendant smoking paraphernalia required both time and money served also to distinguish the educated bourgeois consumer from his working class counterpart.
[35] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 December 1896 p. 539.

ask would be 'a waste of breath'.[36] Although women worked in the harvest of tobacco and the production of cigars, tobacco use was a visible symbol of patriarchy as men owned the means of production, distribution and consumption, both literally and metaphorically. Tobacco, in its various forms, was often embodied with female characteristics, thus emphasising ownership – Barrie's *My Lady Nicotine* being the most obvious example. However, tobacco and women were also portrayed as incompatible alternatives, as Kipling's adage 'A woman is just a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke' suggests.[37]

The gendered nature of anti-smoking material

The increase in smoking through the 19th century did not go unchallenged. Indeed, ever since its introduction to Europe in the 16th century, the medical profession had been divided as to its merits and the clergy had condemned it on moral grounds. The growth in smoking in the mid-19th century provided the impetus for a revival of those arguments, in a way which mirrors the gendered nature of the smoking habit more generally. It was a discussion largely carried out by men about men, with women, when discussed at all, being the exception rather than the rule. From the 1830s onwards, a few medical publications had appeared analysing the physical, mental and moral properties of tobacco.[38] The nicotine content of tobacco had been recognised in 1828 and as a result, much of the material focused on the narcotic properties of tobacco.[39] In 1856, the question assumed wider significance following the debate that year in *The Lancet*.[40] The debate also provided some impetus for Thomas Reynolds, whose Anti-Tobacco Society, founded in 1853, had produced a steady stream of material against the habit. In 1858 he started a journal to disseminate his ideas, which

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[36] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 August 1915 p. 260. However, perusal of the pages of the *TTR* and anecdotal evidence suggests that women tobacconists were not unknown.

[37] The opening chapter of J.M. Barrie's *My Lady Nicotine* focuses on the author's decision to give up smoking in order to marry. J.M. Barrie *My Lady Nicotine* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902).

[38] For example, J. Shew *Tobacco: its history, nature and effects on the body and mind* (London: J. Watson, 1853); Lizars, J. *Practical Observations*; A. Clarke *A dissertation on the Use and Abuse of Tobacco wherein the advantages attending the consumption of that entertaining weed are particularly considered humbly addressed to all the tobacco consumers in Great Britain and Ireland but especially to those among religious peoples* (London: G. Whitefield 1789, 2nd edn.).

[39] J. Jennings *A practical treatise on the history, medical properties and cultivation of tobacco* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper 1830); T. Reynolds *The Substance of a Lecture on the Pernicious Properties and Injurious Effects of Tobacco* (undated); Brodie, B. 'On Tobacco' *Lancet* ii (1860) p. 243 .

he produced until his death in 1875.[41] The society was supported by a panel of eminent doctors and clergy, reflecting the blurred medical and moral agenda of the anti-smoking contingent.[42] A second anti-smoking society, the Manchester and Salford Anti-Tobacco Society, was formed in 1867, again with support from doctors and clergy, among others. It became the English Anti-Tobacco Society in 1872 and it, like the Anti-Tobacco Society, published a monthly journal, *Beacon Light*, and much other material against the smoking habit. Both societies had strong non-conformist leanings, with Reynolds himself being a former evangelist preacher.[43] There are obvious similarities between their arguments and those used by the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and other reform movements opposing tobacco use in the United States. Indeed much of the material in both countries used quotes from the same medical sources to justify often moralistic arguments and there is a commonality in the arguments used to make their point.[44] For those opposed to the habit, tobacco smoking defiled both the body and soul in ways which were often inextricably linked.[45] Smokers were introducing a narcotic into their bodies, which acted against the 'laws of our nature', both at a physical and a metaphysical level.[46] The lists of diseases it was supposed to induce ranged from cancer and lunacy to nausea and diarrhoea, and its use was also supposed to impair the mind and the senses.[47] Examples in the various anti-tobacco journals and in *The Lancet* during The Great Tobacco Controversy of 1857 were typically based on case studies and clinical

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[40] Solly, S. 'Clinical Lectures on paralysis: Lecture 1' *The Lancet* 1856 ii p. 641; See Chapter Two p. 50 of this thesis.

[41] The Anti-Tobacco Journal was continued by his daughter until her death in 1900. R. B. Walker, 'Medical Aspects of Tobacco Smoking and the Anti-Tobacco Movement in Britain in the Nineteenth Century' *Medical History* (1980) p. 398.

[42] *Anti-Tobacco Journal* 1 (1858) p. 1.

[43] M. Hilton *The Disease of Tobacco Smoking and its cure* Unpublished paper given at the University of Birmingham, 24 November, 1999. Unpublished.

[44] Both UK and US anti-smoking material of the time consistently refers to John Lizars, Benjamin Brodie and Samuel Solly, among others, as medical justification for their opposition to tobacco. Arents Collection no. 3246 contains a collection of examples of this from both sides of the Atlantic. It would be interesting to further explore the crossover, but that lies beyond the sphere of this thesis.

[45] The interplay between medicine and religion and the influence of the Temperance movement on those opposing smoking in Britain has been explored by Walker '*Medical Aspects*' and by M. Hilton and S. Nightingale 'A Microbe of the Devil's Own make': Religion and Science in the British Anti-Tobacco Movement 1853 – 1908' in S. Lock, L. Reynolds and E.M. Tansey (eds.) *Ashes to Ashes: a history of smoking Clio Medica* 46 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998) p. 112 – 3. Neither of these papers look at the influence of the American reform movement on the development of anti-tobacco sentiment in Britain, an aspect which I believe would merit further study.

[46] 'Principles of the Anti-Tobacco Society' *Anti-Tobacco Journal* I (1858) p. 1.

[47] Anon. 'The Physiological Position of Tobacco' reprinted from *The Quarterly Journal of Science* (London: N. Truber and Co. 1873) George Arents Collection n. 3246; B.W. Richardson *For and*

impression, with those in the anti-tobacco journals normally having the added factor of lurid sensationalism. In addition, smoking was commonly seen to be a moral threat, encouraging drinking and consequent penury and crime.[48] The growth in anti-smoking feeling, as evident in the growth of those societies and their publications, ran parallel to the spread of the habit and to its increasing visibility in society. The enthusiasm with which the medical profession jumped on Solly's reference to smoking also attests to more than a passing interest in the subject on their part. However, it is impossible to judge the extent of anti-smoking feeling more generally or its impact. It is commonly assumed to have been the preserve of a minority,[49] an opinion promoted by the tobacco companies of the day and by a series of satirical articles and cartoons in *Punch*.[50] Nonetheless, it can provide a benchmark for the spread of tobacco and it's perceived social consequences.

While anti-smoking material remained remarkably consistent in its arguments for much of the period, the focus of these arguments shifted as the market expanded to encompass different groups. Thus, through the latter half of the 19th century, pamphlets, journals and books published against smoking tended to assume that the smoker would be male. As Thomas Reynolds wrote in 1872 in a reply to a correspondent who denied the possibility of a connection between tobacco and disease,

> it is the male sex, which purchases the pleasures of tobacco at every cost, that is usually affected by epithelial cancer, generally at the period of middle life...[51]

His argument was based on the fact that the disease was very rare in females, as they did not commonly smoke, an argument which was to be echoed nearly 80 years in the

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Against Tobacco (London: John Churchill 1865); Drysdale, C.R. *Tobacco and the diseases it produces* (London: Bailliere, Tyndale and Cox, 1875).

[48] T. Reynolds *A lecture on the great tobacco question delivered in the Mechanics Institution, Salford* (Manchester: W. Brenner, 1857) p. 20.

[49] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* p. 81 – 2; V. Berridge 'Science and Policy: the case of post-war British smoking policy' in Lock, Reynolds and Tansey (eds.) *Ashes to Ashes* p. 144 – 162.

[50] See for example, *Cope's Tobacco Plant* May 1870; September 1871; October 1871; March 1872. Also *Punch* 1861 reprinted in the *Anti Tobacco Journal* 3 (1861) p. 226.

[51] *Tobacco and Disease: the substance of three letters reprinted with additional matter from the 'English Mechanic'* (London: N. Trübner and Co., 1872) p. 9.

preliminary discussions of smoking and lung cancer. The widespread assumption was that tobacco smoking was 'as yet confined to the male half of the population'.[52] Where women did appear in anti-smoking literature, it was as the economic or social victims of smoking or as the moral force to dissuade their husbands and sons from taking up or maintaining the habit.[53]

In this context, smoking was seen as an affront to women. It deprived her both of economic resources and material well-being, and of the unpolluted company of her husband. These arguments were particularly aimed at the working classes. The anodyne properties of tobacco were seen to suppress any desire for self-improvement – a central philosophy of Victorian society, while the squandering of scarce economic resources on tobacco was seen as irresponsible and immoral.

> The very fact that it (*smoking*) makes him (*the smoker*) contented with his lot is a point against his pipe...he ought to hate and loathe his tenement house home; and when he goes to that home in the evening; instead of sitting down in stolid selfishness to smoke he should be giving his wife (who usually has the worst of it) the assistance she deserves. Better the merry song, the cheerful talk, the pleasant stroll than this dulling of the senses and the brain in smoke... It is an unhandsome thing in this husband to steal out of his vile surroundings into cloudland, and leave his wife and children alone to their noisome desolation.[54]

A common theme was what might otherwise be done with the money.

> The pounds that are spent year by year, even by moderate smokers and snuffers, would do in the aggregate much good, either to themselves, their families, or to those whose bodies or minds crave help from

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[52] A. Arnold (Mrs.) *A Woman on Tobacco* (Manchester: Anti-Narcotic League, 1885); R.B. Walker 'Medical Aspects' p. 393 similarly notes that it was assumed that the smoker would be male.
[53] *Anti-Tobacco Journal* vol. III p. 194, *Anti-Tobacco Journal* vol. III p. 209; A. Arnold (Mrs.) *A Woman on Tobacco*, p. 6-7.
[54] Parton *Smoking and Drinking* p. 2; also R.L. Carpenter *A lecture on Tobacco* (London: National Temperance Publication Dept 1882) p. 25 'men are not ashamed to keep their children from school, on

> fellow men, while the sums spent by the immoderate consumers of the noxious poison go to make up the fearful amount of EIGHT millions, annually; spent too, in the indulgence of positive evil habits.[55]

Tobacco use was seen to lead to drunkenness, and expenditure on both of these was condemned as a cause of secondary poverty.[56]

Anti-smoking campaigners also warned against the 'seductive and sensual affects of tobacco', as these could lead to moral laxity. More specific was the assertion that smokers idled away Sunday morning smoking and were too ashamed to come into church smelling of smoke. That this was specifically a male problem was suggested by Thomas Reynolds, the founder of the British Anti-Tobacco Society and the most vociferous and prolific anti-smoking campaigner of the time.

> It is a fact which often induces observation, that in almost every city, town and village, those who make up our worshipping assemblies consist of a much larger number of females than of the other sex... where are the males? Alas! They are suffering from past indulgence or amusing themselves with the noxious weed. [57]

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the plea that they cannot afford two pence or four pence a week, while they spend sixpence on tobacco'.

[55] Wm Hate-Smoke (pseud.) *Smoking and Smokers* (London 1855) p. 10; This argument was also commonly used in the *Anti-Tobacco Journal* – for example vol. I p. 143, vol. II p. 47.

[56] A commonly held belief, which can be traced back to Benjamin Rush, was that smoking led to drinking. B. Rush *Essays, Moral, Political and Philosophical* (Philadelphia, 1798) p. 270. These ideas were reworked in anti-smoking tracts such as T. Reynolds *'Smoke Not!' Pamphlet No. 8 The British Anti-Tobacco Society versus the Lancet* (London, Houston & Stonemason, 1857) pp. 4 – 6. This pamphlet quotes extensively from the writings of a physician, James Copland, thus giving the argument medical legitimacy. Another pamphlet warns that 'Ragged children will increasingly abound in every locality; penury will stalk through the land; public houses will be proportionately in demand, as smoking increases and who does not see that our youth, of all classes are to be smoking men, - if indeed they become men at all.' T. Reynolds, *The Master Vice of the Age: exhibited in a speech at the close of a lecture in the New Hall, Reading, November 9 1855 by the Secretary of the British Anti-Tobacco Society* Arents Collection n. 3246; Another pamphlet characterises 'A fellow who smokes and drinks' as follows: 'a tattered wretched creature, with a pipe in his mouth, staggering to a public house and behind him a miserable abode of squalor and poverty.' In contrast to this was set the man who did not smoke and drink; 'a stalwart man, with head erect and bright countenance, wishing goodbye to his blooming family as he goes to work in the morning'. A Arnold (Mrs.) *A Woman on Tobacco*, p. 6-7.

[57] T. Reynolds *A Lecture of the Great Tobacco Question delivered in the Mechanics Institution, Salford, prefaced by the Rev. Canon Stowell MA* (Manchester, W. Brenner, 1857) p. 6.
In 1896, the *Tobacco Trade Review* reported on an attempt to get round this problem.

Even where morals were not at stake, the fact smoking kept men and women apart was seen as a social problem.[58] As the Reverend Shuttleworth argued in 1888,

> the great disadvantage of smoking, to my mind, is that it accentuates the separation of the sexes, and so fosters the coarser and more selfish side of men's habits.[59]

Such arguments had a strong moral agenda. However, within the medical framework women were also seen to be the victims of smoking. One writer argued that smoking led to degeneracy and that the children of smokers would be 'stunted in growth and deformed in shape (and) incapable of struggling through the diseases incidental to children and die prematurely.' Moreover, the writer argues that 'these imperfections are most manifest in the female offspring... the female child is more or less the victim of his (*the father's*) vices and debased habits'.[60] The fact that smoke polluted the atmosphere, especially in crowded dwellings where fresh air was insufficient, was also seen as hazardous to health, especially to young infants.[61] Some years later, Dr. Tidswell continued the theme, noting that 'the only women who suffer from cancer are the wives and daughters of men who have indulged to excess in tobacco'.[62]

With a view to rendering religious services more attractive to the male sex, in one or two instances pastors have allowed to smoke at certain gatherings held in mission halls or public rooms.

Tobacco Trade Review 1 February 1896 p. 38.

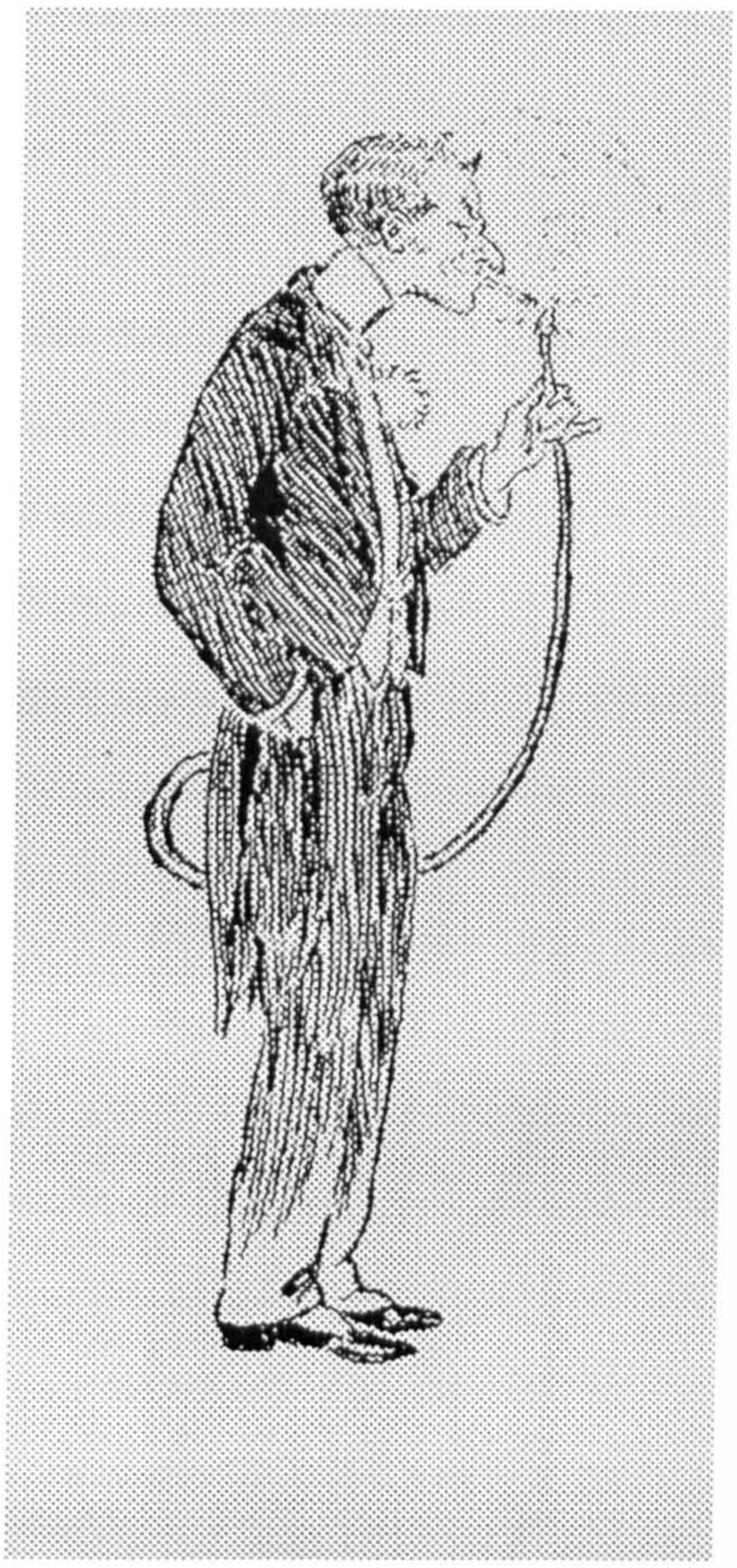
[58] Fowler *Our Smoking Husbands*.

[59] H.C. Shuttleworth (Rev.) 'Shall We Smoke?' *The Young Man: a monthly journal and review* II No. 19 (July 1888).

[60] Dr. Copeland, *Occasional Paper* quoted by J. Kirk (Rev. Professor) *A Manly Habit* (Manchester: Anti Narcotic League, undated); H. Brewer *Tobacco: a prize essay on the history of tobacco and its physical action on the human body, through its various modes of employment* (London: F. Pitman 1870) The argument about degeneracy was also applied at a national level – in an article from Samuel Solly, feeding into the *Lancet* debate, the mental condition of the Turks and the emaciated physical condition of the Germans were given as examples of the deleterious effect of smoking on a nation. Letter from Samuel Solly, *The Lancet* 14 February 1857 p. 176 – 7.

[61] A Arnold (Mrs.) *A Woman on Tobacco*, p. 11, R.L. Carpenter *A lecture on Tobacco*, p. 19; Dr. Hodgkin *On the Physical, Moral and Social Effects of Tobacco* (Bradford, 1859) p.7.

[62] H.H. Tidswell *The tobacco habit, its history and pathology* (London: J & A Churchill, 1912) p. 76.



Illus. 1

'Tobacco is a filthy weed,
It from the Devil did proceed'[1]

Tobacco was often associated with the Devil in late 19th and early 20th century anti-smoking material.

[1] Text from H.J. Curtis *About tobacco: a few facts gleaned* (Wilmington, Vt: Deerfield Valley Times Print, 1895) Illustration from J. Bain Jnr *Tobacco in Song and Story* (New York: New York Public Library, 1953) p. 144.

Smoking as a symbol of the 'ideal divide'

The delineation of tobacco use along gendered lines for much of the 19th century was both a result and an expression of prevailing gender norms, underpinned by contemporary scientific understandings of gender. It was precisely tobacco's association with masculinity, and everything that involved, which precluded its association with femininity. As the industrial revolution separated the workplace and the home, so-called 'separate spheres' emerged for men and women in the middle-classes. This was underpinned by ideas of biological difference and evolutionary theory which placed women at the centre of the domestic and progenitive sphere. What Thomas Laqueur has termed a 'two sex' model of understanding reproduction marked an incommensurable difference between the sexes, one which, to quote Laqueur, reduced women to the organ.[63] Within this framework, women were perceived as mentally unstable due to menstruation and the process of reproduction and menopause, their nerves were said to be finer and weaker as a result of the physical changes they experienced in their bodies and their maternal role was held to be their supreme function.[64] While Lacquer notes that this 'did not in itself logically entail any particular position on the social and cultural place of women', the Judeo-Christian tradition had historically posited women as subordinate to men, a position reinforced by the evangelical revival of the late 18th century.[65] What the 'two sex' model did was provide the necessary scientific rationale for gendered disparity, replacing religious dogma with a secular social order in accordance with the tenets of the Enlightenment. As a result, scientific theories of the natural difference between men and women formed the basis for social and cultural theories of gender. Women, with their unstable natures and maternal instincts, were positioned in the domestic sphere. Men, on the other hand, were seen as biologically more stable, rational and

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[63] T. Lacquer *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1990). This replaced the early modern Galenic view which posited a hierarchical view of the sexes and viewed men as more complete than women due to their hotter and drier nature. In other words, in the Galenic model, difference was not sexually based, as men and women's reproductive organs were viewed as essentially the same.

[64] For example H. Spencer *Principles of Biology* (London: 1864) and H. Spencer *Principles of Sociology* (London: Williams and Norgate 1876 - 1896).

[65] Although the opportunities for women to be involved in public works expanded, their activities tended to be confined to missionary and philanthropic work, roles which expanded the realm of their domestic obligations. In matters of organisation and initiative, women's role was secondary and she was expected to support the decisions and actions of men. L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes*,

intellectually able. Their world was that of politics and commerce. The distinction was legally enforced: married women, and a woman's vocation was considered to be marriage, were not allowed to own property or to enter into legal contracts. They were also excluded from politics under the terms of the 1832 Reform Act.[66] The positioning of smoking in the male realm, conducive to thought and action, put it beyond the boundaries of female experience.

Notions of biological difference were reinforced by contemporary evolutionary thinking, as writers such as Herbert Spencer and W.L. Distant argued that women's intellectual development had been stifled to allow the development of her reproductive functions. The increasingly differentiated sex roles were seen a sign of social progress. As Spencer noted in 1871 'if (social) perfection is to be the aim of our efforts, it will be best advanced by further divergence of male and female characteristics'.[67] The reason/unreason dichotomy of the Enlightenment was thus literally embodied in a male/female dichotomy, which formed the basis of the so-called 'ideal divide': the masculine world of work (public) and the feminine world of domesticity (private). To quote Jane Lewis,

> female well-being was classically associated with passivity, a love of home, children and domestic duties and, in the mid- and late nineteenth century, sexual innocence and absence of sexual feelings. Healthy development in women was thus signified by an attachment to their prescribed sphere and by the manifestation of moral virtue.[68]

This manifestation of moral virtue and the perceived moral superiority of women which it implied also served both to distinguish and to restrict women socially. Shielded from the corruption of the outside work, women were supposed contribute to

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pp. 130 – 148, R. B. Shoemaker *Gender in English Society: the emergence of separate spheres?* (London: Longman 1998) pp. 209 – 227.

[66] J. Lewis *Women in England 1870 – 1950 Sexual Divisions and Social Change* (Wheatsheaf Books , Sussex 1984) p. x (Introduction).

[67] H. Spencer 'The Probable Retrogression of Women' *Saturday Review* 32 (1871) p. 11.

[68] J. Lewis, *Women in England* p. 86.

the spiritual and moral well-being of their husbands and sons by example and gentle persuasion[69] To quote Frederic Harrison,

> the true function of woman is to educate, not children only, but men, to train to a higher civilisation, not the rising generation, but the actual society. And to do this by diffusing the spirit of affection, of self-restraint, self-sacrifice, fidelity and purity. And this is to be effected not by writing books about these things in the closet, nor by preaching sermons about them in the congregation, but by manifesting them hour by hour in each home by the magic of the voice, look, words, and all the incommunicable graces of woman's tenderness.[70]

As has already been shown, much of this ideology was evident in anti-smoking literature of the time, as they were urged to use their moral superiority and powers of persuasion to prevent their husbands and sons from turning to tobacco[71]. One female author dedicated her book to other women because

> the solution of the tobacco problem lies in your hands. A cause which aims to lift so fearful a burden, to remove so terrible an evil, is worthy of your warmest efforts, your most skilful advocacy.[72]

Whether the scientific arguments engendered the social mores or upheld a social system already in place is a moot point.[73] Nonetheless, it was contemporary understandings of gendered human nature, and the distinct and different social roles which that suggested, which lay at the heart of gender differences in smoking behaviour. Men could traverse easily between public and private spheres, in both ideal and practice. Women were much more constrained by social norms and expectations. As their physical well-being, mental health and moral virtue were inextricably linked with their reproductive role, both biologically and socially, they were confined to the

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[69] T. Gisborne 'An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex' (1797) pp. 246 – 7 quoted by S. Delamont and L. Duffin *The nineteenth century woman: her cultural and physical world* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).
[70] F. Harrison 'The Emancipation of Woman' *The Fortnightly Review* 50 (1891).
[71] Arnold (Mrs.) *A Woman on Tobacco* p. 11.
[72] Lawrence (Mrs.) *The Tobacco Problem* opening dedication.

domestic sphere. If a woman went beyond that sphere, she did so at risk of her reputation. As Davidoff has put it, '(although) many women glided into the public from time to time, their legitimacy was always questioned – note the term 'public women' or 'women of the streets' for prostitutes'.[74]

Tobacco use, through its association with masculinity and the world of men, was therefore at odds with the physical and mental purity and the moral superiority which lay at the heart of ideal femininity. An 1889 article by J.D. Hunting entitled *Women and Tobacco* supports the suggestion that tobacco use had been the exception among women for much of the century. That this was not a matter of choice but rather of social pressure was supported by the rest of her argument. She explicitly situated censure of women's smoking within prevailing understandings of gender, arguing that it was men's construction of women as 'an angelic being, absolutely pure, delicate and ethereal', of 'an ideal womanhood', which precluded tobacco use.

> Should she pollute her pretty lips with the "precious stinke", on which, however, as far back as the reign of James I some of the gentry thought it a brave thing to spend £300 or £400 a year. Perish the thought![75]

Those women who did smoke were condemned as unfeminine or immoral. As John Kirk wrote in 1878,

> women don't smoke. If you have seen them in some parts where they do, you will have noticed that it is only the toughest of their kind after all who take to the pipe. The truest representative of the gentler sex never does so. It is only the woman who comes nearest to being like a man who shows the slightest tendency in that direction.[76]

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[73] E. Fee 'The Sexual Politics of Victorian Social Anthropology' in M. Hartman and L. W. Banner (eds.) *Clio's Consciousness Raised* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) p. 101.
[74] Davidoff 'Adam Spoke First' p. 90.
[75] J.D. Hunting 'Women and Tobacco' *National Review* 14 (1889) p. 222.
[76] Kirk *A Manly Habit* p. 4.

Inhaling smoke was inhaling a visible pollutant, one which by that time, was recognised to contain a drug. Smoking among women was also seen as inherently sexual and immodest. The overtly sensual heroine of Merimee's *Carmen*, and Bizet's opera of the same name worked in a cigarette factory in Seville and the association of cigarettes and sexuality was obvious.[77] The later penchant for the use of the cigarette as a prop in erotic photographs merely served to confirm the connection (Illus. 2).[78] In 1858, The *Anti-Tobacco Journal* railed against 'fallen females in the metropolis' in 1858, describing these women as 'abandoned characters'.[79] The language and tone of the article is indicative of prevailing social mores – these women have been led astray, 'induced into the habit of cigar smoking by the youths with whom they associate'. The women have been rendered passive in their decision to smoke, but the use of the word 'fallen' shows the damage this has caused to their reputation and the overtones of sexual immorality are clear.

The relative absence of women smokers in the historical record for much of the 19th century supports the suggestion that smoking among women was seen as socially unacceptable. Where smoking among women is recorded, it is because it had incited comment. For example, Constance de Rothschild wrote in 1858,

> we talked about ladies smoking in general and Julia's in particular. We agreed that we did not like to see a lady smoke regularly, day after day, but that at times, a chance cigar is very pleasant.[80]

George Sand was also known to smoke in the mid-19th century, as was her contemporary, Lola Montez, both of whom challenged prevailing social mores in their own distinctive ways at that time. Lola Montez, a self-styled adventuress with an assumed name and a past liaison with the King of Bavaria, provides what is possibly

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[77] R. Klein 'The Devil in Carmen' *Differences: A journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 5:1 (1993) pp. 51 – 72. Cassandra Tate notes that in a 1914 performance of Carmen in Kansas the setting was changed from a cigarette factory to a dairy and Carmen made her entrance holding a pail of milk rather than a cigarette. C. Tate *Cigarette Wars The Triumph of the Little White Slaver* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999) p. 24.

[78] M. Koetzle and U. Scheid *Feu d'amour: Seductive Smoke* (Köln: Benedict Taschen, 1994). The erotic associations of smoking women continue today. An innocent web search for 'women and smoking' revealed an array of glamour and fetish sites, which would be better placed on Graham Norton than in this thesis.

[79] *Anti-Tobacco Journal* vol. 1 1858.

[80] L. Cohen *Lady Rothschild and her Daughters* (London 1935) p. 93.

Illus. 2

The cigarette was often used as an erotic prop in photographs. M.Koetzle and U. Scheid *Feu d'Amour: Seductive Smoke* (Koln, Benedikt Taschen, 1994).

the earliest photographic evidence of smoking among women. Her 1851 portrait shows her leaning against a pedestal with an unlit cigarette in her hand.[81] Similarly, her contemporary, George Sand, was associated with smoking and moreover with smoking in public in the 1850s. However, her actions, along with her masculine dress, were a direct challenge to accepted notions of feminine behaviour.[82] Neither she nor Montez can be seen as typical examples of contemporary womanhood, although the example of Sand was occasionally cited in later debate surrounding the habit.[83]

The autobiography of Margot Asquith (1864 - 1945) also suggests that she smoked as a young woman and that this was part of her desire to think and act for herself. As a young woman she fought hard to persuade her parents to let her travel unchaperoned to Germany. 'I wanted to be alone and I wanted to learn', she later wrote.[84] She smoked during her time in Germany, a habit which she associated very much with her educated literary life, recalling sitting smoking and discussing literature with her hostess in Dresden.

> (We sat) in loose moments... smoking cigarettes and eating black cherries; we discussed Shakespeare, Wagner, Brahms, Middlemarch, Bach and Hegel, and the time flew.[85]

Smoking was not new to her at this stage: earlier she recalled smoking on the schoolroom balcony, overlooking the railway line, and the warning which this provoked from one of her fellow pupils.[86] She did not say where she got the cigarettes from; indeed she did not dwell on the fact that she does smoke. She seemed to view it rather as an unremarkable part of her existence, later referring to smoking while sitting at her writing desk.[87] However, she did acknowledge that her existence as part of a bohemian literary set drew criticism from others, and her later romantic escapades with Peter Flower also caused concern. Her rival for Peter's affections, a woman who was known to have had many lovers, was, aside from her host in

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[81] Koetzle & Scheid *Feu d' Amour* p. 11, Schivelbusch *Tastes of Paradise* p. 124.
[82] Tate, *Cigarette Wars* p. 97, Koetzle and Schied, p. 9.
[83] J.D. Hunting 'Women and Tobacco' *National Review* 14 (1889) p. 222.
[84] M. Asquith *The Autobiography of Margot Asquith* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd, 1920) p. 80.
[85] Asquith *Autobiography* p. 82.
[86] 'There would be an awful row if you were caught with that cigarette'. Asquith *Autobiography* p. 75.
[87] Asquith *Autobiography* p. 242.

Dresden, the only other woman with whom smoking is explicitly connected. In this context, smoking retained its associations with the *demi-mondaine*.

The extent to which the young Margot Asquith was representative of women in her generation is an open question. A fashionable debutante, she was also part of a literary and intellectual set, The Souls, who advocated greater freedom for women in thought and dress. In person and in her group, she presented a challenge to contemporary social mores. However, there is no way of knowing how public her habit was. It was her later success as a writer and Prime Minister's wife, rather than public comment on her behaviour, which have ensured her experiences survived on the historical record in the form of autobiography.

It was not until the 1890s that smoking among women began to appear as anything more than a few sporadic references. In an 1889 article, for example, J.D. Hunting suggested that,

> in some country houses, it is not uncommon for the ladies to join the gentlemen in the smoking room and to mingle the fumes of their mild-flavoured cigarettes with the more masculine cigar smoke.

The author cited a number of other individual examples but concluded that,

> among the upper and middle classes it is difficult to tell how large a number thus indulge: so many keep it a secret from their own sex as from men, and only accidentally is the fact sometimes exposed that lips deemed guileless of all nicotic pollution are but all too familiar with the herb's soft pungency; as in the case of a young lady at a London hospital, suffering from *epithelioma* – rarely found in females – who, on pressing inquiry confessed that she had long smoked in private.[88]

[88] Hunting, 'Women and Tobacco' p. 222.

What this suggests is that if women's smoking had occurred previously, it had remained largely a private and as such unrecorded practice. Her wording suggests that such secrecy continued and it is this fact which makes it difficult to estimate the real extent of smoking among women before reliable figures became available. Irrespective of how widespread the practice was, however, Hunting's 1889 article is the beginning of a larger presence for women smokers on the historical record. This suggests that the habit was becoming more visible, relatively speaking, in polite society. It was this fact which, Hunting argued, prompted the need for discussion.

> So long as the bias of public opinion availed to make women conceal the fact that they smoked, discussions as to its advisability or non-advisability were very seldom heard; but now that many have openly asserted their right both to think and *to smoke* as they please, society is roused, and puts to itself the question, "Shall this thing be?".[89]

The need to discuss women's smoking suggests that it is a new phenomenon which society as a whole has not yet formed a considered response to. However, her question 'Shall this thing be?' related to more than smoking among women, as she suggests that it is both women's right to think and to smoke which are under consideration. Hunting's article positions smoking among women within the context of the wider debate of 'The Woman Question' which centred on the education and political rights of women. The question of whether or not women should smoke went right to the heart of societal expectations of women and debate surrounding smoking among women in the 1890s reflected wider concerns over gender roles. Smoking, the cigarette in particular, was to become a potent symbol for those seeking to re-define or negotiate gender boundaries.

Smoking and the 'Woman Question' in the 1890s

While Hunting stopped short of using the term equality, preferring instead to concentrate on women's right to own property and to play a public role, her article indicated the way in which gender boundaries were being renegotiated by certain

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[89] Hunting, 'Women and Tobacco' p. 222.

groups of women. This was by no means a new phenomenon, as the furore surrounding Eliza Lynn Linton's *Girl of the Period* essay of 1868 indicates.[90] Linton's *Girl of the Period*, 'a creature who dyes her hair and paints her face...a creature whose sole idea of life is fun, whose sole aim is unbounded luxury, and whose dress is the chief object of such thought and intellect as she possesses', faced criticism for the way in which, according to Linton, she imitated the *demi-mondaine*, both in manners and morals, in dress and in deportment. She was seen to undermine the ideal of English womanhood, particularly in her improper associations with cigar-smoking gentlemen and her desire to marry for money over love. Linton's attack drew on the angel and the whore dichotomy in a way which, her critics argued, did not reflect the paucity of women's options outside of matrimony or the desires of professional women to an existence not dependent on making a good marriage. The 'Girl of the Period' was, to quote Henry James, a 'wanton exaggeration in the interests of sensationalism'.[91] Nonetheless, the caricature was picked up by the press and became the subject of further articles, cartoons and satires.

However, the 'Girl of the Period', the debutante who sought to imitate the demi-monde, was soon supplanted by a more lasting threat to the social fabric, the educated, emancipated, 'advanced' woman. From the 1870s onwards, women were benefiting from access to secondary education and, for a privileged and courageous few, university. Educated women sought employment, albeit with inferior pay and conditions, and legal equality. Demographic reality forced women in general to be more independent, personally and economically as a 'surplus' of women at marriageable age meant that marriage was not necessarily an available option.[92] Whether by design or necessity, employment and personal independence freed middle class women from traditional constraints. As more women entered higher education and had an increasing public presence, they gained the opportunity not only to develop new identities themselves but to appropriate more space for women publicly and politically. As a masculine habit, smoking provided a visible challenge to conventional gender roles. To quote Hunting again,

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[90] E. L. Linton, 'The Girl of the Period' *Saturday Review* 14 March 1868 pp. 339 – 40.
[91] H. James, 'Modern Women'. *Nation* 7 (1868) pp. 332 – 34 quoted in E.K. Helsinger, R. Lauterbach Sheetes and W. Veeder.(eds.) *The Woman Question: Defining Voices* (New York, London: Garland Publishing Ltd., 1983).

> women were made non-smokers as they were made non-participators in many of men's privileges and pleasures, and women are becoming smokers because they no longer fear men's criticisms nor cherish their over fanciful ideas concerning them.[93]

In 1891, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, for example, wrote an article challenging the notion that women's biological make-up made her any less capable of a public or political presence. She argued that breaking gendered conventions surrounding behaviours such as riding astride and smoking would not cause the collapse of social institutions.[94] Other women acted more directly. A letter in 1894 in the *Daily Telegraph*, for example, suggests that smoking among women was on the increase and that women were asserting their right to smoke in public places. The male correspondent reports that his carriage had been invaded by four young women, who fixed a smoking label to the window and proceeded to smoke. His protests were in vain, as he was told the smoke would be good for him.[95]

Women's education, emancipation and increased independence obviously did not pass without comment and the pages of the periodical press provided an ideal forum for vigorous debate. As smoking among women gained a noticeable presence, it also assumed its place in the debate. From the publication of the *Girl of The Period* onwards, Lynn Linton had been a frequent contributor. She held closely to the importance of woman's role as wife and mother, despite her own divorce and independent life, and doubted the value of higher education for women.[96] In 1891, she wrote three articles on what she termed the 'Wild Women', social, moral and political

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[92] D. Rubenstein *Before the Suffragettes: women's emancipation in the 1890s* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1896).
[93] Hunting 'Women and Tobacco' p. 224.
[94] M. Garrett Fawcett 'The Emancipation of Women' *The Fortnightly Review* 50 (1891) in K. Rowold (ed.) *Gender and Science: late nineteenth century debates on the female mind and body* (Bristol, Thoemmes Press 1996) pp. 278 – 293.
[95] *Daily Telegraph* , 1 May 1894; quoted by D. Rubenstein *Before the Suffragettes*, p. 19.
[96] E. L. Linton 'The Higher Education of Women' (1886) published in K. Rowold (ed.) *Gender and Science* p. 39 - 40; What is interesting about Linton is that she had fought hard to live independently and was dependent on her own education for her vocation as a journalist. N. Fox Anderson *Woman against women in Victorian England: a life of Eliza Lynn Linton* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1987).

insurgents, who desired political and personal independence.[97] Far from marrying for money, the 'Wild Woman' opposed marriage altogether, preferring 'absolute personal independence coupled with supreme power over men'.[98] Linton used smoking as a symbol of this. It was not the association of women with cigar-smoking men which motivated their denunciation, but the fact that they were smoking themselves.

> She (*the Wild Woman*) makes between the sexes no distinctions, moral or aesthetic; nor even personal; but holds that what is lawful to the one is permissible to the other... not thinking that in obliterating the finer distinctions of sex she is obliterating the finer traits of civilisation, and that every step made towards identity of habits is a step downwards in refinement and delicacy – wherein lies the essential core of civilisation. She smokes after dinner with the men, in railway carriages; in public rooms – when she is allowed. She thinks she is thereby vindicating her independence and honouring her emancipated womanhood.[99]

Linton tied smoking in with women's claims to equality with men and counted it by drawing on the idea of the two sexes as 'distinct and different'. Her opposition to the habit drew on the notion of the 'ideal divide'. She argued that the *rasion d' etre* of woman was maternity and that man had the 'outside work' to do, be it running the country or tilling the soil.[100] For Linton, tobacco use was something which told against the natural functions of women and the 'elemental' ordering of society. Her argument was not against tobacco use *per se* but against women adopting the habits and roles perceived to belong to men. It was not the tobacco smoke which was the issue, but the symbolic threat which its female users posed to the male establishment. That threat was larger in both scale and tone to the one posed by the so-called *Girl of the Period*, partly because women's demands were more specifically directed at male privilege and pleasure, and partly because the power of the press had increased, thus multiplying the impact of debate on the issue. While she was perhaps the most

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[97] E.L. Linton 'Wild Women No. 1: As politicians' *The Nineteenth Century* July 1891 pp. 79 – 88; E.L. Linton 'The Wild Women as social insurgents' *The Nineteenth Century* October 1891 pp. 596 – 605; E.L. Linton 'The partisans of the Wild Woman' *The Nineteenth Century* March 1892 pp. 455 – 464.
[98] E.L. Linton 'Wild Women as Social Insurgents' p. 596.
[99] E.L. Linton 'Wild Women as Social Insurgents' p. 597.

vehement critic of smoking among women, her words reflect criticisms of women's emancipation more generally and are rooted in a gendered understanding of human nature.[101]

However, the position of smoking as a symbol of emancipation, both by its supporters and detractors was complicated by the shades of opinion in between. While J.D. Hunting, for example, did not question the fact that women should challenge their subordinate position, she did question the use of tobacco as the best medium by which to do this. In doing so, she drew on contemporary medical arguments against smoking – argument previously used largely against male smokers – to cast doubt on the wisdom of tobacco's use by the 'weaker' sex.

> It is not the purpose of this article to enter into a medical dissertation on the therapeutic use and abuse of tobacco, or to detail the many nervous diseases caused by moderate smoking; neither is it necessary to give statistics of the unequal proportions which the number of male patients bears to the female in our hospitals... Sufficient is it to note that tobacco, or rather its inherent principle, nicotine, is a poisonous drug, stimulative when consumed in small quantities, sedative when taken in large, and that such stimulus and narcosis are only gained by an unnatural excitement or paralysis of the great nerve centres, which are thereby rendered unfit for their important tasks of controlling the actions of lungs and heart...Tobacco has no power to nourish or build up; it can neither generate nor conserve vital heat, but in time destroys it and enfeebles every function, by a natural consequence, affecting the weakest parts first. That all these things are true may be believed, and yet women may do, as men have done, shake off the thought with the reflection that if tobacco be a poison it is a very slow one.
>
> True, you strong-limbed, strong brained women, true! You may not feel the effects, as your weaker sisters inevitably would, this year or next; may scarcely perhaps, at the end of a long life, for you will see

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[100] E.L. Linton 'Wild Women as Politicians' p. 81.
[101] For a comprehensive discussion of other contemporary authors who argued along similar lines see K Rowold (ed.) *Gender and Science.*

> to it that you are not over-indulgent; but how about the coming generation?[102]

The crux of the matter was that 'women bear the world and make it'. Despite her acknowledgement of the position of tobacco as an emancipatory symbol, her criticism of tobacco use brought women's role as mother and helpmate to man to the fore. It was up to women, she argued, to be possessed of 'a pure desire to live, not unto ourselves, but unto the race at large'.[103] Such arguments were echoed by other writers who argued that smoking affected a woman's reproductive abilities.[104] Smoking among women was turned into a wider social question, with implications beyond the individual woman.

However, in contrast to this, it was also argued that smoking was not necessarily incompatible with conventional femininity. In 1893, Lady Colin Campbell suggested that, rather than being a challenge to men's position, women's smoking could be seen as conducive to their feminine role and could promote better understanding between the sexes. She argued that the benefits of tobacco – as a 'soother of overworked brains and nerves' – lend it to the 'far more delicate and acute... nervous organisation (of women)' and went on to suggest that tobacco use would stop women nagging their husbands and becoming hysterical.[105]

Lady Campbell subverted arguments about women's weaker body and nerves to suggest that this was precisely why they should turn to tobacco. She painted it as a way of coping with 'the thousand and one little irritations of (women's) daily existence... to the benefit of their husbands and of the world at large'.[106] Rather than seeing tobacco as a threat to the core values of the family and society, Lady Campbell suggested that it could be used to buttress their upkeep. In doing so, she concurred with prevailing understandings of gender and women's position, rather than challenging them. Women's smoking was positioned within the domestic realm, beyond the 'noisy work-a-day world with its sordid elements and its ugly realism'.

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[102] Hunting 'Women and Tobacco' p. 227.
[103] Hunting 'Women and Tobacco' p. 228.
[104] E.S. Gronberg 'Historical and Political perspective: women and drug use' *Journal of Social Issues* 38:2 (1982) pp. 9 – 23.
[105] C. Campbell 'A Plea for Tobacco' *The English Illustrated Magazine* 11:2 (1893) pp. 82.

> The pleasure to a tired and harassed man to find his way back from his office to a quiet drawing room, ... a low voiced woman welcomes him.., a cigarette just removed from her lips.[107]

In this context, tobacco was seen as a bridge between the largely separate daily existences of the two sexes. The implicit suggestion was that by coming home to smoke and by sharing the pleasure with his wife, man would not be tempted to seek his pleasures elsewhere, either in smoking clubs or less reputable places. Smoking together would, Lady Campbell suggested, strengthen marriage and help woman be a better companion to man.

> Your thoughts are apt to work in unison as you each watch the rings and eddies of that lovely pale blue smoke dissolve in the quiet air.[108]

Far from disturbing the matrimonial home and the society which depended on it, Lady Campbell presented tobacco as a soothing, peaceful and tranquil addition for both parties.[109]

Needless to say, Linton disagreed. In a spirited riposte to Lady Colin Campbell, Linton harked back to her earlier articles on the Wild Woman, making the connection with the wider debate surrounding women's position in society explicit.

> This demand of women for the right to smoke with and like men, may stand as the epitome, the test case, of the whole woman question from A to Z... the core of this movement is not a special love for tobacco pure and simple, but the determination of the modern woman to ignore the limitations, the apportionments, the conventional proprieties as well as the elemental differences of sex.[110]

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[106] C. Campbell 'A Plea for Tobacco' p. 81.
[107] C. Campbell 'A Plea for Tobacco' p. 83.
[108] C. Campbell 'A Plea for Tobacco' p. 83.
[109] Her own home life was far from tranquil, however, as she was forced to obtain legal separation from her husband, the younger son of the Duke of Argyll, on grounds of cruelty. B. Onslow *Women of the Press in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000) p. 219.
[110] E. L. Linton 'A Counterblaste' p. 86.

In responding to Lady Campbell, Linton once again made the argument that smoking was not in keeping with conventional understandings of femininity. The cigarette, she argued, was a symbol as well as fact. Tobacco left physical stains on the teeth and fingers and moral stains on the character of good, high-bred, modest, well-conducted women. However, the basis of the argument remained that tobacco was perceived as a masculine pastime, and, in a world which marked the division between masculine and feminine realms, the two should not mix. In a wider reference to what she saw smoking as symbolic of, she expressed concern that 'manly women' would lead to 'unmanly men'. Smoking women did not only present a challenge to masculinity, therefore, but threatened to destroy it.

Linton's concept of the Wild Woman was followed in 1894 by that of the New Woman, another literary creation which stereotyped the educated, emancipated woman. Rubenstein argues that the term was coined in a debate between two authors during the 1890s, Sarah Grand, the name adopted by Frances Elizabeth Bellenden Clarke, and Ouida, the pen name of Louise Ramé. Ouida upheld traditional arguments as to woman's inferiority to men; Grand asserted that 'the new woman' was a little above men with a combination of education and moral superiority. Ouida then used the term 'New Woman' as a title of an article berating the woman who rejected her traditional roles as wife and mother, and 'coveted' the traditional public roles of men.[111] The stereotype was little different from Linton's Wild Woman, and was used to caricature and ridicule women who challenged sexual distinction. Smoking remained a potent symbol of both the challenge and the ridicule. It was picked up by *Punch* in a series of cartoons about the New Woman, which depicted her as masculine, unattractive and demanding (Illus. 3).[112]

Despite their different views on the phenomenon of the 'New Woman', both Sarah Grand and Ouida appeared to be against smoking among woman. In 1896, Ouida embodied the unconventional nature of cigarette smoking for women in the character, Cigarette, in her military novel, *Under Two Flags*. Her paternity unknown, Cigarette was 'the pet of the army of Africa and was as lawless as most of her patrons'. Her

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[111] Rubenstein *Before the Suffragettes* pp. 15 – 16.
[112] See, for example, *Punch* 1895 p. 282; *Punch* 1896 p. 282.

THE NEW WOMAN.

"YOU 'RE NOT LEAVING US, JACK? TEA WILL BE HERE DIRECTLY!"
"OH, I 'M GOING FOR A CUP OF TEA IN THE SERVANTS' HALL. I CAN'T GET ON WITHOUT FEMALE SOCIETY, YOU KNOW!"

Illus. 3 One of a series of cartoons from *Punch* satirising the New Woman. *Punch*, 15 June 1895.

mother was 'a brutal, drunken, vile-tongued old woman'. Cigarette herself crosses the boundary between the sexes, smoking cigars and cigarettes, swearing, shooting, but is only able to do so because she is outwith the limits of polite society. The allegorical Cigarette is located within the framework of masculinity, beyond the bounds of respectable society, but not truly accepted by either sex.[113]

Sarah Grand's opposition to smoking was more general: she was said to be against the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and caffeine. In *The Beth Book*, a prominent New Woman novel, she used smoking throughout as a way of delineating gendered social space in a way which upholds women's position of moral authority and protects her from the baser instincts of men. *The Beth Book* was very clearly shaped by feminist arguments of the time and was a strong protest against the sexual double-standard. Beth was a talented female character who was constrained by the social codes of gentility and femininity. After making an unhappy marriage to Dan, who she discovered ran a hospital for venereal disease, Beth struggled to regain her own independence, eventually separating from Dan and becoming successful in her own right. Throughout, cigar-smoking was associated with Dan, and his actions in smoking were used to reflect his mood and behaviour towards Beth – in one scene, his anger was shown by his crushing out of the cigar he was smoking, in another smoking was a way of ignoring her. His continued smoking, despite her objections, was used to symbolise boorish, arrogant masculinity. In one scene, she used her objection to his smoking as a way of keeping him out of her bedroom, and thereby protected herself from unwanted advances. Her dislike of the smell of tobacco smoke was a way of marking out, and protecting, her own personal space.[114] The example of Sarah Grand shows that supporting the feminist activism of the period did not necessarily mean endorsing smoking among women.

The complexity of the debate surrounding smoking among women was understood by contemporary commentators. It was summed up in a fictionalised post-luncheon discussion in an article entitled 'Smoke', by Ethel Harrison, wife of Fredric Harrison quoted on page 104.[115] Clearly indicated as a 'question of the day', the discussion

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[113] Ouida *Under Two Flags* (London: Chattus and Windus, 1896)
[114] S. Grand *The Beth Book* (1897: London: Virago, 1986).
[115] E.B. Harrison 'Smoke' *The Nineteenth Century* 36 (1894) pp. 389 – 96.

began with the phenomenon of the New Woman and swiftly moved on to 'that apple of discord – tobacco'. The discussion mirrored arguments already made by other authors, focussing on the effect of smoking on women's nerves and the future health of the race. The arguments were moral as well as physical; one guest asserted that a higher morality was expected among women that men.

However, much of the impetus among male guests seemed to be to maintain the position of smoking as a male prerogative. In a statement which would echo through future generations, one of the guests, a Professor asserted that although many women may have seemed to smoke, it was mostly 'mere *pose*'. The claim was that women didn't inhale and therefore, as far as their male critics are concerned, didn't smoke properly.

> When you see a woman carefully puffing away her smoke, instead of drawing it in, you may know she does not much care about it.

By suggesting that women neither cared for the habit nor showed any expertise in doing it, the Professor located smoking back into the masculine realm. Those who cared about tobacco, who knew how to smoke properly were men. As the lunch party broke up, one of the male guests made an aside to another. The real reason against the woman-smoker, he muttered, was that men should never have the smoking room to themselves. This suggested that the medical and moral arguments were merely employed to uphold the status quo, to preserve male pleasures and male prerogatives.

The challenge to the status quo remained, however. Once the two male guests had left, the young woman also present confessed to her unperturbed hostess that she had smoked two cigarettes out of her bedroom window the night before. What was drawn out in Ethel Harrison's fictional discussion is the generational difference. The 'new woman' is a young woman, with new ideas and new claims, informed by her education and opportunity in a way her mother's generation were not.

The generational difference was also attested to by Evelyn Lang in her contribution to *The Ladies Realm* discussion of 1900, referred to in the introduction of this thesis. While not against education or independence for women, she was wholly opposed to

smoking among women. Like authors before her, such as Linton and Hunting, she situated smoking within the wider Woman Question, as part of a constellation of 'masculine' behaviours, such as cycling, masculine dress and slang, used by 'new women' to challenge contemporary notions of womanhood. However, she referred to 'girls' as opposed to women, suggesting unmarried single women were the focus of her criticism, and went on to doubt whether the 'new' woman' was any better than the 'old'.[116]

The rest of the contributors to the *Ladies Realm* debate tried to reconcile smoking with contemporary notions of womanhood. The Hon. Mrs Chetwynd argued that,

> there is no reason why a woman should not smoke if it is not done aggressively, if it is done when it puts no one to inconvenience and offends no-one else and if it is done in the intimate society of those who affect it.... but where it is very objectionable is when a manly woman tries to ape a man's way of smoking, or smokes all day everywhere in public and in an aggressive manner, regardless of the prejudices of other people, annoying or disturbing them.[117]

In other words, if a woman was to smoke, it should be in private company and in a demure way so as not to challenge the masculinity of her male companions. Chetwynd went on to say that a woman should not smoke if her husband or family objected, a viewpoint which was echoed by her fellow contributors.[118] The contributors to the Ladies Realm discussion therefore deferred to men on the question of whether or not women should smoke. For them, smoking among women was not a symbol of emancipation or a challenge to the status quo, but something dependent on male permission in a way which upheld existing social structures.

Despite the ambiguity of the position of the cigarette in the debate which surrounded women's social position, it was its association with the emancipated New Woman which remained the enduring legacy of the period. This association was crystallised

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[116] E. Lang 'Should Ladies Smoke: A discussion' *The Ladies Realm* 7 (1900) p. 514 – 5.
[117] H. Chetwynd, (The Hon, Mrs.) 'Should Ladies Smoke: A discussion' p. 516.

in the first part of Dorothy Richardson's 1916 novel *Pilgrimage*. Her character, Miriam, a woman who turns to teaching after her family have fallen on hard times, is from the start uncomfortable with her prescribed feminine role. Her early smoking escapades date from rolling her father's cigarettes as a girl, when she smoked furtively and concealed the evidence. Richardson's work is remarkable for its full description of Miriam's first cigarette. It goes on for three pages and is not just a passing reference.[119] Miriam then smokes again when she is holding a governess position. She does so as an aggressive gesture, brought on by the contempt of the women at her playing billiards. It is a conscious action which separates her from the other women in the room.

> Miriam discharged a double stream of smoke violently through her nostrils – breaking out at last a public defiance of the freemasonry of women. 'I suppose I'm a new woman – I've said I am now, anyhow', she reflected, wondering in the background of her determination how she would reconcile the role with her work as a children's governess.[120]

She again smoked in company when she joined a literary set and vowed to start bringing her own cigarettes. However, while the various volumes of *Pilgrimage*, published in the 1920s and 1930s, are based to a certain extent on Richardson's own experiences in the 1890s, they are essentially a series of historical novels. They offer a powerful critique of male and female roles at the end of the 19th century, but it is a critique which was shaped by discourses of gender and femininity produced through the experiences of the First World War and beyond. Such discourses were not available to Miriam. *Pilgrimage*, as a series of novels, is just as much a contribution to the debate surrounding women's position in the inter-war period as it is a reflection of women's position in the 1920s.

Moreover, it is debatable whether Richardson would have been able to publish such a full and frank description of women's smoking two decades earlier than she did. She

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[118] M. Nevill 'Should Ladies Smoke: A discussion' p. 517; H. Fraser (Mrs.) 'Should Ladies Smoke: A discussion' p. 518.
[119] D. Richardson *The Pilgrimage: Backwater* (1916, London: Walter Allen, 1967) p. 208.

herself moved in a Bohemian literary set in the mid-1890s.[121] She had a close and complex relationship with H.G. Wells and both of them were acquainted with the lesser known Grant Allen, who depicted smoking among women as a symbol of emancipation in his 1895 novel, *The Woman Who Did.*[122] Wells' heroine, *Ann Veronica*, also smoked, but she was not a woman to be emulated. Cast out from the family home, forced to the pawn-brokers and of dubious morality, her character was condemned by reviewers and the public alike.[123] Similarly, Grant Allen's endorsement of free love was not widely supported.[124] The point is, that in the literary set in which Wells, Richardson and Allen moved, smoking may have been constructed as a challenge to social mores, but it was one which was surrounded by controversy. The significance of smoking in *The Pilgrimage* is not that it was representative of the meaning of smoking among women in the 1890s. Rather it shows the way in which women's smoking during the period has been remembered, with its association with emancipation and education and with the 'New Woman' who embodied such values as paramount.

However, while the association of smoking with emancipation, both among those who aimed to convey a feminist message and those who opposed it, has been the most enduring legacy of the period, this was not the only meaning which smoking had. The debate surrounding smoking among women was as multi-faceted as women's social position. Medical and moral objections to smoking were raised by those who supported women's emancipation. Conversely, the pharmacological properties of tobacco were portrayed as a way of helping women to cope with the demands of idealised womanhood. In all cases, smoking, or not smoking, was a way in which the doctrine of 'separate spheres' could be subjectively endorsed, redefined or else openly challenged by different groups of women.

Nonetheless, the fact that smoking among women was considered worthy of comment at all attests both to the novelty of the phenomenon and to the gender differences at the time, not only in smoking habits, but in the position and status of men and women

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[120] D. Richardson *The Pilgrimage: Honeycomb* (1917, London: Walter Allen 1967) p. 435 – 6.
[121] G. G. Fromm *Dorothy Richardson: a biography* (Chicago London: University of Illinois Press, 1977) pp. 36 – 55.
[122] G. Allen *The Woman Who Did* (London: John Lane, 1895).
[123] H.G. Wells *Ann Veronica* (1909, London: Virago, 1980).

more generally. Smoking among women was seen to affect the fabric of society in a way which went beyond the health and morals of the individual woman. It was a behaviour which society saw fit to comment on and to judge, as the controversy which surrounded the actress, Lily Langtry, when she posed for a portrait with a cigarette, illustrates.[125] Smoking among women was very far from being the matter of individual choice which it was for men.

Smoking among women in the working classes

The debate surrounding smoking among women in the 1890s was one which was carried out in reference to the middle and upper classes, a fact which was recognised by contemporary commentators.[126] Indeed, it is precisely because it was a debate which related to the middle and upper classes, that it has survived on the historical record. The experiences of the working classes have gone largely unrecorded.

The extent to which women of the working classes would have been subject to the same social strictures as women of the middle and upper classes is itself a matter of some debate. As Elizabeth Fee has pointed out, the rhetoric of biological difference was employed by middle class scientists to describe women of an equal social standing.[127] However, this does not necessarily mean that notions of respectability and morality would not have prevailed in some form. The main problem with most contemporary evidence is that it is seen through the eyes of middle class commentators and is therefore as much evidence of their attitudes as an indication of reality. It is far more difficult to ascertain just exactly what working class perceptions of respectability were and where they stemmed from. In addition, the distinction between home and work was more blurred for working class than middle class women, with women undertaking paid work in their own homes and social interaction taking place publicly in the closes or the streets. As far as smoking is concerned, a lack of evidence confounds the problem. Financial hardship and lack of

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[124] Fromm, *Dorothy Richardson*, p. 49.
[125] *Lillie Langtry, full length portrait, seated, facing right, smoking cigarette.* Library of Congress, Prints and Photographic Department LC-USZ62-103108; C. Tate Cigarette Wars : the triumph of the little white slaver ((New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 24.
[126] E.B. Harrison 'Smoke' p. 390.
[127] E. Fee 'The Sexual Politics of Victorian Anthropology', in L. Banner and M. Hartman (ed.) *Clio's Consciousness Raised* (New York: Harper Torchbooks 1974) p. 92 and 101.

time would have been two main factors preventing women smoking, as Ethel Harrison suggested in her article, but there is evidence to suggest that some women smoked. As Apperson noted in his 1914 history of smoking,

> there have always been pipe smokers among the women of the poorer classes. Up to the middle of the last century smoking was very common among the hard working women of Northumberland and the Scottish border. Nor has this practice by any means died out. In May 1913, a woman, who was charged with drunkenness at the West Ham police court, laid the blame for her condition on her pipe. She said she had smoked it for twenty years and "it always makes me giddy!" [128]

A 1903 report, for example, gives the impression that smoking among women in a Scottish fishing community was a frequent sight.

> In Montrose, smoking among the women at least of the fishing population is only less general than among the men. There you see them, in the evening and after their days labours, sitting on the upturned boats which they have helped to beach or on their own doorsteps pulling at their short clay pipes with contentment written upon their brows.[129]

In her assault on smoking among women of the upper classes, Linton used smoking among the working classes to raise a spectre of what could happen when 'sex has no aesthetic distinctions'. She wrote that in the coal districts 'where women work like men, and with men, and are dressed like men' pipe smoking among women was not unusual.[130] She also referred to old women smoking pipes.

> These ancient dames with whiskin' beards about their mou's, withered and unsightly, worn out, and no longer women in desirableness and beauty – why should they not take to the habits of men? They do not

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[128] Apperson *The Social History of Smoking* p. 215.
[129] 'A Counterblast against tobacco: the health society's indictment' *The Guardian* 19 February 1903.

> disgust because they no longer charm; but even in those places you do not find the younger women with cutty pipes between their lips.[131]

However, Linton's description was a rhetorical device designed to depict the antithesis of desirable femininity for the purposes of argument. The extent to which her descriptions of working class women reflected the experiences of such women remains a matter of conjecture. Certainly, the image of the old lady smoking a pipe is common in oral history testimony relating to the turn of the century, but there is little other evidence to augment Linton's descriptions. Furthermore, in her reply to Lady Colin Campbell's article of 1893, she asserted that one of the dangers of upper and middle class women taking up smoking was that it would then spread to all classes.

> What the mistress permits to herself, the maid adjusts to her surroundings, and the irritable nerves for which the plea is made belong just as much to one social stratum as to another... smoking ladies would inevitably include, by time, smoking women of all conditions; and the look out then would be formidable.[132]

There is evidence to suggest that in the industrial towns of the north, the smoking of cigarettes, known as 'Brownies' in the trade, or the use of snuff among factory girls does not seem to have been uncommon.[133] However, the textile factories these women worked in themselves challenged the sexual division of labour, with the powerloom weaving being overwhelmingly done by women, even after marriage. These women joined trade unions, had a strong independent identity and a key role in the economic life of the region.[134] The extent to which working class women who were confined to the home smoked is impossible to gauge – where household budgets include tobacco, one has to assume that it is for male consumption and certainly oral history evidence would seem to back this assumption up.[135]

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[130] E.L. Linton 'The Wild Women as social insurgents' p. 597.
[131] E.L. Linton 'The Wild Women as social insurgents' p. 597.
[132] E.L. Linton 'A Counterblaste' p. 87.
[133] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 April 1898 p. 163; Elizabeth Roberts Archive *Social Life in Barrow and Lancaster* (hereafter *ERA Lancaster and Barrow*), Mrs A2B, born 1904, p. 55; Mr C1L (born 1902), p. 41; Mr H1L(born 1904) p. 22; Mrs H2L, (born 1889), p. 34.
[134] D. Massey *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) pp. 194 – 197.
[135] Paul Thompson's interview collection *100 Families, Social Mobility and Aging: a Multi-Generational Approach* - tape reference C685/31/1 -3, British Library National Sound Archive,

The problem with trying to estimate smoking habits among working class women in the late 19th and early 20th century is, as with their more affluent counterparts, primarily one of lack of evidence. One source is Elizabeth Roberts' oral history interviews for her study of social life of Barrow and Lancaster between 1880 and 1930.[136] Carried out in the early 1970s, respondents were asked to recall their childhood experiences. Smoking figured as a subject of discussion for both sexes, but in most cases comment was fairly brief. It is not really sufficient to ascertain what the social meanings of smoking were for various respondents apart from in a very sketchy way.[137] The consensus among both male and female respondents seemed to be that women didn't smoke and where reasons are given, they suggest that the censure which surrounded smoking in the middle and upper classes also extended to the working classes. One female respondent, born in 1887, recalled that,

> if you'd been seen smoking a cigarette in those days, you'd have been condemned as not much use, a common person.[138]

Another woman, born a decade later, recalled that when she was growing up prior to the First World War 'women didn't smoke... It was dreadful to see a woman smoking.'[139] This was supported by the memories of other respondents and it seems to be an attitude which held in the first decades of the 20th century.[140] On the other hand, there were also those who recalled that women did smoke sometimes. However, the circumstances in which they did so again attest to the fact that the behaviour was censured, as the following dialogue between Mrs H2B, born in 1885 and her brother-in-law, born in 1886, illustrates.

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transcript p 20; tape reference C685/132/1, British Library National Sound Archive, transcript p 21; tape reference C685/178/1 - 3, British Library National Sound Archive, transcript p 28.

[136] *ERA Barrow and Lancaster* and *Social Life in Preston 1890 – 1940 (Preston)* hereafter *ERA Preston.*

[137] The style of questioning is problematic in places as questions often border on being leading (I think it was quite unusual for women to smoke in those days?). Nonetheless, her interviews give a valuable insight into both the behaviour of, and attitudes towards, women in relation to smoking.

[138] *ERA Lancaster and Barrow* Mrs C2B (born 1887) p. 23.

[139] *ERA Lancaster and Barrow* Mrs D1B (born 1899) p. 18.

[140] For example, *ERA Lancaster and Barrow*, Mrs A2B (born 1904) p. 51; Mr A2B (born 1904) p. 96 – 7; Mr B1B (born 1897) p. 75 – 6; Mr C1L (1902) p. 41; Mr and Mrs H3L (born 1904 and 1903 respectively) p. 131 – 2; Mr C1P p. 63 – 4.

Can you remember when women first started smoking?

(Mrs H2B) I couldn't remember a date because I think that some women have always smoked.

(Mr H2B) Before the First World War, very surreptitiously.

(Mr H2B) Anybody who smoked out of doors, a woman, was considered very common.

Where smoking did occur, it took place behind closed doors. What is interesting, however, are the references to snuff use among some of the woman, especially the older ones.

> *When do you think women started smoking?*
> I don't know... this woman would sit on the doorstep smoking a pipe... we didn't think it was very nice and she used to take snuff as well. There used to be a lot of people took snuff in those days... Old Mrs White about ninety four. Mrs Beck another ninety odder. (Snuffy Beck they used to call her) ... She used to cadge a ha'penny off me to make into a penny for a pennyworth of snuff. [141]

The association of old women with pipes is also made. One respondent recalled one or two women who smoke pipes but went on to say that 'you never saw women smoking cigarettes in the street or the house.' [142]

The stricture which seemed to surround women did not extend to their male counterparts, as there were frequent references to pipe and, less frequently, cigarette smoking among the male respondents and in the recollections of fathers and grandfathers by both sexes. Smoking as a juvenile was frowned upon, however, with several interviewees recalling that their early smoking experiments had got them into

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[141] *ERA Lancaster and Barrow* Mr C1L (born 1902) p. 41.
[142] *ERA Lancaster and Barrow* Mr P1B (born 1900) p. 46 – 7.

trouble. One respondent recalled that 'we never smoked in the house until we were twenty-one'.[143]

While the literature surrounding smoking in the 1890s certainly gave smoking among women a visible historical presence, it is still difficult to ascertain to what extent women did actually smoke. Despite the efforts of retailers to 'work up' the trade,[144] there is little evidence to suggest that smoking was any more than the preserve of a minority.[145]

Smoking still retained its connotations of deviance from feminine norms, even among those who were educated and independent. Mass Observation, for example, quote a woman student recalling that when she arrived in Girton in 1906, 'smoking was unheard of and condemned if heard of'.[146] Those who did smoke did so behind closed doors. Nonetheless, the cigarette retained its symbolic value in the debate surrounding women's social position. The Suffragettes adopted the cigarette in their campaign for political equality – the *Suffragette News* ran advertisements for cigarettes with the slogan Votes for Women down the side or else in the Suffragette colours. One supporter of the movement later recalled that when she had joined Christabel Pankhurst's W.S.P.U., 'the bravado part of smoking was very evident among the Suffragettes'.[147]

The importance of the cigarette

While the increasing visibility of smoking among women was part a wider debate about women's social role, it was also facilitated by changes in the tobacco industry itself. It is notable that the discussion surrounding smoking among women centred on the cigarette. The women being discussed were very rarely smoking cigars, and hardly ever smoking pipes. On one hand, this reflected the middle and upper class nature of

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[143] *ERA Lancaster and Barrow* Mr H2B (born 1885).
[144] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 May 1897 p. 225; *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 March 1898 p. 139.
[145] An American journalist was still able to assert in 1906 noted that the practice of cigarette smoking was confined to 'the lady of wealth and luxury' whose position was so well-established that she did not have to bother about adverse comment and 'the demi-monde, who don't care a flip about what the world may say or think'. Quoted in Mass Observation File Report 3192 *Man and his Cigarette* (Mass Observation 1949) p. 65.
[146] Mass Observation File Report 3192 *Man and his Cigarette* p. 68.
[147] *Suffragette News* 1905; Mass Observation File Report 3192 *Man and his Cigarette* p. 68.

the debate, but more prominently, it was a result of the introduction of the cigarette into British society. This was important on a number of levels.

Firstly, as a smaller, more discreet way of consuming tobacco, the cigarette was more attractive to women than pipes or cigars. It was milder and easier to inhale, less messy to deal with and the smell was less offensive. However, the cigarettes which affluent women smokers of the 1890s consumed were Turkish or Egyptian cigarettes, more expensive and of better quality than the cheap mass-produced brands which were to transform the social meaning of smoking more generally. It was the advent of the machine-made cigarettes, and the mass produced brands which followed, which was to prove most important in increasing tobacco consumption and facilitating the social and spatial expansion of the habit more generally. This changed the social meaning of smoking in a manner which paved the way for women to smoke in larger numbers, and with less censure, in the 20th century.

The advent of the cigarette

Hand-made cigarettes had long been popular in Spain and the Mediterranean countries since the introduction of tobacco to Western Europe and their use had spread through countries like Turkey and Russia via trade routes. The cigarette was first introduced to Britain following the Crimean war, 1854 – 6, when British soldiers mixed with French and Turkish soldiers.[148] As cigarettes initially had to be imported, they were expensive and as such smoking them remained very much a minority habit. Their quality was often inferior to that of cigars and other forms of tobacco.[149] Like the cigar, the cigarette was initially treated with suspicion because of its foreign origins and its use suffered from the same associations with dandyism. Moreover, it was regarded as effeminate, as a result of the diminutive 'ette' on the end and its small size. It seems somewhat contradictory therefore that women smoking cigarettes were seen to be usurping male privilege. An 1892 cartoon in *The Smoker* makes this point.

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[148] J. E. Brooks 'Introduction' p. 170.

[149] An 1878 advert by J. Grunnebaum Cigarette Manufacturer and Cigar Merchant est. 25 years "begs to inform Cigarette Smokers that, in consequence of the enormously increased demand for Tobacco made up in this form, and the comparatively inferior articles now before the public, he has been induced, through the solicitation of many important customers, to devote his special attention to the production of the finest cigarettes, and he offers his registered brands with full confidence that his

It is both a satire on the increasing number of women smoking behind closed doors and a comment on the effeminate nature of the cigarette. A picture of a man entering a room to find a female friend smoking is accompanied by the following text:

> HARRY: (horrified at seeing Kate puffing at a cigarette) Mercy! Do you smoke, Kate?
> KATE: Well, not because I enjoy it, Harry. I want to fill the room with smoke so that should a burglar break in, he'll think there's a man in the house.
> HARRY: (smiling) My dear girl, you are only wasting your time. A men *never* smokes cigarettes, at least no MAN that a burglar need be afraid of. [150]

There is record of 'little paper cigars' being smoked by immigrants in London, a group who tended to incite xenophobic feeling at the best of times, and, as Altrick has pointed out, smoking cigarettes served to symbolise evil and villainy among characters in English fiction of the time.[151] Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the labour force making cigarettes was predominantly foreign.[152] Cigarette use seems therefore to have been associated with elite groups at the top of society, wayward women, immigrants and those at the bottom of the social scale, by-passing the mass of the respectable middle class. When Wills decided to buy the US patented Bonsack machine in 1883 to mass produce cigarettes, they did so more out of curiosity, than a belief that the product would attract mass sales.[153] In this case, curiosity did not kill the cat, but quite the opposite. By the end of the Second World War, cigarettes not only took the largest section of the tobacco market, but the size of that market was increasing correspondingly.

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endeavours will be appreciated both in regard to quality and price." *The Gaiety Programme* 16 March 1878.
[150] *The Smoker* Vol. 1 No 14 (1892) p. 213.
[151] Altrick *The Presence of the Present.* p. 269.
[152] Parliamentary Papers 1903 Cmd. 1742 *Royal Commission on Alien Immigration: Minutes of Evidence* vol. III p. 792 – 3.
[153] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. & H.O. Wills and the development of the U.K. tobacco industry 1786 – 1965* (London: Methuen & Co, 1973) p. 155.

This success was largely due to the salience of the cigarette in an increasingly industrial and urban age and to changes in business and corporate development more generally. As J.E. Brookes noted in 1937,

> the extraordinary rise in popularity of the cigarette in the later decades of the XIXth century was more than just a manifestation of a change in taste. The cigarette was something of a symbol of a new age wherein the culminating industrial revolution merged with advancing mechanical civilisation. Smokers responded to the vigorous tempo of the period and called for tobacco in a compact form which would provide immediate effects. The pipe represented a leisurely smoke and required a certain amount of paraphernalia; snuff (with its essential accoutrements) demanded the deliberateness of an aristocratic age; the cigar which had come to be popularly regarded as luxury, was not to be hastily consumed. Only the cigarette provided the need for a transient, pleasurable nervine in an age of great activity and among people who had grown impatient with the past.[154]

Moreover, the cigarette was less pungent smelling than the cigar, thus 'likely to disarm the prejudices of members of the Anti-Tobacco Society, and all lady objectors, to the habit of smoking' and, as it gained in popularity and more cigarettes were made in Britain, it was cheaper than the cigar.[155] This latter fact became indisputable with Wills' acquisition of the Bonsack machine. This could produce cigarettes at the rate of 300 a minute, a fact which increased the output of the tobacco industry, lowered the price and led to a new mass-produced form of tobacco consumption, a fact acknowledged in the *Tobacco Trade Review* in 1895.[156] Cheap branded cigarettes, such as 'Wild Woodbine' and 'Cinderella' made regular smoking both affordable and convenient to far larger sections of society. Moreover, the use of Virginian 'Bright leaf' tobacco, which was mild, easier to smoke and could be inhaled, meant not only

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[154] Brooks 'Introduction' p. 173.
[155] Anon. *Tobacco Whiffs for the Smoking Carriage* (1874) Chapter IV The cigarette.
[156] M.R. Burns 'Economies of Scale in Tobacco Manufacture 1897 – 1910' *Journal of Economic History* 43 (1983) pp. 461 – 474; The fact that the Chancellor reduced the duty on tobacco in 1887 meant that prices could be further reduced and at this point, five cigarettes could be bought for one penny. M. Corina *Trust in Tobacco: The Anglo-American Struggle for Power* (London: Michael Joseph 1975); *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 August 1985 p. 274.

that a greater quantity of cigarettes could be consumed, but that nicotine entered the body more quickly, and the way it did so was more likely to lead to addiction.[157] The result was that in the 1890s and early 1900s, as other firms followed suit and invested in cigarette machines, cigarettes took an increasing share of the tobacco market.[158]

This growth did not go uncontested, both by the tobacco industry and by tobacco's moral and medical critics. Mass-produced cigarettes were seen as a threat to the livelihood of independent retail tobacconists. Cigarettes not only had low profit margins but could be sold on premises which did not rely solely on the sale of tobacco for their income. They could then be discounted further, a concern which exercised tobacconists for a good many decades. Moreover, such premises were often not covered by licensing laws which stipulated that tobacconists close at 8pm and could therefore trade for longer. This and the introduction of vending machines for the sale of cigarettes were further threats.[159] Mass-produced cigarettes were also seen to threaten the livelihood of the girls and young women who had previously made cigarettes by hand.[160] Such criticisms were not solely provoked by altruism; concern over starving women and children was merely a displacement of larger concerns about the effect of mass produced cigarettes on the position of the independent retail

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[157] In the early nineteenth century tobacco was cured over large open fires, which required 24 hour supervision and were extremely dangerous. These were increasingly replaced by enclosed brick flues which were not only easier to control, but produced a more intense heat. This made little or no difference to the heavy, dark tobacco which was produced for pipe smoking or tobacco chewing. However, in North Carolina, where the tobacco was lighter in both weight and colour, it did make a difference. When charcoal was introduced as the fuel for flue-curing in North Carolina in 1834, the result was mild, golden coloured tobacco. The distinguishing factor was that the smoke was easy to swallow, thus encouraging smokers to inhale. R. Kluger *Ashes to Ashes: America's hundred year cigarette war, the Public Health and the unabashed triumph of Philip Morris* (New York: Vintage Books) p. 7 – 8: H. Ashton and R. Stepney *Smoking: Psychology and Pharmacology* (London: Tavistock, 1982) p. 30.

[158] Wills ensured that they led the market for much of this period by securing the rights not only to the Bonsack, but to the Bohl, another machine which could produce cigarettes at an equal rate. This machine was not for their own use, but they wanted to stop a rival gaining access to the technology. Player's spent much of the 1890s experimenting with various other machines, such as the Elliot and the Baron machine, while Lambert and Butler and W & F Faulkner settled for the American Luddington, which had a slower output rate. Player's DD PL 5/9/1-12.

[159] The *Tobacco Trade Review* carries articles on this from the 1890s through until at least the Second World War. A volume of press cuttings in the Player's archive also deals with this issue esp.: *Daily Express* 24 October 1902 p. 25, *Morning Advertiser* 1 January, 1903. A detailed analysis of the impact of the cigarette on tobacco retail trade can be found in M. Hilton *Constructing Tobacco: Perspectives on Consumer Culture in Britain 1850 – 1950* (PhD thesis, Lancaster University 1996); B.W.E. Alford *W.D. & H.O. Wills*.

[160] Paper given by Albert Smith at the Liverpool, Birkenhead and District Tobacconists Association, 7 December 1894, printed in *The Tobacco Trade Review* January 1st 1895 p. 3 – 4. Smith referred to the 'public thoughtlessness by their craving for the cheap article', which would lead to girls and young women being deprived of perhaps the only method of earning their livelihood.

tobacconist. For the public, however, it meant cheap cigarettes and a proliferation of brands available at a variety of outlets. As a result, the sale of tobacco, in the form of cigarettes, became increasingly visible outside the confines of the tobacconists shop.

This trend was accelerated by what became known as 'The Great Tobacco War'. Until 1901, the influence of developments in the United States in tobacco curing and technology had been beneficial to the growth of the cigarette market in Britain. In 1901, that influence became a threat. In October of that year the American tobacco entrepreneur, Buck Duke, decided to purchase the British tobacco firm, Ogdens, and launch a hostile bid to take over the British tobacco industry. The course and implications of this battle have been amply documented by a number of authors and it is not worth re-iterating the details here.[161] What is important is that thirteen British companies responded by forming Imperial Tobacco Ltd at the end of 1901 and offered a bonus to every shop that agreed not to stock American brands. As both retailers and consumers were enticed with incentive and counter incentive, cigarette prices fell across the board.[162] Cigarette cards and coupons were added as inducements to people to buy.[163] There was widespread newspaper coverage of the conflict and its implications for the British tobacco industry, thus ensuring the subject was in the public eye.[164] The price war lasted until September 1902, when the American Tobacco Company and Imperial Tobacco agreed to market only in their own countries and to unite (in the form of British American Tobacco) to sell both groups' brands in the rest of the world.[165] The general opinion of the newspapers of the time was that the merger would mean less value for the consumer, a view which was summed up in *The Sun*.

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[161] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. & H.O. Wills* pp. 247 – 277; H Cox *The Global Cigarette: Origins and Evolution of British American Tobacco 1880 – 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000) pp. 68 – 71; R. Kluger *Ashes to Ashes* pp. 41 – 43. The Player's Archive also holds a number of papers relating to the issue. Player's DD PL 1/2/1 – 39.

[162] Player's DD PL 7/19 vol. 1 contains press cuttings from newspapers about 'The Great Tobacco War'.

[163] Richard Kluger *Ashes to Ashes* p. 42.

[164] Player's DD PL 7/19/1 is a volume of press cuttings from the period.

[165] Player's DD PL 1/2/1 – 39: Papers relating to the amalgamation of John Player and Sons with WD and HO Wills Ltd, Lambert and Butler Ltd, Edwards Ringer and Bigg Ltd, Hignett Brothers and Co Ltd, Hignett's Tobacco Co ltd, William Clarke and Son Ltd, Richmond cavendish Co Ltd, Stephen Mitchell and Son, D & J McDonald, F & J Smith, Adkin and Sons and Franklin Davey & Co to form the Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd.

> We perceive visions of our best loved four penny merging into more money or worse value.[166]

However, the trend towards more widespread use of cheap cigarettes was not one which would easily be reversed, even with the development of the combine. Tobacco retailers saw the combine itself as an additional threat, firstly as it was opening shops under its own protection and secondly because it was supplying cigarettes to shops which were not principally tobacconists. In other words the whole way in which tobacco had previously been bought and sold was under threat. This was part of a larger change in retailing patterns in the late 19th and early 20th century which, as Matthew Hilton has demonstrated, saw a transition from the independent retail of individually blended pipe tobacco and imported cigars to the wholesale of branded cigarettes. He argued that this transition was indicative of 'the general movement from a society based around individualism and independence in notions of business, the market and the self, to one that was increasingly eclipsed by a mass commercial environment'[167].

In addition, advertising created images of smokers and smoking which entered the semiotic consciousness of late Victorian England and did much to counter the arguments against smoking on the grounds of health and physical degradation. Here again, the impact of the American foray into the British tobacco market was evident in the change from simple black and white text to suggestive images.[168] The 'Great Tobacco War' had thus brought about a rationalisation of the British tobacco industry and a change to more aggressive methods of selling cigarettes. The result was an acceleration in the already increasing number of cigarettes being smoked. Moreover, contemporary literature, the trade and mainstream press, and consumption figures attest to the fact that smoking as a habit became increasingly visible in public places and in contemporary discourse.[169]

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[166] *The Sun*, 29 September 1902.
[167] Matthew Hilton *Constructing Tobacco* p. 333.
[168] Alford *WD and HO Wills* pp. 309 – 311, R. Kluger *Ashes to Ashes* p. 42, Hilton *Constructing Tobacco* p. 112.
[169] See for example Apperson *The Social History of Smoking*: A.E. Hamilton *This Smoking World* (The Century Co. New York, London 1927) A. Charlton 'Galsworthy's images of smoking in the Fortsyte Chronicles' pp. 633 – 638. Charlton uses the work of Galsworthy and his contemporaries to look at changing smoking habits; various issues of the *Tobacco Trade Review*, *Tobacco Weekly Journal* and *Tobacco;* N.Wald *U.K. Smoking Statistics* p. 3.

The spread of smoking in social space

As smoking moved beyond the closed doors of the smoking rooms and clubs and began to encroach in public life, the social sanctions surrounding smoking in public places were increasingly contested. The spread of smoking in public life was evident as early as 1868 when the practice of smoking in railway carriages led to legislation compelling railway companies to provide segregated carriages for smokers and non-smokers.[170] This legislation continued the separation between smokers and non-smokers apparent in the private use of smoking rooms and clubs. The provision of separate smoking rooms in new libraries similarly attests to the spread of smoking in public life,[171] and again indicates a tension between the need to accommodate smokers and awareness of the discomfort their behaviour may cause others. Smoking in railway carriages appeared to be a particular source of conflict. As one objector noted, smoke could be a source of irritation to non-smokers, particularly women.

> To the large majority of women, and a great many men, smoke is a great annoyance, for the smoker cannot keep it to himself. He poisons our streets, he pollutes our public gardens... he particularly affects railway carriages intended for others, importing so rank an odour that we open the windows even in a snowstorm.[172]

Another writer, also objecting to the presence of smoking in railway cars, saw the smoke as something physically polluting his own body, not only the space around him.

> Smokers monopolise far more than their share of our railway accommodation... What is worse, he often ignores carriages provided for his accommodation and looks aggrieved if, asking whether you object to smoking, you answer – however mildly – that you do. Tobacco is a powerful drug administered through the respiratory organs and... the smoker administers his drug to all around him

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[170] Public Acts 31&32 Vict, ch. 119 para 20.
[171] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 November 1895 p. 404.
[172] Arnold *A Woman on Tobacco* p. 10.

> whether they wish it or not... Neither opium or intoxicating drink produces such insensibility... the opium eater does not compel you to eat opium with him; the drunkard does not compel you to drink. The smoker compels you to smoke, to breathe the smoke he has just discharged from his own mouth.[173]

In 1895, the English Anti-Tobacco Society called for regulatory intervention to suppress smoking in the streets and other public places under the provisions of the Health Act, arguing that the practice was a public nuisance.[174] They did not get their wish. What happened rather was a negotiation of boundaries to accommodate the increasing prevalence of smoking among men. While social sanctions continued to exert some pressure on where it was or was not acceptable to smoke,[175] the trend seemed to be towards a greater prevalence of smoking in most public places.[176] Consequently, smoking in front of women became more acceptable. An 1888 article advised young men against it.

> A man should be careful – more careful than young men are too often – not to smoke before Ladies, unless by their express permission; not to take the scent of stale tobacco into their society; or in any other way to make his enjoyment of a pipe an offence to women.[177]

However, the note that young men often did not observe such etiquette indicates the practice of smoking in front of women, while a commentator in 1907 similarly implied that the habit was becoming more widespread, and also more acceptable.

> To smoke in Hyde Park, even up to comparatively recent years, was looked upon as absolutely unpardonable, while smoking anywhere with a lady would have been classed as an almost disgraceful social crime.[178]

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[173] Carpenter *A Lecture on Tobacco* p. 20.
[174] Monthly letter of the English Anti-Tobacco Society (Manchester, October 1895).
[175] Smoking in church continued to be proscribed, for example, the Tobacco Trade Review reports on a case of a labourer being fined for smoking in church. *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 February 1896 p. 38.
[176] Apperson *The Social History of Tobacco* Chapter One.
[177] 'Shall We Smoke' *The Young Man: a monthly journal and review* vol. II no 19 (1888) p. 76.
[178] Quoted in Apperson *The Social History of Smoking* p. 200.

By 1914, Apperson, writing about the social history of tobacco was able to say,

> nothing is more marked in the change in the social attitude towards tobacco than the revolution which has taken place in woman's view of smoking...Women do not nowadays shun the smell of smoke as they did in early Victorian days, as if it were the most dreadful of odours. They are tolerant of smoking in public places, in restaurants – in fact wherever men and women congregate – to a degree that would have horrified extremely their mothers and grandmothers. It is only within the last few years that visits to music halls and theatres of varieties have been socially possible to ladies. Men go largely because they can smoke through the performance; women go largely because they have ceased to consider tobacco-smoke as a thing to be rigidly avoided, and therefore have no hesitation in accompanying their menfolk.[179]

Although smoking had moved out of the smoking clubs and smoking rooms into shared space, it remained a fundamentally male habit. The imagery surrounding tobacco was masculine and anti-tobacco literature assumed that the smoker would be male. Military, particularly naval, imagery was especially popular. The Player's sailor was perhaps the most enduring image (Illus. 4), but battleships, naval heroes and ordinary sailors all featured regularly on trade cards and advertising for both pipe tobacco and cigarettes.[180] Another advert showing a young boy dressed up in a bowler hat, long coat and pipe with the caption 'Now I'm Grandfather' fitted the child into an existing cultural tradition and prefigured the notion that starting to smoke was a rite of passage into adulthood (Illus. 5).[181] Cigar boxes were decorated with pictures of exotic, well-endowed young women (Illus. 6),[182] while cigarette cards often featured photographs or lithographs of a similar, if somewhat more revealing, nature.[183] This

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[179] Apperson *The Social History of Smoking* p. 201.
[180] *Tobacco Papers*, Box 2, JJC; also Player's DD PL 6/21/2, 6/21/3.
[181] Advert for *Player's Navy Cut*, JJC, *Tobacco Papers*, Box 2.
[182] JJC, *Tobacco Papers*, Box 2.
[183] JJC, *Tobacco* Box 1.

Illus. 4 (above) The Player's sailor, an instantly recognisable symbol for smokers of all generations. Undated.
Nottingham County Council: Community Services: Nottingham City Archives DD PL 7/2/1 page 40.
Reproduced with kind permission of The Imperial Tobacco Company.

Illus. 5 (right) 'Now I'm Grandfather'. Turn of the century advertisement.
John Johnson Collection, *Tobacco* Box 2.

Illus. 6

One of a collection of cigar box labels. Undated.
John Johnson Collection, *Tobacco Papers*, Box 2.

was all aimed at a growing male market, and as Matthew Hilton has pointed out, one which was becoming more uniform in nature.[184]

However, what is also apparent is that there was a discreet market which existed for female smokers, despite the social strictures surrounding the habit. An article in *Cope's Tobacco Plant* in 1870 noted that 'The Ladies have not only begun to tolerate tobacco but in a small degree they patronise it' and another noted that 'Ladies cigarettes are slender and nicely made'.[185] A turn of the century advertising pamphlet for Martin Bros., a London tobacco manufacturer, quoted the Ladies Society paper as saying 'It is now fashionable for Ladies to smoke dainty little cigarettes and why not?'. The back of the pamphlet had an order form for Ladies Cigarettes which were 'dainty and nicely boxed in 100s. They are very mild and made with pure tobacco'.[186] S. Polak, another London tobacconist advertised White Rose, cigarettes 'of a mild quality specially manufactured for the Ladies'.[187] Other makers similarly targeted the female market with small scented cigarettes with names such as Young Ladies, Miranda's Dream, Pour le Dame and Two Roses. The cigarettes women were expected to toy with reflected the essential characteristics of femininity – they were discreet and inoffensive – as were their advertisements.

In trying to sell mass-produced brands, the approach to women played on a sub-text of appropriate behaviour. A 1900 advert for Ogdens showed a woman and a man behind a large umbrella (Illus. 7). The strapline read '"Give me a little puff – are they Ogden's?" – "RATHER!!"'. It was still not acceptable for women to be seen smoking in public, but the advert suggested, this did not mean they should not enjoy a quick puff of a man's cigarette. By trying to extend the cigarette market to women, the tobacco industry worked within the bounds of conventional female behaviour. For as long as smoking remained a risqué behaviour for women, it was the female smokers, rather than the manufacturers of cigarettes, who risked their reputation.

By the 1900s the habit had established a foothold among the male population and it was increasingly accepted that smoking in moderation was relatively harmless to

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[184] Matthew Hilton *Constructing Tobacco,* p. 60 – 67.
[185] *Cope's Tobacco Plant* May 1870 p. 15, March 1872 p. 289.
[186] JJC, *Tobacco* Box 1.

Illus. 7

Advert for Ogden's cigarettes, 24 October 1900.
John Johnson Collection, *Tobacco*, Box 2.

one's moral and physical well-being. In keeping with the laissez faire ethos of Victorian society, it was assumed that, for men, the decision whether, where and how much to smoke was a matter of individual choice, rather than something which could be prescribed or legislated.[188] As *The Lancet* observed in 1886 'the Use of Tobacco, as distinguished from its abuse, ought to be a matter of intelligent observation and experience'.[189] As has already been shown, this did not extend to women, whose smoking was seen to have wider social implications. In addition, smoking was also positioned outwith the realm of individual choice for children and young people.

The gendered nature of juvenile smoking

Concerns about juvenile smoking and material produced against it reflected the gendered nature of smoking in society more generally – it was seen to be a male problem and the focus was on boys. This also reflected the social circumstances boys found themselves in and their expectations of adulthood. Boys often had income from jobs and time free from household duties in a way which girls did not; smoking was also a way in which they could symbolise maturity. The cigarette was perceived as the particular problem at the end of the 19th century.

Juvenile smoking was not a new problem at the end of the 19th century. Since its inception in 1853, the Anti-Tobacco Society had railed against the 'rows of whiskerless, sallow, sulky boys, sucking at clay pipes' and had called calls for its legislative prohibition as early as 1856.[190] Juvenile smoking was similarly condemned in clerical tracts.[191] However, the introduction of penny cigarettes and the increased prevalence of smoking among men of all classes by the end of the 19th century had its corollary in the increase in smoking among juvenile boys, and this phenomenon attracted increasing comment in the trade journals and contemporary

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[187] JJC, *Tobacco* Box 2.
[188] R. E. Goodin *No Smoking: the ethical issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) p. 3.
[189] 'Smoking Tobacco' *The Lancet* June 19th 1886 p. 1177.
[190] T. Reynolds *Juvenile Street Smoking: reasons for seeking its legislative prohibition in a letter to the Lord Bishop of Manchester* (London: Houlston and Stoneman 1856).
[191] J.Q. A. Henry (Rev) *The Deadly Cigarette or the perils of juvenile smoking* (London: Richard James 1907) p. 169 – 171.

literature.[192] The trade seemed primarily concerned with the fact that boys invariably bought penny packets which had low profit margins and the 'Great Tobacco War' of 1901/2 merely served to accelerate that trend. As one journalist noted at the end of the dispute,

> presumably the abandonment of the American firms *ad captandum* methods will tend to make cheap cigarettes not quite so cheap as they have been, but it is to be feared that our British youth will still be able to ruin his wretched little constitution and make a nuisance of himself without any great pecuniary outlay.[193]

Juvenile smoking was primarily seen as an urban working class problem, as boys in employment and still living at home had a certain amount of disposable income, enough at least for penny packets of cigarettes, while the prevailing street culture encouraged visible shows of masculinity and independence.[194] As Paterson wrote in 1911, much of this display was aimed at showing that the boy had passed out of parental authority and was financially able to do as he pleased.

> The choice of work once made... the boy soon falls into the routine of work and his first fortnight ages rapidly. Hitherto the smoking of cigarettes was a furtive prank, only delightful because forbidden; now it becomes a public exhibition, denoting manhood, independence and wealth.[195]

This step into what Paul Thompson has termed 'economic adulthood' was much more than a financial one.[196] Having an independent income certainly allowed the teenager or young adult the freedom to choose what he or she wore, where he or she went, who he or she spent time with, whether he or she smoked or drank: in other words, their whole lifestyle became a matter of individual choice provided he or she

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[192] M. Hilton '"Tabs", "Fags" and the "Boy Labour Problem" in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain' *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1995) p. 588; E.J.Urwick *Studies of Boy Life in our Cities* (New York: Gardland 1980) p. 98.
[193] *St. James Gazette* 29 Sept 1902 DD PL 7/19/1.
[194] Hilton "Tabs", "Fags" and the "Boy Labour Problem" p. 587 – 607.
[195] A. Paterson 'Across the Bridges' (London 1911) p. 125 quoted by M. Hilton "Tabs", "Fags" and the "Boy Labour Problem" p. 593.

could pay for it. But it was also a symbolic step. 'Economic adulthood', as opposed to physical or sexual maturity, facilitated the move beyond the sphere of parental and familial influence to allow a certain amount of self determination for the teenager or young adult. Even if the individual still lived at home, as was likely among working class boys at the time, the fact that they were now not wholly dependent on parental support economically brought about a change in relations, which either resulted in conflict or a consensus to be negotiated to allow the young person to develop his or her own adult identity. From the start, the cheapness of mass produced cigarettes, the fact that they were easier to smoke than a pipe or cigar, and the visibility with which they could be consumed meant that they became symbolic of this step into adulthood, an association which held throughout the period and shall be discussed in more detail later.

At the turn of the century, the desire to seem grown up, curiosity about smoking and the lack of amusement in urban slums were all contributing factors to the increase in juvenile smoking. There was no law prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to juveniles and oral history evidence points to the availability of single cigarettes from shops, if the child could not afford a packet and to the practice of splitting packets between children.[197] Cigarette cards were an added incentive. Initially introduced as backing for soft cigarette packets in America, they soon gained currency as collectors items and encouraged brand loyalty.[198] Cards could be collected and swapped to complete sets and provided an added source of amusement for young boys.[199]

Anti-smoking literature of the time focusing on juvenile smoking also saw it as a specifically male problem. The problems of juvenile smoking had been highlighted in some of the earlier anti-smoking literature, but what was different about turn of the century material was its quantity. This can be attributed to the increasing number of boys smoking cigarettes, which were perceived to be particularly harmful, and to wider concerns about physical deterioration among British youth, British male youth

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[196] P. Thompson 'The War with Adults' *Oral History* 3:2 (1975) p. 34.
[197] *ERA Preston*, Mr F1P (born 1906) p. 108; Mr G1P (born 1903) p. 56; *ERA Barrow and Lancaster* Mrs M6B (born 1896, interviewed in 1972) p. 64.
[198] I.O. Evans *Cigarette cards and how to collect them* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd 1937) p. 15, p.20.
[199] R. Roberts *The Classic Slum* (Manchester 1971) p. 134 quoted by Hilton "Tabs", "Fags" and the "Boy Labour Problem" p. 591; *ERA Preston*, Mr B1B (born 1897, interviewed 1972) p. 22.

in particular.[200] Again, a number of parallels can be drawn with the anti-cigarette movement in the United States, although the impetus for the movement was arguably different.[201] Much of the literature is not against smoking *per se*, but the adoption of the habit by those under 21. Apart from the fact that those older were believed to be able to make up their own minds, it was thought that tobacco did more harm to young people and that by the time these boys reached adulthood, the habit would have taken hold. As one of the King's physicians Sir W.H. Broadbent argued,

> it is in boyhood that tobacco does most injury, impairing digestion at a time when this function is most important, weakening the heart and vessels, and lowering the tone and energy of the nervous system. It is in early youth, also, that the practice of smoking is likely to acquire a tyrannical dominance.

However, concern about health was not the only impetus behind the movement against juvenile smoking. As Broadbent's next sentence indicates, it had a strong moral agenda.

> Worse, almost than the injury to health is the giving way to the habits of self-indulgence, which sap the foundations of character and are fatal to efficiency. Drinking, too, is often a corollary to smoking, and the constitution is thus brought under another deadly influence. It is now becoming generally admitted that it is not enough to improve the conditions of life of the working classes, and of the poor.. (but) it is even more important to raise the level of character, and to render the individual and family capable of appreciating and taking advantage of elevating influences.[202]

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[200] H. Jones *Health and Society in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Longman, 1994) pp. 21 – 23.
[201] Apart from the obvious fact that the background and context of the situation in both countries was different, the British were concerned about the health of their youth in the face of defeat, as they contemplated the possible decline of their empire and position in the world. The Americans, as a young country, saw the problem in terms of their youth being fit enough for the potential growth of the country. This was underscored by concern about increasing immigration and religious diversification.
[202] T. Bowick *Whiffs for our boys* (London: The Hygienic League and The Union for the Suppression of Cigarette Smoking by Juveniles, 1905) Foreword by Sir W.H. Broadbent, Physician in Ordinary to the King.

The idea that smoking was the corollary of drinking was not new; indeed, as has already been shown, it was prevalent in earlier anti-smoking material. It was also common in American anti-cigarette material of the time, and, as has already been suggested with earlier anti-tobacco material, it is not unlikely that there was some crossover between movements.[203] The British anti-cigarette movement never reached the same extremes in Britain as it did in the States, but many of the ideas underpinning it were the same. Born of the Protestant traditions of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and nurtured by Lucy Page Gaston (1860 - 1924) from 1899, the Chicago-based Anti-Cigarette League was the largest of a number of American groups campaigning against juvenile smoking on moral, financial and medical grounds.[204] The fight against tobacco and alcohol was a way in which women could form a presence in the public sphere within the confines of conventional femininity. In this sense, it was the fight against cigarettes, rather than their consumption, which was the emancipatory tool.

The Protestant origins of the WCTU and the Anti-Cigarette League were evident in the religious rhetoric which permeated their arguments. Tobacco was not only a scourge on the God-given body and soul, but was a misappropriation of land, capital and labour and as such an affront to God's munificence.[205] Cigarettes were particularly harmful, not only because the smoke was inhaled but because it was claimed that the tobacco was adulterated or impregnated with opium. The slippery road to alcoholism and narcotic abuse, indolence, moral weakness and crime

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[203] Such an argument would be based on the fact that Lucy Page Gaston's brother lived for a number of years in Britain during which time he was a prominent member of British society, founding the International Prohibition Federation in 1909 and working for the War Office throughout the First World War and eventually settled in England. He advised the Lords Select Committee on Juvenile smoking in 1907 and one would assume he was involved in the movement here. That is, however, an assumption and would require further research to substantiate. One of Gaston's contemporaries from Chicago worked and wrote extensively on reform matters in London from 1904 onwards and it is not unlikely that material went back and forth across the Atlantic. Certainly material published in Britain refers to American examples and gives quotes from US physicians and vice versa. The networks thus established and the people involved require further research.

[204] R. Bordin *Women and Temperance: the quest for power and liberty 1873 – 1900* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1981); R. Sobel *They Satisfy: the cigarette in American life* (Anchor Press, New York, 1978); E.A. King *The Cigarette and Youth* (Newport, Kentucky: The Central Anti-Cigarette League, 1896, fourth edition, 35th thousand).

[205] H. J. Curtis (Mrs) 'About tobacco: a few facts gleaned' in *Facts about Tobacco compiled by members of the WCTU of Vermont* (Wilmington, Vt Deerfield Valley Times print 1894) p. 13; A. A. Livermore *Anti Tobacco: the substance of an address before the Meadville Temperance Union January 29th 1882* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883) p. 24; F. Star (Prof.) *Tobacco Smoking for Boys* no. 228 of a series of pamphlets publ. by the National Temperance Society and Publication House, New York.

beckoned in the puff of a cigarette.[206] The financial implications of spending one's earnings on cigarettes were made clear through moral tales where individuals saved the money they would have spent on cigarettes for a house and future security.[207] Boys who smoked were portrayed as enslaved victims, a rhetoric which had it's direct antecedent in the rhetoric of the anti-slavery societies of the antebellum period. The notion of slavery also served to highlight the addictive properties of the drug.[208]

Although juvenile smoking had already been legislated against in 26 states by 1890, the legislation was rarely enforced.[209] Gaston was fanatical in her opposition to the cigarette, devoting her life to the expansion and enforcement of anti-cigarette legislation. She was particularly focused on under 21 boys, believing that they developed 'cigarette face' and were more likely to become criminals. She signed herself alternately 'Yours for the Boy', 'Yours to Win' and 'Yours for Victory' as she lobbied business men and legislators in her quest for support in the early 1900s.[210] The League magazine was called 'The Boy' and while girls were not expressly excluded it was thought that 'if boys are clean and high-minded, the girls are sure to be alright too'.[211] Her support came from businessmen, physicians and the clergy, and the cause was further endorsed by Henry Ford's *The Case against the Little White Slaver*, published in three volumes in 1914 and 1915.[212] Drawing on many of the medical and moral arguments deployed against the cigarette in other literature, Ford also argued that smokers are less efficient employees and that smoking will injure a boy's chances of getting a good job, as well as his health and morals.

In Britain, there had been calls for legislation against juvenile smoking as early as 1856,[213] but it was not until cigarette smoking took hold at the end of the century that these became any more than isolated voices. A good number of pamphlets were

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[206] H. Charles (Dr.) *Tobacco: a few facts on its physical, moral and financial aspects* (Indiana 1874).
[207] *The Story of a cigarette fiend* Lincoln Crusade Series of The Anti-Cigarette League of America No. 3 (1909) p.7, Arents Collection vol. IV. n. 3245.
[208] J. S. Rogers *An essay on tobacco comprising a brief history of that plant and its effects on the human constitution when employed as an article of luxury. Delivered as a lecture before the New York Anti- Tobacco Society* (New York, Howe and Bates 1836); A. A. Lawrence *Anti-tobacco* p. 24.
[209] Tate *Cigarette Wars* p. 30.
[210] Correspondence between Henry Churchill King and Lucy Page Gaston, Oberlin College Archives.
[211] Letter from Gaston to Henry Churchill King 19 January 1904 Papers of Henry Churchill King, Oberlin College Archives.
[212] H. Ford *The Case Against the Little White Slaver* (Detroit, 1914, 1915).

published on the issue, drawing on much of the same rhetoric as had been evident in earlier anti-smoking material, and on images from American literature on the subject. Many of the images of entrapment and bondage apparent in the American material were used, most particularly by The Reverend Henry Adams who had worked against juvenile cigarette smoking in Chicago at the time Gaston was leading her crusade (Illus. 8).[214] The added threat was that the physical harm would be done while the boy was still growing both physically and morally.

Concern about the effects of smoking among young boys allied with larger concerns about the health of the nation led to a number of committees and private bills in Parliament to investigate and legislate on the matter.[215] This was part of wider concern about physical degeneration and inefficiency in the wake of the recruitment crisis in the Boer War and the effects of industrialisation and its associated living conditions on the health of the future generations. A number of witnesses gave evidence to the 1904 Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration testifying to the deleterious effects of tobacco on the body and morals of young boys.[216] However, that the concern was more about the welfare of children as a whole than the effects of tobacco *per se* is indicated by the fact that juvenile smoking could only be legislated against as part of the wide-ranging Children's Act of 1908. Moreover, there was little or no reference to girls in the discussions of juvenile smoking – it was seen primarily as a problem affecting young, urban boys. When legislation was passed, it made provision for boys, not girls, to be searched for smoking materials.[217] A similar bias is evident in the material produced by the Anti-Cigarette League, formed in Britain in March 1901, with Lord Baden Powell later becoming its chairman.[218] On its advisory board was the young Winston Churchill MP and a number of doctors and clergy, reflecting both the medical and moral agenda

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[213] T. Reynolds *Smoke Not!* (London: Houlston and Stonemason 1857) p. 4 reprints a petition to parliament.

[214] J.Q.A. Henry (Rev) *The Deadly Cigarette or the perils of juvenile smoking* (London: Richard James 1907) Preface. The Reverend Henry was associated with the Christian Temperance Campaign in London.

[215] See for example *Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, Minutes of Evidence 1904* Parliamentary Papers XXXII Cmd. 2210.

[216] *Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* p. 83, p. 90, p. 98 – 99, p. 180, p. 217, p. 255 for examples.

TRAPPED!

Yes, this is a boy, not a rat or a rabbit ;
He is caught fast and sure in a trap called *habit*.
'Twas easy to enter, and pleasant, no doubt ;
Now he can't join the game—'tis too hard to get out.

Illus. 8

Illustration against juvenile smoking.

J.Q.A. Henry *The Deadly Cigarette or The Perils of Juvenile Smoking* (London: Richard James, 1907).

of the League. It's stated aim was 'to make the Government realise the evils of boys smoking and to take some steps to put temptation out of their way'.[219]

The male bias of the League was evident in the content of the magazine and in its changing title, which went from *The International Cigarette League Gazette* in 1905 to *The International Anti-Cigarette League Gazette and Boys' Outlook* in April 1907.[220] At the same time, it formed the Boys' League of Honour to encourage the growth of 'the right ideals of life and those habits which tend to the formation of a pure and noble character... courage, truth, self command, fairplay and chivalry.'[221] A month later, it became the *Boys' Outlook and International Anti-Cigarette League Gazette*, suggesting a widening perspective once a bill incorporating clauses on juvenile smoking became increasingly likely. The male bias seemed to stem from a failure to accept that girls could take up smoking in sufficient numbers to make their membership necessary. Despite acknowledging that smoking among girls was not unknown, the League specifically excluded them from joining.

Smoking Among Girls

There seems to be a growing use of the cigarette among women and even girls, and at least one of our branches has felt at liberty to enrol girl members. We do not wish to restrict the liberty of our branches in this matter, but we would remind them that the League is a *boys'* anti-smoking league and that we do not care for girls to join our membership. I hope that a *girls'* Anti-Cigarette league will never be required, but if it should, it should be started on independent lines.[222]

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[217] *Children Act 1908* Public General Acts 8 Edward 7 Ch. 76 Part III Juvenile Smoking pp. 471 – 472 para. 40.
[218] *The International Anti-Cigarette League Gazette* July 1905. On its advisory board was the young Winston Churchill MP and a number of doctors and clergy.
[219] *The International Anti-Cigarette League Gazette* July 1905 p. 1. The League aimed to 'develop the highest type of manhood, which is the Christian gentleman'. *The International Anti Cigarette League Gazette* no. 9 December 1905 p. 73.
[220] *The International Anti-Cigarette League Gazette and Boys Outlook* vol. III no. 25 April 1907.
[221] *The International Anti-Cigarette League Gazette and Boys Outlook* p. 73.
[222] *The Boys Outlook and International Anti-Cigarette league Gazette* Vol. III No. 28 July 1907.

In much of the other anti-smoking literature, juvenile smoking was synonymous with boys smoking, reflecting the masculine nature of the habit more generally. Such material did little to try to halt the spread of smoking among adult men; boys were asked to sign the pledge until age 21, when it was hoped that the temptation to smoke would have passed.[223] The increasing use of tobacco, especially in the form of cigarettes, suggest that such initiatives had limited, if any, success.[224] The focus on juvenile smoking can also be seen as tacit acceptance that, by the beginning of the 20th century, there was little that could be said or done to prevent the spread of the habit among grown men. As a result, the passing of the Children's Act effectively silenced the anti-smoking smoking movement, as there was by this point acceptance, or tolerance at least, of the presence of adult, male smokers in shared space. This acceptance was accentuated by the experience of the First World War.

The meaning of smoking in the First World War

The First World War was pivotal in the expansion of cigarette smoking, not only in entrenching cigarette smoking among troops, but also because it contributed to the increasing acceptance of cigarette smoking in society as a whole, in civilian life as well as at the front. For soldiers, the cigarette came to be regarded not as a luxury, an indulgence or a leisure item, but as a necessity of survival. At the beginning of 1915, the *Tobacco Trade Review* carried an editorial noting that the cigarette trade had doubled through export to the front, owing to the popularity of the cigarette among soldiers. The reasons for this were simple: 'it requires no pipe; there is nothing to lose except the matches'.[225] The matches, however, posed an unforeseen safety hazard, prompting the Postmaster General to issue strict instructions as to their posting and packaging after a spate of fires.[226] The popularity of cigarettes at the front, recognised in the press and in campaigns to collect cigarettes and tobacco to send to troops, had the effect of increasing the visibility of cigarettes back home and enhancing their reputation as a solace and a comfort in times of stress.[227] Letters in the *British*

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[223] H. Reid *A Question of Manliness: a chat with the boys on smoking* (International Anti-Cigarette League Leaflet no. 4 (1906).
[224] N.J. Wald et al. *UK Smoking Statistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 12-13.
[225] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 January 1915 p. 7, 1 February 1915 p. 4.
[226] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 January 1915 p. 10.
[227] *The Times* 15 October 1914 p.9,29 October 1914 p. 3, 21 November 1914 p. 5, 21 December 1914 p.10; *Tobacco Trade Review*1 May 1915 p. 150.

American Tobacco Bulletin, a weekly bulletin started by BAT in April 1915 in order to keep those on service and those back home in touch with each other, confirms the appreciation felt by the soldiers for tobacco sent to them.[228] The *Bulletin* is a bizarre juxtaposition of letters and news from the front and civilian minutia such as lists of births, marriages and deaths and company social occasions. One soldier, after recounting his quite horrific experiences as a scout in a fairly understated manner, signs off 'Now for some grub and Castles galore!'.[229] For the troops smoking became both an escape from the reality of war, and a way of establishing a rapport with fellow troops.[230] The packets and tins which cigarettes and tobacco came in also had a role to play - the backs of cigarette packets were used to hold tattered and torn one franc notes together[231] and Player's received a number of letters from soldiers claiming to owe their lives to cigarette and tobacco tins which had stopped shrapnel bullets from going any further.[232]

For those back home, collecting cigarettes was an active way of supporting the war effort and in some cases, it also provided a diversion from everyday life. In December 1914, people in Glasgow held a 'Tobacco Day', collecting money to buy tobacco to send to troops. They collected over £1700 and 'liberal' donations of cigarettes and tobacco. The day was rounded off with a fancy dress procession by torchlight.[233] The desire to send tobacco to loved ones overseas also had the side-effect of bringing women into tobacconists in increasing numbers. As a correspondent noted in the *Tobacco Trade Review* in September 1915,

> under normal conditions the presence of ladies has long been a feature of the majority of Glasgow tobacco shops – behind the counter. The war has had the effect, however, of bringing many of the same sex into the customers' part of the establishment. The reason of course is the large extent to which cigarettes are bought – not by the smokers

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[228] *British American Tobacco Bulletin* 24 April 1915 No. 2 p. 2; 8 May 1915 No. 4 p. 2; 4 September 1915 vol. 21 p. 11. The Bulletin continued until 1920, when it changed focus and became an in-house magazine.
[229] Letter from Private A. Jay, *BAT Bulletin* 1 May 1915 No. 3 p. 1.
[230] For example, letter from Air Mechanic F.N. Stewart *BAT Bulletin* 4 September 1915 vol. 21 p. 11; Private Foden to Mr Rowlands *BAT Bulletin* 8 May 1915 No. 4 p. 3.
[231] *Player's* DD PL 6/18/7 – 18.
[232] Correspondence, DD PL 6/18/2, see also DD PL 6/18/1.
[233] *The Herald* 14 December 1914 p. 9, 15 December 1914 p. 9.

themselves when they are serving in His Majesty's Forces – but by relatives and friends. And the women folks whatever their personal feelings with regard to tobacco itself, are only too glad to purchase comfort for those who know what relief the weed brings. And so elderly ladies and little girls study a shop window which has never interested them before and enter also.[234]

A Leeds correspondent similarly noted that,

> for the most part the wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts buy lavishly of cigarettes and tobacco to send either to the front or the training camp.[235]

The implication of such comments is that although women were buying the cigarettes, they were for male consumption. Smoking was still seen as a male habit. Indeed, the Leeds correspondent went on to say that charitable organisations also 'see that our lads in either service do not go short of the chief of male creature comforts'.[236] Through its association with the soldier, the association of smoking with masculinity increased, but the fact that women collected for or subscribed to cigarette funds or else sent cigarettes themselves is testimony to women's increasing involvement with cigarette consumption, albeit by proxy.[237]

It was not only the soldiers' interests which were being served by the increase in tobacco consumption. In 1916, the government took on the task of supplying duty free tobaccos and cigarettes directly to the forces as part of a wider overhaul of its system for contracting war supplies.[238] In doing so, it acknowledged that smoking was a necessity of wartime life. This also strengthened the position of both the ITCo. and the cigarette when Wills became the major supplier to the War Office in 1916.[239] That position was further consolidated when Imperial successfully dissuaded the government from rationing tobacco to economise on shipping tonnage. At Imperial's

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[234] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 September 1915 p. 307.
[235] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 September 1915 p. 308.
[236] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 September 1915 p. 308.
[237] *British American Tobacco Bulletin* 21 August 1915 vol. 19 p. 16.
[238] B.W.E Alford *W.D. & H.O. Wills* p. 321.

annual meeting, Mr G. Wills argued that doing so would be detrimental to morale and a false economy as smokers would eat more.

> If the average smoker went short probably his temper and nerves would suffer and that was a matter they could not regard lightly in these days when most men were working at high tension... Moreover, if they took away some or all of a man's weekly tobacco, he would add at least as many ounces to his consumption of food, a great part of which came from overseas... No-one who considered the question dispassionately could fail to come to the conclusion that it would be a dangerous and, in the end, a most unreal form of economy.[240]

Tobacco was thus positioned not only as a necessity to the troops, but also to civilians. Despite the shortages of leaf, tobacco was not officially rationed, a decision which did not go uncontested in Parliament. In a vote on shipping space in 1918, one MP questioned why tobacco was being allocated space over and above food,[241] and in his financial statement of that year, Bonar Law also expressed concern over the question of shipping tonnage used by tobacco. However, he took a somewhat more pragmatic approach to the question, arguing, like many before and after him, that it was a powerful way of raising revenue.[242]

By the end of the war, cigarettes had overtaken pipe tobacco and cigars in popularity.[243] Moreover, just as the war had enabled women to take on masculine jobs and roles, so did it present to them new opportunities for acquainting themselves with masculine pleasures. A number of Elizabeth Roberts' oral history respondents refer to women beginning to smoke when they went into the munitions.

> *When do you think women started smoking?*

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[239] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. & H.O. Wills* p. 321.
[240] 'Demand for more tobacco' *The Times*, 20 February 1918, page 3 col. c.
[241] Mr Holt MP., Parliamentary Debates Commons, 1918 vol. 103 p. 571.
[242] Bonar Law, Ways and Means Financial Statement, 22 April 1918, Parliamentary Debates Commons vol. 103 p.715; The increased yield from tax duties on tobacco was also commented on in the Budget of that year. 1 May 1918, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons vol. 103 p. 1593.
[243] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. & H.O. Wills* p. 324.

I think in the First World War on munitions because they had the money to buy them.[244]

I think the First World War had started for it to be a common thing... when the girls got working.[245]

I'll tell you what ... brought that mass smoking on was having to turn to work in mass, in large numbers to the 1914-18 war. They congregated in areas and they became members of clubs and they did things together. They went on trips and they ran little social gatherings and that fetched the smoking angle quickly on the scene.[246]

Nonetheless, the behaviour of the munitions workers, seen as 'boisterous and noisy', posed a moral panic. The National Union of Women Workers, a union of middle class women who aimed to 'promote the social and moral and religious welfare of women' joined with the YWCA, the Mothers' Union, the Church Army, the Girls Friendly Society and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in the Voluntary Women's Patrols to patrol public parks and garrison and munition towns together with the Women Police Volunteers.[247] However, the increased economic and personal independence which many women gained in the First World War went beyond those who worked in the munitions. War merely served to accelerate change which was already underway, as women had been emancipating themselves through the suffrage movements and their involvement in labour and social reform.[248] Nonetheless, the experience of war undoubtedly allowed women more freedom, a fact which found expression in changing dress codes and social patterns. An article in *The Daily Mail* remarked on the new phenomenon in 1915.

The war time business girl is to be seen any night dining out alone or with a friend in the moderate priced restaurant in London. Formerly she would never have had her evening meal unless in the company of

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[244] *ERA Barrow and Lancaster* Mrs N1L (born 1899) p. 61.
[245] *ERA Barrow and Lancaster* Mr B1B (born 1897) p. 75 – 6.
[246] *ERA Barrow and Lancaster* Mr H1L (born 1904) p. 18.
[247] Lewis *Women in England* p. 185.

> a man friend. But now with money and without men she is more and more beginning to dine out.[249]

The article also noted the 'smoking of the customary cigarette'.

The conditions of war and the resulting dislocation of social and gender norms provided the conditions for tobacco advertising to gradually expand its target market Once again, however, the industry struck a delicate balance in challenging social boundaries while not threatening them too much. Women's smoking in the company of a male companion was implied, rather than overtly portrayed in advertisements, and it was shown as a discreet, private moment. A 1916 advert for Kenilworth, made by Cope Bros., for example, showed a man and a woman in a rowing boat on a river. She is rowing while he is reclining with a cigarette. The text reads 'Shall we find a nice quiet corner? Let us tie up in the shade for a bit. You must want a rest. And I can see by the way you are looking at my Kenilworth that you'd like one too.' A 1917 advert, also for Kenilworth featured an army officer at a ball. He invites his female companion to 'find some place where we can be all by ourselves and have a Kenilworth in peace'(Illus. 9).[250] Both have the theme of smoking together in privacy. In both the woman takes her lead from the man. Certainly these adverts are aimed at increasing the female market, but their message is aimed just as much at men. They promote the idea that it is acceptable for men to offer women cigarettes, indeed the gesture is shown as a prelude to increased intimacy. The man is suggesting that the woman smoke – it is not a gesture of defiance on her part, nor a threat to his social standing. The industry struck a delicate balance in challenging social boundaries while not threatening them too much. The portrayal of the cigarette as a tool of seduction tapped into the notions of men and women as two parts of a whole, necessary for social cohesion.[251] In this context the cigarette was the bridge across gender boundaries.

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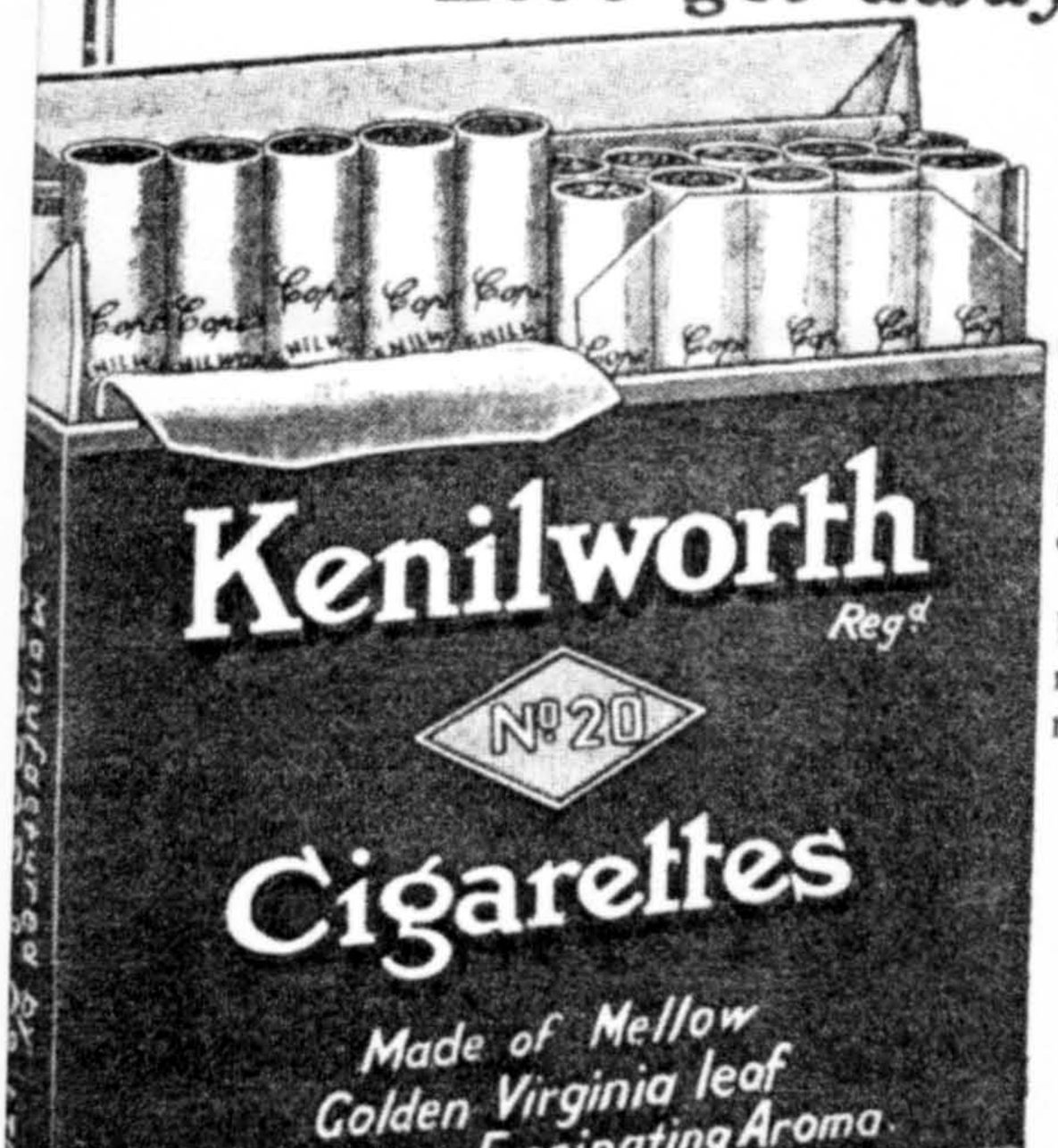
[248] D. Thom *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: women workers in World War One* (London: IB Taurus, 2000) pp. 94 – 121.
[249] 'Dining Out Girls' *Daily Mail* September 1915 Quoted by A. Marwick *Women at War 1914 – 1948* (London: Fontana [for the] Imperial War Museum, 1977) p. 127.
[250] These adverts are taken from JJC *Tobacco* Box 4.
[251] De Reske's was another brand which played on the theme, setting their upper class in luxurious surroundings, thus associating smoking with romance and luxury. C. Hall *The Twenties in Vogue* (London, 1983) pp. 150-1. The luxurious nature of the De Reske advertisements and the acceptability of the brand to women is noted in a number of the responses to Mass Observations 1937 smoking

"Let's get away from this mob—



"I'm dying for a cigarette. Let's find some place where we can be all by ourselves and have a Kenilworth in peace."

Kenilworths are the most soothing and seductive cigarettes imaginable.

Whenever you want to get the finest Virginia Cigarettes without paying an extravagant price—ask your tobacconist for Kenilworth Cigarettes. Experts agree that the golden Virginia leaf used in Kenilworths is the "find of the century" in cigarette tobacco.

You enjoy the flavour all the more because Kenilworths are so beautifully made; just the right shape and size, with all the tobacco arranged in long fine strands laid neatly lengthwise.

Kenilworth Cigarettes are made of mellow golden Virginia leaf yielding a fascinating aroma. They will compare favourably with any Virginia Cigarettes you can obtain, no matter how high the price. Yet Kenilworths only cost 1/3 for 20; 3/1 for 50; 6/- for 100.

FOR THE FRONT.—We will post Kenilworth Cigarettes to Soldiers at the Front specially packed in airtight tins of 50 at 2/6 per 100, duty free. Postage 1/- for 200 to 300; 1/4 up to 900. Minimum order 200. Order through your Tobacconist or send remittance direct to us.

Postal Address: 6, Lord Nelson St., Liverpool.

COPE BROS. & CO., LTD.,
LIVERPOOL AND LONDON. MAY 1917

Manufacturers of High-Class Cigarettes.

Illus. 9 Advert for Kenilworth cigarettes, May 1917. The small type paragraph at the bottom gives instructions for sending cigarettes to the Forces. John Johnson Collection, *Tobacco*, Box 4.

What was apparent through the period of this chapter was not a radical change in the position of women, nor in their relationship with smoking, but a process in which the increased visibility and acceptance of women in the public sphere was paralleled by the increased visibility and acceptance of smoking among men in social spaces more generally. It was the beginning of changes in gender roles coupled with negotiation over the spaces in which these changes took place which provided the climate in which the suggestion that women might also legitimately share a cigarette could be made.

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survey. One anonymous respondent noted that 'Those advertisements with an exotic setting of a man and woman in evening dress rather tempt me to try the cigarettes. I think De Reske used to have such advertisements.' *Mass Observation Archive* TC63 Box 3 File D Women T – Z. See also P.W. in Box 3.

Chapter Four - 'Smooth to the lips are the ivory tips': the rise of the female smoker 1919 - 1945

In terms of tobacco use, the most notable phenomenon of the interwar period was the encroachment of smoking into almost every sphere of life, both public and private. As a *Times* leader, entitled 'Gentlemen, You May Smoke' noted in 1929,

> there is now, indeed, no place or time, except during sleep, church, and in Parliament, where men may not be seen (and smelt) smoking.[1]

This ran parallel to a standardisation of the product as marketing and advertising became more sophisticated in promoting brand loyalty, retailing moved out of the hands of specialist tobacconists and into general stores, and technical innovation and organisational changes strengthened the position of the leading tobacco manufacturers. The process of changing the cultural meaning of smoking which had begun with the mass production of cigarettes continued apace as the cigarette consolidated its position as the most popular way of consuming tobacco. The conditions of war accelerated the demand for cigarettes, but a return to peacetime did not herald a return to the leisurely recreational smoke. Among men, cigarette smoking became increasingly ubiquitous, as cigarette sales outstripped those of pipe tobaccos and consumption increased spatially and temporally. Where and when tobacco might be consumed was still contested, but non-smokers were increasingly the minority. It was this continuing spread of the smoking habit more generally, and cigarettes in particular which, as the last chapter argued, created the necessary climate for smoking to be taken up more openly by women.

However, the adoption of smoking by increasing numbers of women was gradual, and distinct in form and context from the widespread uptake of mass-produced cigarettes by men. As Georgina Howell has noted in relation to the immediate post-war years,

> women were smoking in public, but the cigarettes had to be Egyptian or Turkish, not Virginian.[2]

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[1] "Gentlemen, You May Smoke", *The Times*, April 17, 1929 p. 17 col. d.

Moreover, convention still ruled where and when a woman could smoke.

> It was alright to smoke in the restaurant car of a train, but vulgar on the top of a bus. Some women smoked in restaurants, and a waiter in one knocked a cigarette out of a lady's mouth.[3]

By the late 1920s, however, brands such as Player's Bachelors and Craven 'A', Virginian cork-tipped cigarettes were aimed at the female market and smoking among women gained a more visible presence in the media.

Nonetheless, as the title of *The Times* article in 1929 implied, smoking remained predominantly associated with men. And despite the proliferation of smoking among men, the spread of the habit amongst women, where not openly resisted, required a complex negotiation of gender boundaries. The traditional cultural imperatives of femininity - child-bearing and motherhood - were seen to be threatened by the practice and such arguments reflected wider concerns about the place of women in society. Where women did challenge such constraints, they did so as part of a wider redefinition of femininity and acceptable female behaviour. As a result, the rhetoric and imagery surrounding smoking continued to produce multiple and often conflicting discourses of womanhood. This chapter will explore how these discourses were incorporated into the existing, predominantly masculine, perspective of the tobacco smoking world. It will argue that the spaces where smoking among women was sanctioned were fewer than those enjoyed by their male counterparts and that female smoking continued to be constrained by gender-specific conventions. It was not until the social and economic dislocation of the Second World War that such conventions began to crumble.

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[2] G. Howell *In Vogue: Six Decades of Fashion* (London: Allen Lane, 1975) p. 4. John Lucas suggests that this may have been to diminish the association of smoking with prostitution 'the more expensive the cigarette the less likely the smoker to be mistaken for a prostitute'. J. Lucas *The Radical Twenties: writing, politics and culture* (Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997) p. 113.
[3] G. Howell *In Vogue* p. 4.

Changes in tobacco consumption

By the beginning of the period under discussion in this chapter, the tobacco market was distinctly different from that of the Victorian period. That change had been wrought by three main factors – firstly, the development of the Imperial Tobacco Company (ITCo.) in 1902, secondly, the unprecedented popularity and success of the cigarette as a form of tobacco consumption and thirdly, the impact of the First World War in establishing tobacco consumption as a necessity in times of stress, further eroding the conventions which saw smoking as an luxurious recreational pastime. Since the multiplicity of producers which had existed in the nineteenth century had been subsumed under the auspices of the ITCo., Imperial had strengthened its hold on the market. Because of its size and influence, it had advantages of both supply and distribution. It operated central buying agencies which ensured cost advantages on one hand, whilst on the other it could run extensive bonus schemes to encourage distributors to stock its brands in preference to others.[4] And although the companies within Imperial were technically independent, prices and terms were strictly controlled across the board. By 1920, the products of the ITCo. accounted for 73% of all tobacco sales. Moreover, those sales were predominantly of cigarettes as opposed to any other form of tobacco and the products of the ITCo. made up for 91% of Britain's cigarette sales.[5]

The development of the industry during this period has been detailed comprehensively in various corporate and social histories and it is not the purpose of this thesis to reiterate these.[6] The main point is that, like other consumer goods in the period, such as confectionery and cleaning agents, the overall trend was towards standardisation of the product and vertical and horizontal integration of the

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[4] B. W. E. Alford *WD and HO Wills and the Development of the UK Tobacco Industry* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1973) p. 331.

[5] Monopolies Commission *Report of the Supply of Cigarettes and Tobacco and of Cigarette and Tobacco Machinery* Parliamentary papers HC Cmd. 218 (1961) pp. 17 – 18; By 1920, the two main Player's in the field were Wills, who had benefited from their early investment in the Bonsack machine and ensuing advantage in the market, and Player's of Nottingham, who had invested in an alternative machine, the Elliot, and had built up a trade to rival that of Will's. Both branches of Imperial Tobacco, they accounted for 60% and 24% of the market respectively.

[6] B.W.E. Alford *W.D. & H.O. Wills*; H. Cox *The Global Cigarette: Origins and Evolution of British American Tobacco 1880 – 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); M. Hilton *Perfect Pleasures: the pipe, the cigar and the cigarette in popular culture 1800 – 2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2000).

manufacturers, reflected by the domination of branches of ITCo. From being a trade dependent on the specialised mixing of tobaccos by independent retail tobacconists and on the understanding of the product by the (male) consumer in the nineteenth century, the tobacco trade had become one dependent on a mass produced commodity, dominated by a handful of brands produced largely by two companies in the twentieth. The uniformity of the cigarette eroded the individuality inherent in the diverse range of products and packaging of the specialist tobacconist.

In addition, the physical nature of the cigarette alone made it a different entity. Whereas the pipe had been a solid instrument lasting beyond the length of a smoke and the cigar had required time to enjoy, the cigarette was an ephemeral pleasure, burning quickly, to be taken up and discarded at will. It was immortalised by Lord Henry in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* when he said 'a cigarette is a perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want?'.[7] The answer to a rhetorical question is perhaps superfluous, but the increase in consumption evident in trade figures of the time suggest that the smoking public was quite clear about what it wanted – another cigarette. The size of the packets – five, tens or twenties, were tailored to different levels of consumption and the uniformity of the product made it ideal to offer to others – one either smoked or one didn't. The genius of the cigarette lay in the fact that the generic product could be consumed by everyone, but through a subtle hierarchy of branding and smoking styles, a sense of individuality could be maintained by the smoker. The brand chosen and when and where it was smoked retained a semiotic significance which belied the overtones of mass production and implications of homogeneity.

By 1920, the increase in tobacco consumption led a correspondent of the *Financial Times* to note in his coverage of the 1920 budget that,

> the increase in the rate of consumption of tobacco has been unprecedented. The increase has been from 140 million lbs. in 1918-19 to about 150 million lbs in 1919-20. And although part of that tobacco may have gone to replenish the stocks in traders hands, the

[7] R. Aldington (ed.) *Oscar Wilde: Selected Works* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1946) p. 190.

> increase in the main is due to growth in consumption. This may be attributed perhaps to the continuous rise in wages, to the return of our army from abroad and in the third place to the growth of the smoking habit among women.[8]

This statement by the *Financial Times* correspondent indicated the two main trends which were shaping the tobacco market at the time he was writing. The first was the growth in overall consumption, largely due to the rise of the cigarette as the most popular form of tobacco consumption among men. The second was the increase in female smokers. The extent to which women took up smoking should not be over-estimated, as women remained a fraction of the total smoking population for at least the next decade.[9] Both the increasing popularity of the cigarette and the increasing number of women smoking were the result of wider societal changes. The growing popularity of the cigarette in the 1920s was due to wider economic dislocation which made it more attractive to smokers. The increase in women smokers was due to wider societal changes which brought women more into contact with the habits and pleasures of men, while their increased participation in the labour market provided the financial means to partake in those pleasures.

The popularity of the cigarette among men

Despite the upsurge in tobacco consumption during and immediately after the war, sales began to fall in 1920 and did not reach immediate post-war levels again until 1927. This was largely due to economic instability after the war, as enforced deflation and stringent measures cutting public expenditure caused a slump following the immediate post-war boom.[10] The resulting unemployment and social distress left little room for any more than the bare necessities. High leaf prices and the subsequent increase in tobacco prices contributed to the problem. In the period preceding and following the general strike of 1926, the situation did not much improve and the trade

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[8] 'The Budget: Unprecedented Consumption of Tobacco' *Financial Times* 20 April 1920.
[9] N. Wald et al. *UK Smoking Statistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 10; p. 13.
[10] B. Schwartz 'The Corporate Economy 1890 – 1929' in Mary Langan and Bill Schwartz *Crises in the British State 1880 – 1930* (London: Hutchison and Co Ltd 1985) pp. 80 – 103.

press carried articles on the effect of depression on the tobacco industry, blaming unemployment and noting that 'wages (were) not what they were before the war'.[11]

However, it was precisely these economic constraints which allowed the cigarette to continue eating into sections of the tobacco market. Throughout the slump of the early twenties, tobacco consumption remained at least a third above pre-war levels. This suggests that although people had to economise, tobacco still remained an item in household budgets.[12] Moreover, economic depression helped the cigarette to consolidate its position as the most popular way of consuming tobacco, as pipe smokers either switched to cheaper twist tobaccos or to cigarettes.[13] There was also a move towards cheaper brands of cigarettes among cigarette smokers and young smokers took up cigarettes in preference to the pipe.[14] Manufacturers who had perhaps hoped that smoking tobaccos would revive after the war were proved wrong and a number expanded their cigarette production to challenge the position of Wills and Player's.[15] The main competitors who emerged in this period were Godfrey Phillips, with their Army Club brand, Carreras Rothman with their Craven 'A' and 'Black Cat' brands and J. Wix and Sons whose best known cigarette was Kensitas.[16] These manufacturers operated outside the mantle of Imperial Tobacco, increasing the competitiveness of the market and challenging the existing brands with new sales techniques and bonus schemes. All of this provided a better deal for the consumer as manufacturers went to increasing lengths to win customers, by introducing coupon trading and other incentives. Kenilworth, for example, introduced its Catch-a-Pal coupons in 1925 whereby if you took a friend into a tobacconists, the tobacconist would provide him with a packet of Kenilworth free of charge 'as a reward for the introduction of a new customer'.[17] Carreras Rothman encouraged smokers to smoke Black Cat with an extensive selection of gifts, including gramophone records, which could be gained by collecting the required amount of coupons.[18] Through smoking, one could gain access to items which might otherwise be inaccessible.

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[11] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 July 1925 p. 36; 1 August 1925; 1 November 1925.
[12] Wald et al. *U.K. Smoking Statistics* p. 13; p. 14 .
[13] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 July 1925 p. 36; Tobacco Trade Review 1 July 1927 p. 34.
[14] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 July 1925 p. 18.
[15] P.N. Lee (ed.) *Tobacco Consumption in various countries* (London: Tobacco Research Council 1975) p. 80. Lee shows that while pipe tobacco sales fell by 17.5%, cigarette sales fell by only 6.5%.
[16] B.W.E. Alford *H.D. & W.O. Wills*.
[17] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 July 1925 p. 12.
[18] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 March 1927 p. 53.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the slump, tobacco maintained a cultural presence and the cigarette especially was seen as a harmless pleasure in times of dearth. *The Times* published an extensive tobacco supplement in 1925, covering all aspects of the history, growth and manufacture of tobacco in the vein of the literature of the Victorian times. Its medical correspondent, in commenting on the spread of the cigarette beyond the smoking room and the dining room, cautioned moderation, but it was generally felt that the cigarette was a safer and less noxious smoke than the pipe or the cigar.[19] Cigarette cards continued to educate smokers about the rudiments and the trivia of life, and, as suggested above, the introduction of coupon schemes provided an added incentive to buy the product. The cigarette became more than burning leaves and paper – it had a history and wider practical benefits in terms of education and economy.

Moreover, the fact that cigarettes were pre-packaged meant that they could be sold practically anywhere and the trend towards multiple grocers and kiosks as outlets of tobacco continued. A report from Glasgow in the *Tobacco Trade Review* in 1927 noted that a multiple confectioners in Jamaica Street was devoting a window to selling cigarettes, a firm of musical instrument dealers was also using a part of their premises to sell cigarettes and that 'a good number' of city hairdressers had started to sell 'smoking requisites'.[20] A report earlier in the same year had noted the sale of cigarettes in 'large offices, works and public institutions'.[21] Price cutting in outlets other than tobacconists continued to be the bane of specialist retailers, although, in contrast to the 1890s, the problem was now cigarettes rather than cheaper smoking tobaccos.[22] Automatic vending machines, first instituted in the early 1900s were

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[19] 'The Importance of Moderation' *The Times Tobacco Supplement* 20 October 1925 p. 31; *British Medical Journal* 7 February 1920 p. 178; *British Medical Journal* 19 November 1921 vol. II p. 819. However, other people argued that the practice of inhaling made the cigarette more dangerous. *British Medical Journal* 9 June 1922 vol. II p. 66; *British Medical Journal* 12 April 1930 vol. I p. 709.

[20] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 August 1927 p. 32. The tobacconists were not taking this challenge lying down, however. The report also notes that one tobacconist in Renfield St. had devoted on of its smaller windows to confectionery, while another tobacconist had opened up a new branch with 'an up-to-date ladies and gents hairdressing saloon'.

[21] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 March 1927 p. 20.

[22] Nearly every edition of the *Tobacco Trade Review* in the mid-1920s carries articles and letters about the problems of price cutting and illegal trading. In 1926, several of the firms outside Imperial, including Gallaher, Godfrey Phillips and Carreras Rothman, formed the Tobacco Trade Advisory Committee in order to stop traders undercutting the manufacturers recommended prices. Imperial

another perceived problem, as they not only disadvantaged licensed tobacconists by allowing tobacco to be sold after hours, but arguably encouraged the practice of juvenile smoking.[23] Despite the disquiet of tobacconists, the public presence of cigarettes in shops and on the streets grew, making them part of the urban scene in a way that tobacco mixed behind the doors of a tobacconists had not been. When real incomes began to rise in 1927, cigarette sales began an unprecedented period of growth underpinned by advertising and marketing campaigns and a media presence which placed them at the heart of modern life. In a society increasingly geared towards a corporate economy and mass production, the cigarette had become a fashionable item of mass consumption.

Cigarette smoking among women

However, while the cigarette itself may have become a popular item of mass consumption, its users were not an amorphous body, nor were their motivations for smoking identical. For this reason, the use of the term mass consumption to describe the phenomenon of cigarette smoking is necessarily problematic. The majority of smokers were male and much of the rhetoric and imagery surrounding the habit was masculine. Cigarettes were therefore only an item of mass consumption if one excludes the female half of the population. Moreover, the reasons why men switched to cigarettes, or why young men starting a smoking career chose to smoke cigarettes instead of pipe tobaccos and cigars, were necessarily different from why increasing numbers of women took up smoking in the 1920s. Firstly, smoking in whatever form was an accepted and established practice among men. That women began to smoke and to do so more openly implies some kind of change in public attitudes. Secondly, there was a difference of quantity (See Fig. 1). What figures are available suggest that female consumption was a negligible part of overall consumption and so female cigarette consumption was by implication a different phenomenon than that of men. In addition, smoking among women received a disproportionate amount of press

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preferred to take their own steps, but neither group had much success in tackling the problem. *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 December 1926 p. 1.

[23] *Tobacco Trade Review* 25 October 1925 p. 20; The problem of juvenile smoking had become marked during the war as 'lads had been allowed to smoke with impunity, owing to the lack of supervision by the police and public officials' and it continued to be an issue throughout the Twenties. The regulations governing the sale of tobacco to minors were reinforced in the 1933 Children's Act.

coverage. In attributing part of the rise in tobacco consumption to female smokers in 1920, the *Financial Times'* correspondent quoted above was merely repeating the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Chamberlain, and he was not the only one to comment on the phenomenon. In 1922, an article in *The Times* suggested that the practice was becoming more widespread, when it refers to 'the enormous increase in cigarette smoking among women'.[24] By 1925, *The Times* gave the impression that every woman in the land was smoking like a chimney.

> Half the women in the land started smoking at once during the Great War, and since the Great War, the other half have followed their example.[25]

This was clearly an exaggeration, but what it nonetheless suggested was a relative increase in the numbers of women smoking which appeared greater to contemporary observers than it actually was in light of the social disapproval surrounding the habit previously. In addition, the origins of the remarks also help to put them in context. As one writer in the *Yorkshire Post* noted in response to the Chancellor's 1920 statement,

> men in the trade doubt very much whether this habit (*smoking among women*) really is increasing. Ladies of a certain kind have indulged the habit for some years and it may be quite true to say that in the limited circle of club habitués cigarette smoking is more common, but that the practice is making headway amongst women in general is disputed; indeed whereas it is said that a section of the munition girls smoked heavily while they were earning good money, they now have to practice economy. Obviously there are no statistics on the subject, and it may be what applies to London does not apply to the north where there are fewer leisured women.[26]

The Times 20 January 1919 p. 5 col. f; *Children and Young Persons Act* 1933 Public General Acts 23 George 5 Ch. 12 Part I Prevention of Cruelty and Exposure to Moral and Physical Danger pp. 47 – 8.

[24] 'Women Cigarette Smokers: habit becoming a vice' *The Times* 5 September 1922 p. 7 col. f.

[25] 'The Smoking Habit' *The Times Tobacco Supplement* 25 October 1925 p. xix.

[26] *Yorkshire Post* 21 April 1920.

The reference made by the Chancellor to smoking among women in his budget speech suggests that the practice was becoming more visible, at least in the social circles he moved in, and a similar phenomenon was evident to the editorial board and readership of the *Times*. There is little or no evidence as to the extent to which smoking among women was prevalent in provincial towns or rural areas, and among women of a lower social status. In his 1927 history of smoking, A.E. Hamilton attributed the increase in smoking among women immediately after the war to 'the upper crust of society' and 'fashionable ladies'.[27] Smoking for women was, as Bernard Alford has put it, a 'society vogue',[28] rather than the 'matter of course' it was for men.[29]

The most enduring image of smoking among women in the immediate post-war period is that of the flapper, a term which in the late nineteenth century had an ambiguous meaning. On one hand, it was used to describe a young prostitute, scarcely past the age of consent, on the other it described a young woman on the eve of her debut.[30] In the immediate post-war years, the term was still used to apply to young women, but it gained different social and political overtones and remained ambiguous due to its different meanings on both sides of the Atlantic and the infiltration of American culture into British society. On both sides of the Atlantic, the term was used to describe the young woman of the post-war years who danced, smoked, and had an unprecedented level of social freedom. As Graves and Hodge put it, the flapper was 'a comradely, sporting, active young women, who would ride pillion on the flapper-bracket of a motorcycle'. In 1919, she was immortalised in a British film 'The Irresistible Flapper' as a high-spirited girl, with a boyish figure, who behaved 'freely'.[31] The slim figure was both a reaction to the shapely Victorian and Edwardian figure with all its corsetry, and also a result of wartime shortages which had reduced women's weight. The fashionable shape in the immediate post-war years was to be without shape, emphasised in straight dress lines, minimal support garments and flattened bosoms. The development of rayon in the mid-1920s encouraged the trend. The comparative freedom of dress was symbolic of new freedoms which young

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[27] A.E. Hamilton *This Smoking World* (New York, London: The Century Co., 1927).
[28] Alford *W.D. & H.O Wills* p. 339 – 340.
[29] *The Times* 17 April 1929 p. 17 col. d.
[30] B. Melman *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties* (Hampshire: MacMillan Press, 1988) p. 28.
[31] R. Graves & A. Hodge *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1940) p. 44.

women in certain groups of society enjoyed, as they travelled unchaperoned, attended parties and generally followed fashion. The entry of the United States into the war and its role in the Allied victory popularised American fashions, music, film and habits in Britain. In the Roaring Twenties, jazz, cocktail parties and cigarettes epitomised the glamorous party life of the flapper.[32]

In the early 1920s, smoking was therefore a symbol of the young, liberated woman. It was, to quote Paula Fass,

> perhaps the most potent symbol of young women's testing of the elbow room provided by her new sense of freedom and equality.[33]

However, while the cigarette was a symbol of new found freedoms for some women,

> it must not be thought that the consciously 'free' women were more than a small minority: conservatively feminine women, who wished things to be as they always had been, were frequent.[34]

Smoking retained many of its associations with an unconventional lifestyle. In his book on the 1920s, John Lucas, for example, recalled a photograph of Nan Youngman, an artist at the time.

> A photograph of Nan, while she was an art student at Slade, shows her sitting cross-legged on a patch of grass outside the college buildings. She wears trousers, strums a ukelele and a cigarette dangles casually from her lips.[35]

One of Elizabeth Robert's respondents, born in 1896, recalled that she mainly saw women smoking when she went into the theatre world, where 'they all smoked, the

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[32] M. Rosen *Popcorn Venus* (New York: Avon Books, 1973) pp. 75 – 98.
[33] P. Fass *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977)
[34] Graves and Hodge *The Long Weekend* p. 48.
[35] Lucas *The Radical Twenties* p. 112.

chorus girls and the women'.[36] In the immediate post-war years, the fashion bible of the rich and famous, *Vogue*, pictured an actress, Molly Ramsden, with a cigarette in her hand.[37] One of the most well-known leading ladies of the time, Tallulah Bankhead also smoked (Illus. 10).[38] Noel Coward's leading lady, Gertrude Lawrence, smoked; her husky voice was her trademark. Sir Cecil Beaton recalled in the late 1920s that 'she smoked cigarettes with a nuance that implied having just come out of bed and wanting to go back into it'.[39] However, although top actresses could become society figures, the profession retained its Bohemian overtones. It was not until 1922 that *Vogue* began to feature cigarettes occasionally in fashion shoots. In an illustration showing off a flowerpot hat the model was drawn with a cigarette in a long black holder. This image, the slim woman with the cigarette holder, became a popular portrayal of the Art Deco movement, captured again in a 1930 cover illustration.[40]

However, in Britain the term 'flapper' gained another meaning, symbolising the political, economic and social instability of the period. The Representation of the People Act of 1918 had extended the franchise to men over twenty one and women over 30. As a result, around 5.5 million women remained without the vote. At the same time, women outnumbered men in the population, as a result of the casualties of World War One. So-called 'superfluous' women, a term which itself implied opprobrium, threatened political and economic stability: political equality meant that women would have outnumbered men in the electorate, equality in work and pay would have threatened male jobs. In addition, the topic of female sexuality and birth control entered the public domain, illustrated by the popularity of Marie Stopes *Married Love* of 1918. As Billie Melman has put it 'at the centre of attention after the war was the ordinary, disenfranchised young woman, not the criminal, the poor or the agitator'.[41] It was this ordinary, disenfranchised young woman who was meant in the discussion surrounding the Flapper Vote in 1928. To quote *Punch*,

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[36] *ERA Barrow and Lancaster* Mrs M2B (born 1896) p. 64.
[37] Howell *In Vogue* p. 5.
[38] D. Wilding *Tallulah Bankhead, three quarter length portrait, seated, facing slightly left, smoking cigarette* (1931) Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs, LC USZ62 – 113297.
[39] Howell *In Vogue* p. 63.
[40] *Vogue* 24th December 1930.
[41] B. Melman *Women in the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: flappers and nymphs* (London: MacMillan press 1988) p. 3.

Illus. 10 Tallulah Bankhead, 1931.
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs
LC-USZ62-113297.

> flapper is the catchword for an adult woman aged twenty one to thirty, when it is the question of giving her the vote under the same qualification of men of the same age.[42]

Both the pleasure-loving and the disenfranchised young woman implied by the term flapper were seen to be a threat to society. In 1920, the *Daily Mail* attacked the 'irresponsible and undisciplined' flapper.

> The social effects of sex disproportion are seen in the crumbling of the old ethical standards. The freedom of the modern independent girl from the supervision of her parents, the tendency to rebel against discipline... encourage(s) a lower standard of morality... the social butterfly type has probably never been so prevalent as at present. It comprises the frivolous, scantily clad 'jazzing flapper', irresponsible and undisciplined...[43]

By 1927, the *Mail* had turned its attention to the question of 'Votes for Flappers', an idea which it believed was 'absurd' and a waste of time as young female voters were 'irresponsible, unpropertied and ill-informed on public affairs'.[44] The voice of the *Mail* was just one in a larger discussion surrounding 'the Flapper vote'. In this context, the association of smoking with 'flapperdom' gained political overtones.

However, the extent to which different groups of women actually did smoke remained questionable. For the early 1920s, smoking among women remained a very different phenomenon than among men. This is shown both by consumption figures which suggest that prevalence of smoking among women was relatively low and by some of the press reaction to women smokers. A 1920 article in the London *Evening News* reports an incident of a woman smoking publicly in Bond Street. Entitled 'Why Bond Street Stared: the bold bad woman who had a cigarette during her stroll', the article details the excitement caused to onlookers and the embarrassment caused to a male acquaintance, when a young woman walked along the sunny side of Bond Street

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[42] *Punch* 175 (30 November 1927) p. 591.
[43] *Daily Mail*, 5 February 1920 quoted by Melman *Women in the Popular Imagination* p.18 –19.
[44] *Daily Mail*, 15 April 1927 quoted by Melman *Women in the Popular Imagination* p.30.

enjoying a cigarette. Whether it was the fact that she was smoking or that she was doing so in the street that caused the consternation is debatable, but it is quite unlikely that a man walking down Bond Street with a cigarette would have attracted the same attention. Another article in the *Daily Chronicle* in 1920 is dismissive of women smokers, characterising them as 'young ladies who choke and blink over their cigarettes in the mildly Bohemian restaurants of Soho!'.[45] In 1922, *The Times* ran an article by its medical correspondent, suggesting that 'the enormous increase of cigarette smoking among women calls for some protest by the medical profession, for the habit is, in many instances, passing beyond a pleasure and becoming a vice'. It went on to argue that the absorption of nicotine produced a condition of nervous distress, followed by palpitations and exhaustion and outbursts of emotion. The damage such a condition could cause could be so severe as to cause mental instability. The crux of the matter, however, was that 'woman's delicate organism was certainly not intended to endure large doses of this poison. Her functions as a mother cannot but be interfered with when she indulges in it to excess'.[46] The impact of smoking among women was therefore set in a different context than that among men, as it was perceived to effect women's role as wife and mother and her vital contribution to the well-being of the race.

The comments in *The Times* echo those made in relation to women's smoking in the periodical press in the 1890s. As smoking among women became more visible in the mid-1920s, the letters pages of *The Times* provided a contemporary forum for debate. In 1926, the number of women smoking in London was sufficiently large to prompt discussion in the pages of *The Times* as to when it had all started. Noting that much contemporary literature deplored the fall in standards between the Victorian and Georgian periods, one correspondent quoted a letter from Charles Dickens to John Forster in 1846 detailing his experience of four ladies smoking 'promiscuously' in a hotel. She concluded that 'there must have been many great great grandmothers to the present day girl!'.[47] In response, a correspondent calling himself 'An Early Victorian' pointed out that the women Charles Dickens was describing were not well-bred and the point of the tale was that they were not 'ladies'. He wrote,

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[45] *Daily Chronicle* 23 March 1920.
[46] *The Times* 5 September 1922 p. 7 col. f.
[47] Letter from Mrs H.A.D. Stone, *The Times*, 24 December 1926 p. 5 col. f.

> I have been told that the practice of ladies smoking 'took on' from the time when his majesty, King Edward VII, initiated the custom of smoking at the dinner table and that it percolated by degrees through all grades of society.[48]

The debate continued with various other correspondents citing *Punch* cartoons of the 1850s and extracts from Thackeray as instances where smoking among women was condoned or condemned.[49] The overall impression, however, is that for the correspondents at least, the phenomenon was something new and sufficiently large to be worth commenting on.

Advertising in the interwar period

The extent to which advertising led or followed demand is debatable and it is again necessary to consider the trend towards greater consumption among men and the increase in consumption among women separately. The main growth in consumption of the cigarette among men during and immediately after the First World War owed little or nothing to advertising, but by the late 1920s the situation had changed. The industry had been taken by surprise by the increasing demand for cigarettes in the late nineteenth century and had spent the first two decades of the twentieth century trying to catch up. The initial growth had been largely due to the inherent benefits of the cigarette itself and these benefits did not in themselves need to be marketed. The cigarette was a cheap and convenient smoke both for oneself and to offer to others, and it was attractive to those starting a smoking career. These factors recommended the cigarette to smokers and led to the subsequent erosion the market share of pipe tobaccos and cigars. While some cigarette advertising did take place, it was certainly less than the aggregate amount of advertising for pipe tobaccos. The demand for cigarettes in the pre-war period was not market, but consumer led and advertising had little part to play.[50]

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[48] Letter from 'An Early Victorian', *The Times*, 30 December 1926 p. 6 col. e.
[49] Letter from Olga Bradbury, *The Times*, 1 Jan 1927 p.6 col. d; letter from Mr. C. Wanklyn, *The Times*, 1 Jan 1927 p. 6 col. 1; *The Times*, 3 January 1927 p. 8 col. e.
[50] The emphasis which tobacco companies gave to advertising in the interwar period can be seen by their increased expenditure on it. In 1911, for example, the combined advertising expenditure of the

However, by the 1920s the competition in the tobacco market was no longer between smoking tobacco and cigarettes but between brands of cigarettes. Rather than merely trying to sell a product, manufacturers became increasingly concerned to sell the benefits of their particular product. In a consumer society no longer dependent on the specialist knowledge of the retailer, the way to inform the public and gain customers was through advertising and marketing. As Alford has noted, the need to advertise more heavily coincided with the increased number and popularity of mass-circulation newspapers, such as the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express* and the *News Chronicle.* The *Daily Mail* alone had a circulation of 1 million in 1919 and nearly two million by 1930.[51] These newspapers provided a new forum for sales promotion and survey of the promotional material which appeared in them is indicative of more general trends in advertising. For much of the early to mid-1920s, adverts tended to be informative, giving advice on price or special packaging. If people were shown smoking, they tended to be men[52] and advertising specifically referred to the smoker as male in text.[53] The use of words like 'everywhere', 'everyone' and images embodying the world were also common, emphasising the sociability of smoking and the fact that it was now accepted almost everywhere. As Matthew Hilton has argued the fact that the iconography and slogans in cigarette adverts were recognisable and therefore accessible to all was one of the factors which opened the product to mass consumption.[54] Images such as the Player's sailor and Carreras Black Cat had the potential to appeal to all sections of society precisely because they had no particular significance.

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eighteen companies who comprised the ITCo. at that point was £194, 398. By 1926, the advertising expenditure of Player's alone was more than three times that. Hilton Perfect Pleasures p. 94; DD PLL 6/1/1 – 17 Annual Analysis of Trading.

[51] B.W.E. Alford *W.D & H.O. Wills.*

[52] The following adverts featuring men smoking appeared in the *Daily Mail* in one week in June 1926 and are indicative of the general way in which advertising was approached. Both Player's and Wills showed a man lighting up a cigarette, Craven 'A', de Reske, Westminster Virginia, Waverly , Army Club, and Sarony cigarettes showed a man holding a cigarette. *Daily Mail* 16 June 1926 p. 4; 17 June p. 4; 17 June p. 9; 18 June p. 6; 19 June p. 3; 21 June p. 4; 21 June p. 10; 23 June p. 9, p. 10.

[53] For example, Kensitas ran a campaign in 1926 along the theme 'Men have different ways of expressing their delight when they first taste a Kensitas.' *Daily Mail* 2 June 1926 p. 10.

[54] Hilton *Perfect Pleasures* p. 99.

Creating positive discourses around the cigarette

By the latter half of the mid-Twenties, however, it is possible to discern a general shift in the modes of advertising as the cigarette market became more crowded. As well as playing on the generic benefits of the product, manufacturers were keen to emphasise the individual qualities of their own brand, be it price, purity or the blend of tobacco, in order to distinguish that brand from the others. To do so, they not only played on the perceived social benefits of the product, but engaged with wider concerns about smoking and its role in society. For example, 'smokers throat' was a commonly recognised complaint among smokers and there were undoubtedly wider concerns about the effects of inhaling cigarette smoke.[55] The question of health and the impact of smoking on the mouth and throat was addressed by a number of brands, which purported to solve that problem. Craven 'A', for example, ran a number of campaigns aimed at dispelling fears about the impact of smoking on health. One campaign had a variety of images featuring a certificate awarded by the Institute of Hygiene for 'quality and purity' and the text 'Craven 'A' The only cigarettes made to prevent sore throats'.[56] Kensitas similarly based their campaign on the fact that their product was 'Always kind to throat and tongue'.[57] An advert for Piccadilly ran with the caption 'I'm not surprised you smoke Piccadilly too, they're so smooth and soothing'.[58] In 1927, Player's responded with an ad campaign for their well-established Navy Cut cigarettes showing two businessmen talking on the 8.30 train.

> White: Personally I don't believe in all this cigarette talk about "preventing" this and "affecting" that. All I want is a jolly good smoke and Player's always give me that.
>
> Brown: I quite agree; I've smoked them for years. After all there's a lot in Player's famous slogan, "It's the tobacco that counts."

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[55] N. Dugdale *Nicotine and Health or Smoke from a doctors pipe: a short discourse on how to avoid some of the effects of smoking* (London: John Bale, Sons and Danielson Ltd, 1936).
[56] *Daily Mail* 4 December 1925; 17 June 1926 p. 9.
[57] *Daily Mail* 1 December 1925 p. 9.
[58] *Daily Mail* 24 April 1935 p. 15.

Wills similarly emphasised the quality of their products. However, while Player's and Wills could trade on their reputation, other products had yet to carve out a niche in the market and emphasising particular benefits was a way of doing so. As the Depression set in the 1930s, adverts appealing to economy appeared, pre-empting charges that cigarette smoking was a frivolous use of money. Churchman's for example, ran a series stressing the fact that their cigarettes lasted a full quarter of an hour, while an advert for Indian Turban cigarettes ran the text 'Why pay more?'.[59] What these adverts had in common was that they recognised that the smoker was an individual making a choice. Much of the text is therefore concerned with assuring the reader that choosing their brand is the right choice, for whatever reason. Wills Gold Flake ran a series of sketches with Mr Gold and Mr Flake, emphasising the quality and freshness of the product, but also characterising Mr Gold and Mr Flake as 'Men with *Wills* of their own'. Other brands emphasised the popularity of their product in order to reassure the smoker that he had good taste. So while manufacturers were appealing to the collective smoking world, they also recognised the individual smokers making the buying decisions.

As the cigarette became firmly established as the main way of consuming tobacco, the theme of sociability also became increasingly common. Using images of couples or groups of friends smoking together, manufacturers increasingly sought to position smoking at the heart of social interaction. Player's, for example, ran a series of advertisements with the slogan 'Whatever the pleasure, Player's complete it', showing people in a variety of leisure pursuits.[60] Gold Flake ran a similar campaign a year later with a series of adverts based on the question and answer sequence 'Do you smoke?' 'Yes, but always Gold Flake'. Adverts showed one or two people in sports activities, in shops or at the cinema with a variation on the question 'Do you smoke (at the pictures/when you're skating/in bed)' and the same response 'Yes – but only Gold Flake'.[61] The tie-in with sporting activities can be seen as a reflection of society's preoccupation with health and fitness, on one hand, and as a reflection of people

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[59] *Daily Mail* 26 January 1935 p. 15; 27 April 1935 p. 12.

[60] Series of adverts in the *Daily Mail* 1935. One particular advert issued for Easter featured a man and a woman smoking in the main photo. Smaller photographs round the edges showed the couple doing different things – walking, playing golf, tennis – and always having a cigarette. The text read 'Those pleasant little jaunts and excursions which make the Easter holiday so enjoyable... Whether it be a trip to the sea, a quiet day's fishing or a brisk round of golf or tennis... how surely is the appeal enhanced and the joy completed with Player's for company. *Daily Mail* 17 April 1935 p. 20.

having more leisure time to indulge in sports and pastimes such as tennis and hiking, which grew in popularity.[62] Manufacturers also timed their advertising to coincide with particular sporting events, such as the Cup Final, The Ashes or the Derby and ran adverts which echoed those themes.[63] In 1926, for example, Wills ran an advert showing a jockey on a horse with the slogan 'The Derby, a certainty with Wills Gold Flake cigarettes', while Player's ran an advert for their Navy Cut cigarettes with the slogan 'Always First'.[64] Similarly, with the increasing number of dance halls and cinemas, manufacturers were keen to associate their products with those activities.[65] Thus, advertising was both a reflection of, and a challenge to, public discourses surrounding smoking. Adverts which played on ideas of sociability and leisure around cigarette smoking were tapping into a trend already in existence and exemplifying notions about the benefits of smoking cigarettes. Those which focused more specifically on issues such as cost or health were engaging with concerns about that trend and suggesting that their brand was beyond reproach. The aim of much of this advertising was the same - to position the cigarette at the heart of social interaction and to encourage both an increase in the number of people who were smoking and the times when they were doing so.

Advertising to women

The phenomenon of women smoking followed a similar trajectory; in other words, women smokers had a visible presence in the mainstream press and in social commentary before they became visible in advertising. In the first instance, advertisers were responding to a trend already apparent and they were coy about how they did so. Women were perceived as secondary to men as smokers, almost as an 'add-on'. The early adverts of the twentieth century for mainstream brands, as opposed to 'ladies cigarettes', which featured women showed them being offered cigarettes by men, their participation sanctioned by the main male smoking body. In the 1920s women were similarly perceived as the secondary smokers, although there was a distinction

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[61] Series in the *Daily Mail* 1936.
[62] Graves and Hodge *The Long Weekend* p. 114, 233.
[63] For example, *Daily Mail* 27 April 1926 Cup Final Supplement ran cigarette adverts; also, *Daily Mail* 14 June 1926 p. 3 Player's advert 'They fight for the Ashes, p. 10Army Club advert ' The Australian team smoke only Army Club cigarettes' among others.
[64] Daily Mail 1 June 1926, p. 4; 2 June 1926 p. 14.

between advertising in the trade press and mainstream newspapers. As was argued in the last chapter, there had always been a distinct market for 'ladies cigarettes' and this was acknowledged in advertisements in the trade press. Such advertising continued throughout the 1920s. In 1926, a London tobacconist advertised Ashes of Roses and Ashes of Violets, 'the newest and daintiest perfumed cigarettes!' while Philip Morris advertised Miss Mayfair 'super perfumed oval, hand made gold tipped cigarettes'.[66]

However, by the 1920s, more mainstream mass-produced brands were also seen to have a potential female market. The advantage of persuading women to smoke mass-produced brands was that they could be shared between the sexes, with no connotations of effeminacy. An advert for Sarony's cigarettes shows a woman customer asking for 'Sarony's please'.[67] This was at least two years before advertising aimed at women appeared in the mainstream press. Similarly, a drawing for a showplate shows a carefree young woman waving a cigarette in one hand and the packet tucked away in the other. The exhaled smoke spells the name of the brand 'Craven A'.[68] In other words, the female demand for cigarettes was recognised by the trade before manufacturers felt comfortable about exploiting it in a more public forum. When they did so, it was initially in a roundabout way. A chronological comparison of adverts for Craven 'A', later regarded as a more 'female' brand is indicative of this. In December 1925 an advert for Carreras showed a woman and a gift packet of cigarettes with the slogan 'Why not give him Craven A this Christmas' (Illus. 11).[69] Thus the woman was enticed to buy cigarettes, within the boundaries of social conventions that dictated she should be looking after her man, and her doing so became more respectable. By June 1926 the advert for Craven 'A' pictured a woman saying 'You just try them!'(Illus. 12).[70] She was endorsing, but not obviously smoking the brand. By Christmas of 1927, the Craven 'A' Christmas advert showed the woman gift-wrapping the boxes of cigarettes, this time with a cigarette in her mouth (Illus. 13).[71]

Within the confines of convention it seems as if the industry was testing the water,

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[65] J. Richards *The Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain 1930 – 1939* (London: Routledge, 1994) p. 11 – 15.
[66] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 December 1926 p. 11; p. 51.
[67] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 April 1925 p. 43.
[68] *Tobacco Trade Review* 1 May 1926 p. 47.
[69] *Daily Mail* 21 December 1925 p. 11.
[70] *Daily Mail* 21 June 1926 p. 11.
[71] *Daily Mail* 20 December 1927 p. 5.

Illus. 11 (left) Advert for Craven 'A' cigarettes.
Daily Mail, 21 December 1925, p.11.

Illus. 12 (below) Advert for Craven 'A' cigarettes.
Daily Mail, 21 June 1926, p. 11.

Illus. 13

Advert for Craven 'A' cigarettes.
Daily Mail, 20 December 1927, p. 5.

introducing women's involvement with smoking gradually before exposing the truth everyone already acknowledged – women smoked.

From 1927 adverts showing women smoking became more common, by the mid-1930s they were leaping off the pages of the popular press. While it was still possible to say in the 1920s that smoking was portrayed as a predominantly masculine habit, by the mid-1930s it was portrayed as a symbol of heterosexuality, with corresponding ideals of masculinity and femininity. One example of this was the way in which Gold Flake was positioned in the market. In 1927, the Mr Gold and Mr Flake advert expressed the opinions of two male smokers in a variety of situations. One particular advert had Mr Gold saying 'Yes, Mr Flake. The modern young lady prefers men with *Wills* of their own'. The woman was passive but there was the hint that she may smoke a Wills cigarette. Such advertising was also exploiting the desire of the smoker to attract the woman.[72] By 1935, the campaign for Wills Gold Flake showed both men and women in a variety of (gendered) social situations which, while promoting smoking among women, also adhered to social conventions. In one of the adverts with couples smoking, it was the man (standing) offering a cigarette to the woman (sitting) (Illus. 14).[73] Other adverts in the series showed couples at the cinema, out walking and between dances, reflecting wider trends of socialising (Illus. 15 and 16).[74] There were also images of women smoking alone, for example when knitting, or with other female friends. These adverts more directly targeted the female smoker, suggesting she incorporate smoking into more aspects of her life.

Other brands also aimed directly at the female market. Craven 'A' has already been mentioned, but Player's Bachelors is probably the more obvious one. It ran adverts with text such as 'Blonde or Brunette prefer the same cigarette' and 'Don't forget our Bachelors in the Dainty red boxes' alongside pictures of smiling young women (Illus. 17 and 18).[75] De Reske Minors also mainly featured women or couples in its advertising from the late 1920s.[76] Cork tips were perceived as feminine, and De Reske's went one better with their 'ivory tips' which they marketed with the slogan

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[72] *Daily Mail* 30 December 1927 p. 3.
[73] *Miss Modern* September 1936 p. 46.
[74] *Miss Modern* August 1935 p. 52, July 1935 p. 50.
[75] *Miss Modern* April 1936 p. 3; *Miss Modern* December 1936 p. 58.

MISS MODERN

Illus. 14

"Do you smoke?"
"Yes, — but only
WILLS'S GOLD FLAKE"

Illus. 15

"Do you smoke
at the pictures?"
"Yes, —but only
WILLS'S GOLD FLAKE"

MISS MODERN

Illus. 16

"Do you smoke
for pleasure?"
"Yes, — but only
WILLS'S GOLD FLAKE"

WILLS'S
GOLD FLAKE CIGARETTES
always cool and mellow
PLAIN OR CORK TIPPED

W.B. 620

WILLS'S
GOLD FLAKE CIGARETTES
always cool and mellow
PLAIN OR CORK TIPPED

W.B. 581

WILLS'S
GOLD FLAKE CIGARETTES
always cool and mellow
PLAIN OR CORK TIPPED

W.B. 566

Adverts for Wills Gold Flake. *Miss Modern*, September 1936 p. 46; August 1935 p. 52; July 1935 p. 50.

Illus. 17

MISS MODERN

Illus. 18

Adverts for Player's Bachelor cigarettes.
Miss Modern, April 1936, p. 3; *Miss Modern*, December 1936, p. 58.

'Smooth to the lips are the ivory tips'.[77] The women pictured in such advertising were young and attractive, with partners or independent career women, with the time and money not only to buy cigarettes but to indulge in the leisure pursuits which were depicted. Nonetheless, manufacturers were also keen to stress that women smokers would get their money's worth. De Reske's, for example, sold its products on quality and value for money, emphasising that their product lasted a full ten minutes.[78] Its advertising showed women in a series of situations where she might have to wait for ten minutes or so, often with a male companion, with a variation of the text '10 minutes to go, so mine's a Minor'.[79]

Smoking as a symbol of social opportunity for women

Whether or not advertising was the cause or result of changing smoking prevalence is a moot point. Nonetheless, the images portrayed in advertising showed the very real changes which were occurring throughout the period. The use of filmstars to endorse brands and references to the cinema mirrored the growing popularity of the cinema as form of entertainment.[80] By the late 1930s there were nearly 5 000 picture houses in Britain. Although going to the cinema was particularly popular with the working classes, it was also popular among other groups as cinemas were built in the middle class suburban areas as well as in town centres.[81] Images of smoking in the cinema in the 1920s focused largely on the unconventional; Clara Bow's *It* (1927) being one of the best known examples. The archetypal flapper, Clara Bow was a self-styled bad girl – preferring to play all-night poker with her chauffeur and servants rather than to socialise with the 'Hollywood smart set'. Her reputation was ruined when she was cited in a divorce case and allegations of her fast-living hit the press.[82] British

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[76] *Daily Mail* March 4th, 1935 p. 5 – this advert showed the woman offering her cigarette case to her male companion.
[77] *Daily Mail* 19 January 1928 p. 12.
[78] *Daily Mail* 24 April 1935 p. 7.
[79] *Daily Mail* 18 February 1935 p. 14.
[80] A particular example of this was Wills Star cigarettes, which not only embodied screen stars in its name but used images of them to sell the product. An advert in 1935 with an illustration of Richard Tauber and Jane Baxter in *Blossom Time* ran with the text 'You'll be charmed by these popular Stars'. *Daily Mail* 17 January 1935 p. 15.
[81] Richards *The Age of the Dream Palace* p. 12, p. 14, p.38.
[82] K. Anger *Hollywood Babylon* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1975) pp. 137 – 40.

versions of the *It* girl, such as Mona Bismarck, Rose Bingham and Brenda Frazier emerged in the 1930s, Cartier cigarette case in hand.[83]

The dance hall was another increasingly popular venue in the interwar period, as the dance crazes of the early twenties became a more enduring and popular form of recreation. Like the cinema, the dance hall was a place where men and women could meet and, advertising suggested, share a cigarette. Sport similarly provided an opportunity for men and women to share their leisure time. Images of golf, hiking and tennis in advertising reflected the popularity of those sports as part of the wider desire to be fit and healthy (Illus. 19). This desire was particularly pertinent for women given pre-war constructions of them as weak and inactive, and the need for athletic exercise was pointed out by contemporary writers.[84] The craze for fitness was in part a constellation of activities - slimming, tanning, sunbathing went alongside exercise - which were designed to 'create the body beautiful'.[85] Women's magazines of the time were full of advice on fashions for the tennis court, exercises which could be done and hints on sunbathing.[86] Such activities did not challenge the status quo, but rather recreated femininity in a way which kept it distinct from masculinity. An article in *Woman's Own* promoting sport and fitness, for example, stressed that while the modern girls could exert themselves on the tennis or lacrosse court, they should nonetheless make sure they did so in a 'dainty frock'. Women were advised against activities which overdeveloped their muscles and were 'destructive of beauty'.[87] Tobacco advertising therefore reflected social trends towards more leisure time and the shared activities which filled that time. The image of smoking as an activity which could be shared between men and women fitted into that environment for both sexes.

However, adverts which depicted young girls smiling and smoking were also showing a new trend, as more and more single young women went into the workplace. Despite the fall in women's employment immediately after the war, the growth of new industries in the 1920s created more factory jobs for women, and opportunities grew

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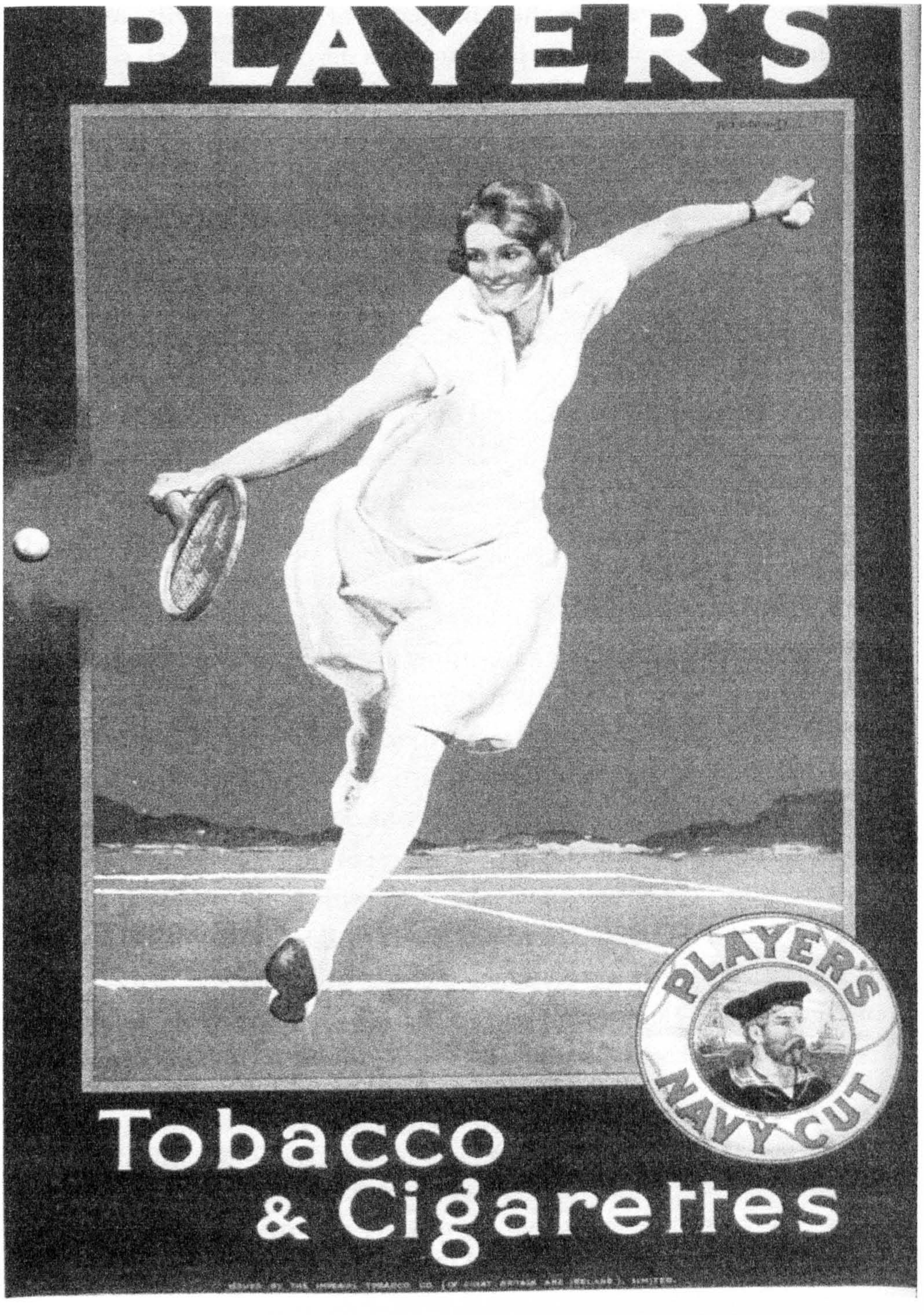
[83] L. Baker Got IT? *The Guardian* 21 April 2001 p. 40.
[84] C. M. Murrell *Womanhood and Health* (London: Mills and Boon Ltd, 1923) p. 104.
[85] J. J. Matthews 'They had such a lot of fun: The Women's League of Health and Beauty between the wars' *History Workshop Journal* 30 (1990) pp. 23 – 54.
[86] 'Be ready for the Tennis season' *Miss Modern* May 1935 p. 31 – 1; 'The Gentle Art of a Suntan' *Miss Modern* July 1935 p. 38 – 39.
[87] 'Games Keep You Fit!' *Woman's Own* 3 June 1933 p. 240.



Illus. 19

Advert for Player's, ca. 1930.
M. Hilton *Smoking in popular culture: 1800 – 2000: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

for typing and clerical work in the government and commercial sector.[88] Wages also rose over the period. This gave more women an independent income, which would have provided them with the means to purchase cigarettes, had they so desired. However, women's wages were often less than their male colleagues and, as Jane Lewis has put it, often scarcely enough to afford a respectable lifestyle, so it is questionable whether cigarettes would have been a priority. [89] Many single women would have still lived at home until marriage and, while this would have given them more money, their personal freedom would have been curtailed by restrictions imposed by their parents. The importance of cinemas and dance halls is highlighted in this context as they would have been important places for women to establish their adult identity. As many jobs remained segregated along sex lines, cinemas and dance halls would have also been one of the places where they would have been able to socialise with the opposite sex. The fact that some women were achieving greater freedoms was attested to by an article in the *Daily Mail* which counselled parents on their daughter's choice of future partner. It was illustrated by two women, a mother and a daughter, across from each other at a coffee table. The mother was seated, clearly remonstrating, while the daughter was perched on the edge of a sofa, cigarette in hand, not really listening. The text beneath reads 'It is quite useless to attempt to influence a new generation by holding up the standards of the old'. Smoking was clearly associated in this picture with that new generation.

The extent to which smoking at work was allowed is questionable. Factory workers at Player's, for example, were given an allowance of cigarettes in 1930, in line with the fact that their male colleagues had been receiving an allowance since 1918. Although women received a smaller allowance than men, Player's must have recognised an increasing number of female smokers.[90] Whether they were allowed to smoke on the premises is not known. Most factories forbade smoking as a fire hazard. However, Miriam Glucksmann notes that smoking was allowed at Morphy Richards factory in

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[88] M. Glucksmann *Women assemble: women workers and the new industries in interwar Britain* (London; Routlegde 1990) p. 46 – 66.
[89] Lewis *Women In England* p. 162 – 8.
[90] Men received 50 cigarettes per week, women received 20. D. Cuthbertson 'Historical Note on the Origin of the Association between Lung Cancer and Smoking' *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians, London* 2: 2 (1968) pp. 191 – 196.

the 1930s, a provision which at least some of the workforce were likely to have taken advantage of.[91]

The growth in personal and financial independence among young women which took place in the interwar period was reflected in the mushrooming magazine culture which surrounded girl and womanhood. These magazines were numerous and diverse with different target audiences. An analysis of the imagery and rhetoric employed around women smokers in some of these magazines reveals an equally diverse range of femininities, from the glamorous socialite in *Vogue* for whom the cigarette was an essential accoutrement, to the working class girl for whom the cigarette was more ambiguous. In the pages of *Vogue* the cigarette was integrated into women's lifestyles. It was used as a prop in fashion shoots[92] and features[93] (Illus. 20) and through advertising. Player's Bachelor was the most commonly advertised cigarette and its adverts tied in with the glamorous fashion style of the magazine (Illus. 21). An advert in November 1938, for example, read 'Though fashion may influence her choice in many matters, she smokes Player's because, like so many of her friends, she prefers those excellent cork-tipped cigarettes'.[94] It is interesting to note that it was not only the tobacco companies which used the cigarette to convey glamour and chic, but also manufacturers of other luxury goods. Lancôme, for example, used a sophisticated woman in an evening dress to sell perfume (Illus. 22).[95] Yardley similarly used a woman, smoking, sitting in a restaurant with a man to sell perfume.[96] Gordon Lowe, Lillywhite and Burberry all used images of women smoking in a variety of leisure settings to sell their outdoor clothing (Illus. 23).[97]

Miss Modern, a magazine which was aimed at the young middle class woman and as its title suggests, intended to be up-to date, also carried a lot of cigarette advertisements from its inception in 1930. The most frequent of these are Player's Bachelor and Wills Gold Flake, although Kensitas and De Reske also figure. Bachelors feature women smoking alone or in pairs. Wills on the other hand used

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[91] Glucksmann *Women Assemble* p. 136.
[92] *Vogue* 27 April 1938 p. 84 Illustrated fashion spread.
[93] *Vogue* 16 November 1938 p. 77 Article on recipes for Christmas is illustrated with the back of a women in a dark green evening dress holding a cigarette.
[94] *Vogue* 16 November 1938 p. 113.
[95] *Vogue*, 25 May 1938, p. 123.
[96] *Vogue* 5 January 1938 p. 3.

Illus. 20 Fashion illustration.
Vogue, 27 April 27 1938 p. 85.

Illus. 21 Advert for Player's Bachelor cigarettes.
Vogue, 11 May 1938, p. 108.

Illus. 22 (left) Advert for Lancôme.
Vogue, 25 May 1938, p. 123.

Illus. 23 (below) Advert for Gordon Lowe.
Vogue, 30 November 1938, p. 14.

images of couples or of the carton. As in *Vogue*, smoking was also used by other manufacturers to symbolise glamour, while other advertising suggests that smoking was a frequent occurrence in readers' lives. For example, an advert for Bondor silk hose features an actress smoking a cigarette showing off her legs, while one for Courtauld's Fashion Studio shows a woman in an evening dress with a cigarette. Colgate's Ribbon Dental Crème was advertised as removing stains which discolour teeth, including tobacco smoke, while Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles advertised their sweets as 'So Good Between Smokes'.[98]

Aside from the advertisements, images of smoking were sporadic, although there was no suggestion that women should not smoke. There was the suggestion, however, that smoking was suited to certain times and occasions and that how it was done is important. For example, smoking featured as a symbol of elegance in an evening dress fashion plate,[99] while an article on manicure was illustrated (Illus. 24) by a woman smoking a cigarette with the text,

> lighting a cigarette is a gesture which makes your hands more important than your face.[100]

In the same way that women were expected to preserve their femininity while playing sport or keeping fit, they were also expected to do so while smoking. The cigarette was portrayed as a feminine accoutrement throughout and the importance of style in smoking was linked to the fact that it was portrayed as a sign of intimacy, as story lines featured couples smoking together.[101] Smoking still retained its connotations of deviance, however, when it was used as a symbolic device in stories to illustrate questionable morality. The clue left behind at a restaurant by an adulterous couple was a gold cigarette case, the woman who ended up pursuing a life of crime smoked (she was rescued from this life of crime by a rich good-looking man), and a woman with a

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[97] Vogue 20 July 1938 p. 14, *Vogue* 20 July 1938 p. 20, *Vogue* 20 November 1938 p. 17.
[98] *Miss Modern*, April 1935 p.37; *Miss Modern* May 1935 p. 49; *Miss Modern* April 1915 p. 79; *Miss Modern* October 1936 p. 71. The claim by toothpaste manufacturers to be able to remove tobacco stains was a common one. An advert for Macleans toothpaste shows a woman with a cigarette in a holder and the caption 'Did you Maclean your teeth today?' The second picture shows her smiling and the words beneath read 'What do you think?' *Daily Mail* 4 February 1935 p. 11.
[99] *Miss Modern* February 1936 p. 3.
[100] *Miss Modern* November 1936 p. 48.
[101] 'Love is for Always' *Miss Modern* February 1935 p. 13.

Illus. 24

A feature on manicure included this photograph with the text 'Lighting a cigarette is a gesture which makes your hands seem more important than your face'.
Miss Modern November 1936 p. 48.

series of lovers and unable to commit to one was pictured lounging around smoking.[102]

In *Women's Own*, a magazine which, its articles on home-making and thrift suggest, was aimed at the working class housewife, did not feature any cigarette advertisements and there was little or no reference to cigarettes. In 1934, however, an article entitled 'A Warning to Wives' warned women against taking things from their husbands which they had not paid for including 'a nearly new box of cigarettes'.[103] This recognised that women did smoke, but cautioned that they should not impinge upon male privilege in doing so.

Resistance to the spread of smoking

In public places

The increasing number of women smoking and their increased visibility in the media can be seen as part of the spatial expansion of the cigarette habit more generally, as it encroached into every sphere of public and private life. These were arguably the two main phenomena of the inter-war period as far as tobacco use was concerned and it is therefore not surprising that the spread of the smoking habit was contested on these two counts. Resistance to smoking focused both on the encroachment of the habit into shared space, and more particularly, the pollution it caused of the air within that space, and on lay fears about what smoking was doing to the health of the nation, a fear embodied in the female smoker. While these were two separate issues, they both had gender implications. By the beginning of the Second World War, women's annual per capita consumption of tobacco was still only about a seventh of men's, which indicates that the majority of non-smokers were women, and the majority of smokers were men.[104] So, while women were on the losing end of debates about contaminated air, they were also on the receiving end of concerns expressed about smoking.

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[102] 'Love Alone' *Miss Modern* February 1935 p. 14; 'Partners in Crime' *Miss Modern* May 1935 p, 16; 'Heartbreaker' *Miss Modern* May 1936 p. 21.
[103] *Woman's Own* 9 June 1934 p. 257.

What was apparent throughout the interwar period, was that as smoking became the expected norm, it was the non-smoker who was forced onto the defensive in terms of non-smoking space and clean air. As A.E. Hamilton noted in 1927,

> smoke has so woven itself into the structure of society that even in many homes of those who never use tobacco the ashtray, ashstand, humidor, tobacco jar, cigar box and an assortment of cigarettes will be found as symbols of modern hospitality... Etiquette demands the ritualistic 'Have a cigar' on the part of the host, and this seems slowly to be giving way to 'have a cigarette'... Smoking has become a pleasure that is taken for granted. The burden of proving that it is not a joy, but a delusion, and of substituting it for something just as acceptable has been placed squarely on the shoulders of those who, for one reason or another, remain opposed to the custom.[105]

In 1929, *The Times* ran a leader which was equally indicative of the way in which attitudes towards smoking had changed in recent years. Smoking was, the writer argued, a matter of course for the young man and to his contemporaries and social intercourse and life were doubtless the better for it. But, he went on, even Raleigh and James I might find themselves in agreement 'if they could see the places where the weed is now at home'. He went on to catalogue the places where smoking was now acceptable, or at least tolerated, and his list showed how far social conventions surrounding smoking had been broken down.

> There are men, and women too, who smoke in public dining rooms, not only among other people's meals, but during their own. There are those who smoke in shops – even in those large general shops which provide smoking rooms to keep customers from smoking elsewhere. In post offices they will strike a match on the counter under a notice requesting them not to smoke. Years ago, when banks were small and modest chambers, clients would take off their hats in respect while

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[104] The actual figures are debatable; Alford has women's annual consumption as a tenth of men's. However, this does not significantly affect the overall argument that women remained a fraction of the smoking public.

they transacted affairs with their friendly financial agents. Today when banks are marble halls, the young client is not over-awed by the splendours of a mere money stop. Hat on, he leans upon the counter, puffing smoke into the faces of the cashier girl and his neighbours. And in railway trains, contempt or wrath is the portion of him that would beg for smoking in a non-smoking carriage where smoking is officially forbidden.[106]

Subsequent letters published in response to this leader confirmed the notion that smoking had become accustomed practice in almost all shared public space. However, for the most part the smoker was perceived as male, and the female smoker was considered in parenthesis. What was also apparent in this correspondence and in other sources was that there was also resistance to this 'contamination'. This echoed the debates in the late nineteenth century over the provision of smoking carriages in trains and rooms in public buildings. But whereas at that time the smoker was contesting social sanctions which precluded him from smoking in such places, the practice was so established by the 1920s that it was the non-smokers who were protesting their right not to breathe that smoke. The issue remained the same – whether a non-smoker should be forced to breathe the smoke from someone else. As one correspondent wrote,

> one after another, the non-smokers strongholds have disappeared – the theatres have gone, the restaurants before 2pm, the front seats at the top of omnibuses, the lifts of the Underground, and now all that remains are the churches, the insides of omnibuses and the British Museum where the non-smoker may be sure of having air to breathe. Even on the pavement he gets choked with foul fumes blown down his throat by passers by... it is time that smokers recognised that there are people who have not accustomed their lungs to breathe smoke all day long and that to have to do so is physically distressing to them.[107]

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[105] A.E. Hamilton *This smoking world* p. 185 – 186.
[106] *The Times* 17 April 1929 p. 17 col. d.
[107] Letter from H.T. White *The Times* 20 April 1929 p. 13 col. e.

Other letters talked about the practice of smoking in theatres and in restaurants, and generally echoed the remarks of one correspondent who wrote 'What seems to be most offensive is the continual encroachment on the liberty of choice about smoking'.[108] What seemed to further exacerbate the situation for non-smokers was that where rooms or carriages were non-smoking, such signs were often ignored.[109] Another letter was indicative of the change in attitudes which had occurred as regards smoking in public places and acknowledged, though far from happily, that the non-smoker was now in the minority.

> Long ago, in an age which the older generation of non-smokers remembers perhaps too well, it was different. The smoker was in a minority, if, as was right and proper, one counted the women... But now the non-smoker is the oddity. Let us therefore, my non-smoking brethren, walk humbly, cap in hand, for these are the days of majority rule and alas, we have not a majority.[110]

However, those who were being forced to breathe the smoke of others were predominantly female, and female non-smokers were not a minority, they were a majority. This would suggest that the smoker continued to be primarily perceived as male, and when correspondents were referring to non-smokers being stigmatised, they meant male non-smokers. It is somewhat incongruous then, that the other main tenet of anti-smoking sentiment was aimed at women. This was particularly apparent in the material published in the inter-war period by the main group opposing smoking, the National Society for Non-Smokers (NSN-S).

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[108] Letter from Sir Flinders Petrie, The Times, 27 April 1929 p. 13d.
[109] Letter from Herbert Levinstein 30 April 1929 p. 12 c; Letter from MD 'one of the egregious minority' 3 May 1926 p. 12 col. g; Letter from Mrs Cecil Eardley 7 May 1929 p. 12 e; Letter from Lady Bern 9 May 1929 p. 12e; Letter from ? 11 June 1929 p. 12e; Letter from M. Farzand Ali 28 June 1929 p. 12 col. e.
[110] Letter from R. B. Graham *The Times* 24 April 1929 p. 17 col. e.

Opposition to smoking among women

Founded in 1926 by Francis J. Phillips to champion the rights of non-smokers, and the implicit assumption by many public bodies that they were now in a minority,[111] the NSN-S attracted a number of high profile figures and claimed to have a base of around 2 000 members. The NSN-S did not aim to stop people smoking,[112] but focused more on the 'environmentally harmful effects of smoking' and the need for clean air.[113] One of its central aims was to protect the rights of non-smokers to clean air. To this end, the society leafleted restaurants, drew up petitions for the railway companies and lobbied Ministers in a manner which foreshadowed the campaigning tactics of later anti-smoking movements.[114] The society also aimed to educate smokers about the injurious effects of their habit,[115] to prevent young people from taking it up and to induce adults to give up, particularly parents and those in positions of influence over young people.[116] While its tone was moderate compared to earlier anti-smoking tracts and it did seem to accept, although not condone, moderate smoking among men, different issues were raised when it came to women smoking and the society certainly did not condone the practice.

In 1930, an off-shoot society was formed, the Women's Non-Smoking Protection Society, which existed, as its name suggests, to protect women from the 'evils' of tobacco.[117] Much of the language used echoed late Victorian rhetoric and in many ways related to the panic at the turn of the century over physical efficiency and the degeneration of the race. Such concerns had been dormant in the aftermath of the First World War, as victory had allayed fears of national deterioration and there had been a

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[111] The immediate motivation for the founding of the society was a decision by London Underground to remove its special smoking carriages, and have instead special non-smoking carriages. The implication was that most travellers were smokers and should be able to smoke on the Underground without the inconvenience of having to find a smoking carriage. *Tobacco* December 1926 no. 552 p. 75.

[112] M. Hilton *Constructing Tobacco: Perspectives on Consumer Culture in Britain 1850 – 1950* (PhD thesis, Lancaster University 1996) p. 261.

[113] V. Berridge 'Science and Policy: the case of post-war British smoking policy' in S. Lock, L. Reynolds and E.M. Tansey (eds.) *Ashes to Ashes; a history of smoking and health Clio Medica* 46 (1998) pp. 143 – 191.

[114] Pamphlets *Stop the Smoking Nuisance in Restaurants – Clean Air in demanded, More Non-Smoking Cars Wanted on the Tubes* are examples of this as is correspondence between various members of the society and the Ministers of Health, Education and Transport PRO MH58/649.

[115] *The National Society of Non-Smokers: Aims and Objectives* - leaflet in PRO MH58/649.

[116] The National Society of Non-Smokers pamphlet *Smoking by Adults* (undated – presumably 1930s) PRO, MH58/649.

[117] Letter from Mrs Reece Jones to the Minister of Health, 3 August 1939 PRO MH 58/649.

surge in the birth-rate immediately following the war.[118] State introduction of family allowances, maternity benefits, free milk and services for the medical inspection in schools were all practical solutions to previous concerns and the focus shifted to education of women in domestic hygiene.[119] The burden of responsibility for the nation's health still fell on women's shoulders, and state and public health measures can be seen as accusatory as much as supportive. The behaviour of women, either by going out to work or being lazy and ignorant in housekeeping and child-rearing, was seen as the root of the problem.[120] The inter-war period saw a loosening of social and moral standards,[121] the Depression, and the possibility of a new war against Germany. By the 1930s, gloomy predictions over the falling birth-rate and high stillbirth and infant mortality rates renewed the emphasis on women as mothers of the future generations.[122]

Anti-smoking literature of the 1930s expressed concerns about the effect of tobacco on women's reproductive systems, their morality, and the welfare of their offspring but the content and tone of such material differed from the turn of the century discussion on several points. The first point was that women became a focus for anti-smoking groups to an extent which they had not been previously. In the nineteenth century, the focus of organised anti-smoking groups had been on men, at the turn of the century on juvenile smokers. By the 1930s, where concern about smoking on the health and well-being of the individual was expressed, it was in relation to women smokers. Moreover, the concerns raised were not confined only to the output of the anti-smoking societies, but were also evident in the press, in tracts written by individuals, in mainstream literature and in correspondence to the Ministry of Health. The debate in the 1890s had focused on a potential phenomenon, rather than one

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[118] R. A. Soloway *Demography and Degeneration: eugenics and the declining birthrate in twentieth century Britain* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990) p. 232.
[119] D. Lupton *The Imperative of Health: public health and the regulated body* (Sage Publications, London 1995) pp. 42 – 46.
[120] C. Hamlin 'State Medicine in Great Britain' in D.Porter (ed.) 'The History of Public Health and the Modern State' *Clio Medica* 26 (Amsterdam, Editions Rodopi, 1994) p. 153.
[121] A. Marwick *Women at War 1914 – 1948* (London 1977) discusses the fact that women began to support themselves, started dining out alone, wearing shorter skirts and experiencing a sense of liberation that was a result of four years of war. She quotes Mary Agnes Hamilton writing in the 1930s 'Life was less than cheap: it was thrown away... all moral standards were help for a short moment and irretrievably lost'. p. 119.
[122] R. A. Soloway *Demography and Degeneration* p. 232 – 246.

which had actually materialised. By the 1930s, smoking among women was not only more prevalent, but also more visible and incited more comment.

Secondly, the fact that whereas female smokers had been seen as 'Wild Women' who were challenging social and biological norms by smoking at the turn of the century, by the 1930s, women smokers were portrayed as being 'enslaved', helpless beings swept along on the tide of fashion and ending up unable to control their need for nicotine. The threat which smoking posed to woman's reproductive capacity was no longer simply that it was unwomanly and could therefore upset the delicate balance of female physiology, but that by smoking, women ingested a poison, which they transmitted to their babies in the womb, in their breastmilk and in the smoky air of the home.

The tone of some of the comment suggests that the opposition to women's smoking stemmed from the patriarchal status quo rather than women's smoking *per se*. Such comments focused on women's perceived weakness, in terms which echoed the criticisms made in the 1890s. In general terms, it was felt that the smoking habit would affect a woman much more gravely than it would a man. It was suggested that women were incapable of being moderate once they had taken up the habit, and that this immoderation would lead to further vices and a further decline in standards of behaviour. To quote two contemporary pamphlets,

> women smoke nervously. They cannot smoke moderately.[123]

> women, with a nervous system comparatively unstable and more sensitive, will tend to smoke excessively and to suffer more than a man.[124]

Another pamphlet went on to consider the wider effects of this on a woman's behaviour.

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[123] M. Reece Jones *Nicotine: how it enslaves men, women and children* (undated, late 1930s/early 1940s judging from the material it was filed with) PRO MH58/649.
[124] A.E. Hamilton *This Smoking World* (The Century Co. New York, London 1927) p. 178.

It was certainly long considered that no decent woman should smoke and, although fashion has changed, there is still a considerable sentiment against smoking by women. Hence a girl who smokes is conscious that she is doing something of which many disapprove. She thus finds herself driven into an attitude of defiance of ordinary sentiment. A rebel in one thing, she is liable to become rebellious in others. Having broken one convention, it becomes easier to break other conventions.[125]

One pamphlet drew the distinction between the 'feminine' type of woman who did not break conventions and the 'modern' type who had 'invaded a vast proportion of the original woman's territory' going on to argue that 'the introduction of cigarette smoking, cocktail drinking and other vices is certainly not making for the betterment of womanhood nor the race'.[126] As in the 1890s, smoking was situated within a constellation of new behaviours which were not perceived to be in keeping with woman's role in society.

The juxtaposition of the 'feminine' and the 'modern' type of woman harked back to idealised notions of womanhood dating from the Victorian era. The 'modern' type of woman was again seen to be a threat to the social order. The use of the word invasion suggested aggressive intent, which was at odds with idealised notions of feminine passivity. Another pamphlet defined the moral roles of men and women and the danger smoking presented to this dichotomy more explicitly.

> The man's duty is to honour and protect the woman. Woman's duty is to inspire the man with noble thoughts and preserve him from temptation.
>
> A noble woman will not only shun lax morals and immodesty, but will inspire men to do likewise. Smoking dulls the moral sense and reacts upon courtesy.[127]

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[125] A. Cardew *Women and Smoking* (1937) PRO MH58/649.
[126] M. Reece Jones *Nicotine: how it enslaves.*
[127] A. Stewart *Should a Woman Smoke* (R. James, London 1929).

The damage a woman was doing to her appearance was also expressed as a concern in aesthetic, moral and physical terms.

> What a deflection from the original to see a woman with a cigarette between her lips! Smoking not only impairs her facial beauty , making her features pointed, and the corner of her lips wrinkled, but the lower lip inartistically protrudes beyond the upper and changes her whole expression.[128]

Opponents of women's smoking argued that it bred 'selfishness, untidiness, carelessness, wastefulness and indifference to the comfort of others'.[129] Such qualities would not have been desirable in a man, but were completely incompatible with the notion of ideal motherhood, indeed any womanhood, where woman were expected to be selfless, careful, and concerned with the comfort of others. Failure, or perceived failure, in this remit would have wider social consequences.

> Injury caused by the woman's inefficiency in the home life, affects not only the individuals and families concerned, but also the whole social community. The difficulties of the family and the individual eventually become the problem of the state.[130]

Although the assertion that smoking bred selfishness was a statement of opinion, rather than an assertion of fact, it indicates one strand of reasoning against smoking among women. Smoking was not only undesirable and unattractive in a woman, but it also undermined prevailing notions of womanhood and femininity.

The medical and moral dangers which tobacco posed to women as the weaker sex lay in the pharmacological properties of nicotine. It was argued that this would affect a

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[128] 'Cigarettes not dignified for women' *Clean Air* 1956; Alexander Stewart similarly argues that a cigarette between female lips is 'a travesty of the sublime', while Alexander Cardew goes beyond the aesthetic dimension to consider the way in which smoking 'fouls their breaths, discolours their teeth and leaves them with a bad taste in their mouth.' A. Stewart *Should a woman smoke?*; A. Cardew *Woman and smoking.*

[129] National Society for Non-Smokers pamphlet *Smoking by Adults* (undated) PRO MH 58/649.

[130] A. Stewart *Should a Woman Smoke.*

woman much more than a man, due to her weaker biological make-up and the delicate nature of her nerves.

> But if tobacco smoking has an adverse effect on the male, what shall we say of its possible influence on the far more delicate tissues of a woman? It is obvious that it will be much more serious. Besides women who become serious smokers tend to excess, lighting cigarette after cigarette at the card table and scarcely knowing they are smoking at all. All the time they are absorbing drugs. Now the dose of medicine is controlled and regulated by the size and age of the patient; yet a woman, perhaps not half the weight of a man, will smoke an equal quantity of cigarettes and trust to her slender frame to deal with the same amount of poisons. It is giving it an impossible task.[131]

The recognition that tobacco is a drug was frequent in anti-smoking material and this was paralleled by the acknowledgement that it is addictive.

> When commencing the habit, no-one expects to reach the point where tobacco becomes his or her master... Having once absorbed nicotine into the system, the smoker experiences a mysterious craving for more and more. The seductive nature of tobacco provides a death trap for many an unfortunate victim.[132]

There were frequent references to smokers as addicts in various contexts, but again the problem of addiction was seen to be worse if the addict was a woman.

> But it is obvious that when the mother is addicted to smoking, the outlook for the child is worse than when the father smokes, because of the greater contact which a mother has with the child.[133]

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[131] Dr. Ernest Griffin 'Foreword' to A. Cardew *Women and Smoking*; A.E. Hamilton *This Smoking World* p. 178.
[132] M. Reece Jones *Nicotine: how it enslaves.*

> It was bad enough when the male portion of the community alone was addicted to tobacco, but now the vice – for it is just as much a vice as any other form of drug-taking – has spread to women also we may expect effects still more disastrous, seriously endangering the health and physique of future generations.[134]

Certainly the concept of addiction was one which was prevalent as regards alcohol and opium use, but Virginia Berridge argues that tobacco use was never integrated fully into the inebriety/addiction model, quoting a contemporary article on the subject,

> the true addict is held in bondage by the fear of withdrawal, and the craving which follows it. With tobacco this does not exist; the loss of one's smoke is an annoyance, but hardly a tragedy.[135]

However, I would argue that anti-tobacco literature certainly embraced the contemporary discourse of addiction, talking of enslavement and craving, bondage and imprisonment, and there was a recognition that nicotine was the pharmacological element responsible for this. It may not have been the dominant paradigm in the medical profession, but there was enough evidence to suggest a certain amount of unease about excessive smoking, which I shall return to later.[136] There may not have been a comparable concept of tobacco inebriety to that of alcoholism, but the detractors of smoking saw it nonetheless as a 'twin evil',[137] equally addictive and harmful to the social and moral framework of the nation. The added danger for women smokers, the quotes above suggest, was that their addiction would endanger the health and morality of their offspring in a way which smoking among men would not.

There was undoubtedly a tension between the idea of the 'modern type of women', the 'rebel' whose unconventional behaviour included cigarette smoking and the idea of

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[133] A. Cardew *Should a Woman Smoke*; See also Letter from Francis Philips to Ernest Brown, Minister of Health 13 February 1941 PRO MH 58/649; Letter from the Secretary, NSN-S to the Editor of the News Chronicle, 23 August 1938 PRO MH 58/649.
[134] Rt. Hon. Sir Ralph Spencer Paget *A plea for the Non-Smoker* (1935).
[135] W.E. Dixon 'The Tobacco Habit' *British Journal of Inebriety* 25 (1927 – 8) pp. 99-121 quoted by Virginia Berridge *Science and Policy* p146; As I will show later in this chapter, W. E. Dixon argued elsewhere that smoking was dangerous for health.
[136] See for example *The Lancet* 18 October 1919 p. 718.
[137] Letter from Francis Phillips to Ernest Brown, Minister of Health, 16 May 1942 PRO MH58/649.

smoking women as 'enslaved victims'. However, the consensus seemed to be that women start smoking to be 'chic', but they 'soon contract the habit and presently cannot cease'.[138] They were seen as not in control of their behaviour, an idea which Margretta Reece Jones, the Chairwoman of the Woman's Protection Society, picked up in her metaphor of drowning.

> Is it not a reality that young Womanhood is drifting downstream and heading for disaster through the poisonous cigarette, risking not only her own life, but that of her offspring – the future of the race being in jeopardy.[139]

In a foreword to a pamphlet *Should Women Smoke?* the chairman of the National Society for Non-Smokers, Francis John Phillips, talked of women being 'enslave(d) in the grip of this insidious tobacco habit'. They should, he argued, learn that 'the future lies with a race versed in hygiene and free from all manner of bondage'.[140] The position of woman as moral exemplar and guardian of the future of the race was suggested, and the solution to the problem was for women not to start smoking and to discourage others from doing so.

> By precept and by example mothers should help to safeguard their daughters from the tobacco habit. A code of honour amongst girls and women should be established, in which smoking is condemned and regarded as inferior and contamination. It should be considered bad form, and a lowering of moral tone and woman's dignity to smoke.

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[138] Rt. Hon. Sir Ralph Spencer Paget *op. cit.* PRO MH58/649.

[139] Reece Jones *Nicotine: how it enslaves*; As suggested already, another common metaphor was the idea of being enchained:

> ... owing to the appalling increase of smoking by the older woman, young women and girls to appear 'fashionable', often becoming 'chain smokers' with a serious danger to health and morals and probably in later years to their offspring. "Chain smokers are in chains indeed and a nation is not free whose womanhood is in fetters.
>
> A Reece Jones (Mrs.) of the Women's Non-Smoking Protective Society to Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health 1945.

[140] F. J. Phillips 'Foreword' to A. Stewart *Should a Woman Smoke?*

> Let it be remembered that the habit once begun tends to become chronic and enslaving.[141]

The role of woman as mother was not only important in moral terms, but more explicitly in biological terms. Much of the literature tied in morally correct behaviour with biological determinism and woman's reproductive role was at the centre of this.

> From a physical point of view woman's place in life is of supreme importance. To women is committed the honoured office of bearing and nurturing children. To bring forth strong and healthy children, and to produce a virile race are vital factors in the functions of her life and calling. Girls and women, who are worthy of their calling, endeavour, by precept and by example, to cultivate habits conducive to health and to a sound, strong progeny. Any practice *or* habit which impairs the health of the woman or undermines her strength has a corresponding injurious and deteriorating effect upon the child.[142]

The author then went on to quote a Dr. Charles D. Barber of Lansing, Michigan speaking at the annual convention of the American Association for Medico-Physico Research.

> A baby born of a cigarette smoking mother is sick. It is poisoned and may die within two weeks of birth. The post-mortem examination shows degeneration of the liver, heart and other organs.[143]

While the consequences of maternal smoking and the rhetoric employed may be somewhat extreme, the concerns expressed were reflected in the quoted words of other medics.

> A young infant with a smoking mother not only absorbs nicotine with its food, but inhales it with tobacco tainted air. When one recalls the

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[141] F. J. Phillips 'Foreword' to A. Stewart *Should a Woman Smoke?*
[142] F. J. Phillips 'Foreword' to A. Stewart *Should a Woman Smoke?*

> deadly and dwarfing influence of nicotine upon young life... it is not to be wondered at that the effects of tobacco using by mothers should be so disastrous. The tobacco laden air of some houses must be a most unfavourable environment for a growing infant.[144]

In another text, a Dr Kress of Washington was quoted as saying,

> nicotine exerts a blighting influence upon the germ plasm from which the infant is developed. High infant mortality is partly due to tobacco. Should marriage be confined to smokers, the results would be disastrous. I pity any child born in a home where both father and mother are smokers. They are always degenerate. Should such a child reach manhood and be married to a smoker, there would probably be no offspring.[145]

Such concerns portrayed a concern about the effects of nicotine on the unborn baby and the effects of environmental tobacco smoke on the growing child (Illus. 25). The twin concerns of internal and external contamination echoed the wider concerns about the effect of smoking on social well-being as a whole. It was not the behaviour of the individual woman which was the concern, but the implications of that behaviour writ large for society. In medical terms, the concern was not for the damage the woman was doing to her body, nor even to that of her child, but to the future health of the nation.

The extent to which such concerns remained the preserve of a few anti-smoking fanatics and the extent to which they mirrored more general opinion is a debatable point. Much of the literature was repetitive in who it quoted, but this does not mean that the concerns expressed were confined to those writing. The NSN-S itself drew over 2 000 members in the first few months of its existence and these members were

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[143] *Daily News*, British United Press 15 October 1927 quoted by Alexander Stewart *Should a Woman Smoke?*
[144] Dr. J.H. Kellogg quoted by A. Stewart *Should a Woman Smoke?*
[145] A.E. Hamilton *This Smoking World* p. 177 – 8; Hamilton describes this statement as 'So palpably undemonstrated and in part so obviously untrue'.

often vocal in their support for the movement.[146] The society spawned several other movements, sometimes as a result of disputes over objectives and means of achieving them,[147] otherwise focusing on different target groups.[148] Much of the material relating to the early years of the society was destroyed after the death of Tom Hirst in 1995, who took over the organisation in the 1960s and transformed it into QUIT.[149] It is therefore difficult to guess at the social make-up of the members of the NSN-S or the extent to which their numbers were maintained or grew. A 1949 Mass Observation report put their average age at over 45, but gave no indication of the source of this data.[150] Although a few thousand was by no means a huge section of the population, it was at least more than the sum of the people writing and distributing the pamphlets. Comments in the press were also indicative of attitudes towards women smokers.

As Penny Tinkler has shown, attitudes towards smoking among women in popular girls and women's magazines were by no means all positive. In 1926, for example, an article in *Girl's Friend* entitled 'This cigarette business' focused on the fact that cigarette smoking undermined femininity, suggesting that the female smoker's hair would smell stale 'instead of the sweet, subtle perfume that he (had) been given to expect' and that her breath would likewise smell. That smoking made woman 'mannish' was also suggested.[151] Such criticism was predicated on the fact that smoking was a masculine behaviour, at odds with idealised femininity, rather than any particular medical grounds. However, as the 1922 article in *The Times* quoted earlier suggested, health concerns were not absent. They surfaced quite prominently in 1939 when a photograph of the Minister of Health, Walter Elliot, lighting a woman's cigarette was published (Illus. 26). This elicited more than a handful of letters to the Ministry of Health, the Prime Minister and to the national newspapers which carried the picture. Most of these letters expressed concern at the prevalence of smoking among women and regretted that the Minister of Health had been seen to encourage

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[146] See for example, *Mass Observation Archive* TC63/3C/Shipway.
[147] For example, the Non-Smokers Defence League was formed in Manchester ca 1930.
[148] For example, the Little Pioneers Band (to protect the young), which retained its affiliation with the NSN-S.
[149] The focus of QUIT is primarily on helping smokers to give up their habit.
[150] Mass Observation File Report 3192 *Man and his cigarette: smoking habits (*1949).
[151] P. Tinkler "Red tips for hot lips': advertising cigarettes for young women in Britain, 1920-1970' *Women's History Review* 10:2 (2001) pp.249-272; P. Tinkler 'Rebellion, Modernity, and Romance: Smoking as a gendered practice in popular young women's magazines, Britain 1918-1939' *Women's Studies International Forum* 24 :1 (2001) pp. 1-12.

THE HEALTH MINISTER, Mr. Walter Elliot, lights the cigarette of his hostess, Mrs. Theis, tenant of one of the new flats in the L.C.C. housing estate he opened at Shepherd's Bush yesterday. Right is Mr. Herbert Morrison, leader of the L.C.C.

Illus. 25 (right) The front cover of Alexander Stewart's pamphlet, *Should a Woman Smoke?* PRO MH 58/649.

Illus. 26 (above) Photograph of Walter Elliot, the Health Minister, lighting a woman's cigarette. Enclosed with correspondence, PRO MH 58/649.

this in his actions. As one correspondent put it, Walter Elliot was 'guilty of deliberately inciting women and girls to indulge in a regrettable and harmful habit, from which, once acquired, they cannot free themselves, much as they would wish to'.[152] One correspondent alluded more directly to the moral and physical concerns highlighted in the anti-smoking literature outlined above.

> You, as Minister of "Health", by assisting a woman – possibly a mother – to light her cigarette, are thereby bestowing your approval on a deplorable drug habit to which, alas, numbers of English women (and girls) have become slaves; and which, apart from the lowering of the moral tone, is doing infinite harm to those who are addicted to it. ...Judging by the appearances in the picture the woman looks a poor specimen physically, especially when compared with the four beefy male individuals; and you would have rendered a real service in keeping with your Office had you suggested that the money wasted on cigarettes would be more advantageously spent on nourishing food.[153]

The tone of this letter is similar to the material produced by the National Society of Non-Smokers and others in seeing smoking among women as an addiction which did physical and moral harm. However, the letter also raised economic concerns which echoed the emphasis on money wasted in nineteenth century anti- tobacco literature aimed at men.

Reactions of the medical profession to smoking

The images presented of female smokers in advertising, in the press, in the movies and by those who opposed the habit show the coexistence of different meanings which smoking held for women in the interwar period. For the medical profession, however, the question seems to have gone largely unaddressed. The medical opinion quoted in anti-smoking material produced in the interwar period came largely from earlier anti-

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[152] Letter from (Mr.) J.E. Jones, Preston, to Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, 26 July 1939 PRO MH58/649.
[153] Letter from E. Moorby to Walter Elliot, Minister of Health, 22 July 1939 PRO MH58/649.

tobacco campaigns in Britain and the United States.[154] This was because there was comparatively little medical material on the health effects of smoking in Britain following the First World War.[155] This extended to both the *Lancet* and the *BMJ,* who paid relatively little attention to the subject. In part this reflects the pervasiveness of the habit, in part it reflects the consensus that moderate smoking was not harmful, and could, in some cases, be beneficial. The latter attitude can be traced to the perceived importance of tobacco in the First World War.[156] Concerns over physical unfitness and, in particular, a condition that was known as 'soldiers heart' had led to an MRC committee to investigate the possible links with tobacco smoking. In 1917, however, the MRC exonerated smoking in its report.[157]

However, despite this endorsement and the unprecedented popularity of the cigarette during and following the First World War, there was not a blanket acceptance of the habit and it is interesting to note the ways in which concerns about health were rationalised and subsumed by the social imperatives of smoking. Articles on tobacco use appeared sporadically and were indicative of some of the concerns expressed about the effects of smoking. These centred on the issue of inhaling the smoke from cigarettes and smoking to excess.[158] However, it was generally accepted that smoking was a social necessity and only in certain cases should abstention be encouraged. As one doctor wrote in a reply to a letter on the subject 'the *per contra* side' of giving up smoking was 'the allegation of unsociability'.[159] In 1931, a doctor wrote in asking whether there was any kind of tobacco suitable for a patient with an 'irritable

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[154] Dr. Kellogg, for example, was a prominent nineteenth century figure in the United States who was known for his advocacy of dietary reform and temperance. Dr Kress was heavily involved in the American anti-cigarette campaigns which focused on juvenile smoking at the turn of the century. He worked with Lucy Page Gaston in Chicago, promoting his own smoking cure, a silver nitrate solution which should be painted on the tongue. 'Killing the Cigaret Habit' *Literary Digest* 47 (6 December 1913) p. 1118.

[155] N. Dugdale *Nicotine and Health or Smoke from a doctors pipe: a short discourse on how to avoid some of the effects of smoking* (London: John Bale, Sons and Danielson Ltd, 1936) p. 3. Dugdale noted that there had been practically no literature published on smoking in the ten or fifteen years preceding his own book, despite the popularity of the habit.

[156] *The Lancet* 3 October 1914 pp. 857 – 8.

[157] P. Bartrip 'Pushing the Weed: the editorialising and advertising of tobacco in the Lancet and the British Medical Journal 1880 – 1958' in Lock, Reynolds and Tansey *Ashes to Ashes* pp. 100 – 129.

[158] *BMJ* 7 February 1920 p. 178 vol. I; 2 July 1921 vol. II p. 20; 6 August 1921 vol. II p. 224; 8 July 1922 vol. II p. 66; 5 August 1922 p. 237; 12 April 1930 vol. I p. 709; 14 May 1932 vol. I p. 918; 10 March 1934 vol. I p. 468.

[159] *BMJ* 20 August 1920 vol. II p. 300.

heart'.[160] Rather than counselling him to abstain, the doctor sought a way around the problem which would not interfere with the prevailing social norms.

One book on smoking, published in 1936, is itself illustrative of the general character of sentiment about smoking in the inter-war period.[161] While aware that smoking did certainly produce some unwelcome effects, the author's concern was how to minimise those effects rather than to abandon the habit.[162] He was not completely permissive however. He criticised the cigarette and the practice of inhaling smoke, arguing that 'cigarette smokers have only to look at the discoloration on their fingers to get an idea of what happens inside their lungs when inhaling'.[163] He also argued that the legal age for smoking should be raised to 20, and that smoking did more harm to some women than men, in particular to pregnant women.

> During pregnancy, smoking should be given up altogether, for it has been shown that nicotine may be present in the blood which feeds the unborn babe. During lactation, nicotine can be found in the milk, and even in very small quantities is injurious to the child.[164]

Dugdale also expressed concern about the effects of smoking on non-smokers breathing it in if they were 'genuinely unable to tolerate tobacco smoke'.[165]

For another contemporary author, J.H. Wodehouse, the smoker was a man with the intelligence and ability to digest the facts about smoking and to make up his own mind how best to proceed. This echoed the idea of the gentleman smoker of the

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[160] *BMJ* 12 September 1931 vol. II p. 517.
[161] N. Dugdale *Nicotine and Health or Smoke from a doctors pipe: a short discourse on how to avoid some of the effects of smoking* (London: John Bale, Sons and Danielson Ltd., 1936).
[162] For example, while explaining the actions of nicotine on the heart, Dugdale would then go on to recommend what tobacco mixtures would best attenuate symptoms such as palpitations, without losing the benefits of contentment and satisfaction which could be attained. He also listed symptoms and circumstances which should be taken as a warning to 'slow down' or to change one's smoking habits. 'Smoker's throat', for example, was one of the 'commonest complaints' among smokers, and Dugdale attributed it both to too much smoking and to using the wrong type of tobacco, an explanation which echoed the advertising for certain brands described above. Dugdale *Nicotine and Health* p. 20 – 23.
[163] Dugdale *Nicotine and Health* p. 30.
[164] Dugdale *Nicotine and Health* p. 22.
[165] Dugdale *Nicotine and Health* p. 6.

Victorian period. He made no reference to women or children, characterising the smoker as an adult man.[166]

However, other sources recognised the changing gender construction of the smoking population. One doctor, writing in the *BMJ*, noted that the instances of people having to give up would increase with the increasing numbers of female smokers.

> Cases are often seen where it is desirable, or even urgently necessary to discontinue smoking … instances of this kind will become much more common in future owing to the great increase of smoking amongst women, whose nervous and circulatory systems are so susceptible to the injurious effects of tobacco.[167]

However, the consensus seemed to be that if one (male or female) could manage one's smoking consumption within certain boundaries (and those boundaries were different depending on sex), both in terms of quantity and in terms of quality, then there was no reason for a rational adult not to smoke.

Nonetheless, despite the widespread acceptance, or at least rationalisation, of the habit, it is possible to discern some disquiet about the effects of tobacco on the health of the smoker, which increased in the years preceding the Second World War. In 1921, Professor W.E. Dixon, a Cambridge professor, delivered a lecture to the Pharmaceutical Society on 'The Drug Habit', in which he acknowledged the 'narcotic properties of tobacco' and the fact that the carbon dioxide in the smoke could cause vertigo, tremors, nausea, anaemia and loss of memory for recent events'.[168] In 1927, he gave another lecture in which he suggested that long term smoking could be responsible for 'some of the cardio-vascular diseases so common in middle and later life'.[169] Dixon's colleague, Rolleston, was more explicit, arguing by 1937 that,

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[166] J. H. Wodehouse *The Smoking Habit: its dangers and its cure* (London: W.H. Jacklen 1924, repr. 1930, 1936) p. 7 – 8.
[167] *BMJ* March 17th 1923 p. 492.
[168] W.E. Dixon 'An Address on the Drug Habit' *BMJ* November 19th 1921 vol. II p. 819. Dixon went on to suggest, however, that such ill-effects were only likely to happen to those who smoked twenty cigarettes or more a day.
[169] W.E. Dixon 'The Tobacco Habit' *BMJ* 22 October, 1927 p. 719 – 725.

> the subject of tobacco smoking was quite as much a concern of public health as that of acute exanthemata, diphtheria and other forms of acute infectious disease.[170]

But while he regarded tobacco smoking as an addiction, he again stopped short of classing it with morphine, heroin or cocaine. What is interesting about Rolleston's argument in 1937 is that he referred to arguments current in Germany at the time, stating that 'many doctors and scientific men concerned with the supervision of the health of the German people were of the opinion that the danger due to nicotine was as great as that caused by alcohol'.[171]

In Britain, articles linking smoking with heart disease appeared sporadically through the 1930s and the connection was clearly believed to be gender-specific. The fact that the incidence of such disease was higher in male smokers was noted and it was here suggested that,

> the possible future increase in the disease among women concomitantly with the increasing use of tobacco by them may yield more information.[172]

By 1936, the subject had gained enough weight to merit a leader in the *BMJ*. While admitting that the association was not causal, it was noted that,

> the victim is nearly always a smoker, and it is known that after the appearance of the symptoms continuation of smoking is harmful. Further the disease is very rarely seen in the female, and this may in part be explained by the less intense smoking habits of women.[173]

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[170] 'The Tobacco Problem' *British Medical Journal* October 23rd 1937 p. 822.
[171] The Tobacco Problem p. 822; For work on German research on the association between smoking and lung cancer in the Nazi era see G. Davey Smith, S. A. Stroeble and M. Egger 'Smoking and Health Promotion in Nazi Germany' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 48 (1994) pp. 220 – 223; R.Proctor *The Nazi War on Cancer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
[172] *BMJ* May 28th 1932 p. 996. See also September 16th 1933 p. 537, November 17th 1934.
[173] *BMJ* May 21st 1936 p. 1037.

It was the prevalence of the disease in men concomitant with their higher smoking rates which was to provide the first real impetus for large scale research into smoking-related disease in Britain in the late 1940s, but the presence of these articles in the *BMJ* and *Lancet* suggest that there was an awareness of the dangers to health before such research got underway. The fact that such observation focused on men reflected the make up of the smoking population. Despite disquiet about the health aspects of smoking, however, the medical and scientific community chose not to go down the same route as the Germans in prohibiting, or even researching, smoking and the Second World War served to entrench the smoking habit yet further.

What contemporary evidence there is suggests that smoking among men was an accepted, unquestioned habit. While some of the 19th century rhetoric about rational consumption and moderation survived, the consensus seemed to be that smoking would not do undue harm. Although the prevalence of smoking among women had increased over the period, it remained relatively low at the outbreak of the Second World War. Contemporary comment supported the contention that smoking remained predominantly a masculine habit. While the explanation of mass commodity culture can arguably be used to explain the increase in men's smoking, the same explanation cannot be used to explain the increase in women's smoking. In the interwar period, smoking among women quite simply was not a mass phenomenon.

Many of the representations of smoking discussed in this chapter were created by people who had been well-educated and, like all such representations, were employed for a purpose, whether to sell a product or as a vehicle for particular ideologies. In addition, the images in the interwar period were, more often than not, male interpretations of smoking and what it symbolised. This was in contrast to the 1890s debate which was authored just as much by women. However, it is possible to gain some insight into the social meaning which smoking had for ordinary people of both sexes by looking at the surveys on smoking which were carried out by Mass Observation in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Smoking in Mass Observation

Mass Observation (MO) was founded in 1937 by Tom Harrison and Charles Madge with the explicit aim of creating 'an anthropology of ourselves'.[174] Twin modes of investigation were employed, reflecting the different approaches of Harrison and Madge. On the one hand, there was the extensive 'observation' of people which Harrison and his team undertook in working class Bolton, and occasionally Blackpool; on the other hand, there were the detailed records sent in by MO volunteers, known as the National Panel, who compiled diaries of certain days and answered monthly questionnaires (or directives, as they were known).

Mass Observation can be seen as part of a wider movement to document the experiences of ordinary people in the 1930s.[175] On one level this was a literary venture,[176] but more significantly, it was also a political one, in that it was attempting to bring about social change.[177] For the Left, the Depression both signified failure in the capitalist world system and opened the debate as to whether there was a democratic alternative to fascism and communism which could overcome that failure. The urgency of finding that alternative was the impetus behind the 'documentary movement' as a whole, which aimed to 'show things as they are' for the majority of the population.[178] To do this, MO, as a movement, aimed to give 'working class and middle class people a chance to speak for themselves'.[179] Moreover it aimed to present their findings to those men and women 'in a way which often directly concern(s) their everyday lives'. This was done by publishing various reports, books and pamphlets.[180] In their political aims, MO ranked alongside movements such as the Left Book Club,[181] authors such as George Orwell,[182] the founders of the magazine

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[174] Quoted in N. Stanley *"The Extra Dimension": a study and assessment of the methods employed by Mass Observation in its first period 1937 – 40* (PhD thesis, Birmingham Polytechnic, 1981) p.2.
[175] K. H. Gustav *The Literature of Labour* (Brighton: Harvester, 1985) pp. 128 – 173.
[176] D. Chaney & M. Pickering 'Authorship in Documentary: Sociology as an Art form in Mass Observation' in J. Corner (ed.) *Documentary and the Mass Media* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986) pp. 29 – 44.
[177] Gustav *The Literature of Labour* p. 175.
[178] H. Jennings & C. Madge (ed.) *May 12th, Mass Observation Day Survey* (London, 1937) p.37.
[179] C. Madge & H. Jennings 'Poetic Description and Mass Observation' *New Verse* 24 (1937) pp. 1-6.
[180] For example C. Madge & T. Harrison *Mass Observation* (London: Muller, 1937); C. Madge & T. Harrison T. (eds.) First Years Work 1937-8 by Mass Observation (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1938); C. Madge & T. Harrison *Britain by Mass Observation* (London: Penguin, 1939).
[181] D. Chaney and M. Pickering 'Authorship in documentary' p. 50.
[182] D. Chaney and M. Pickering 'Authorship in documentary' p. 50.

Fact[183] and *Picture Post*[184] and the documentary film-makers working for the GPO public relations service.[185] MO's studies of smoking can be used to provide a good insight into the social position of smoking, but in doing so, one nonetheless has to question whether the political agenda of the organisation or the personal motivations of the panellists allowed them to present an objective account of contemporary social experience.

The National Panel was made up of unpaid volunteers who undertook to keep diaries on specific days of the month and to answer questionnaires on specific issues, such as smoking, football pools and pub-going. Most of them had responded to newspaper publicity or joined after reading the pamphlets and articles published by MO.[186] They did not provide a representative sample, being composed of those who, given the voluntary nature of the panel, were sufficiently interested in MO's work to respond to their 'directives'. Despite MO's claim in 1939 that there were 'some two thousand voluntary observers all over the country', very few responded regularly.[187] They could not afford to turn anyone away who did wish to respond. In response to criticism about the validity of their results, MO did provide a breakdown of the background of the panel in their book *First Years Work.*[188] The majority were single men and women in their twenties, who described themselves as lower-middle to middle class and lived in the South East of England. Professionally, they were predominantly artists, journalists and writers, teachers and students, office workers and housewives. Nick Stanley's detailed analysis of the panel supports those broad conclusions.[189] The problem was then not only that the National Panel did not provide a statistically valid sample of the population, but that, in a large part, it represented a highly select representation of that population, namely predominantly young middle class people who subscribed to particular set of beliefs.

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[183] S. Laing 'Presenting things as they are': John Sommerfield's May Day and Mass Observation' in F. Gloversmith (ed.) *Class, Culture and Social Change: a new view of the 1930s* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980) pp. 142 – 60.
[184] D. Chaney & M. Pickering 'Authorship in documentary' p. 50.
[185] Gustav *The Literature of Labour* p. 136 – 144.
[186] C. Madge & T. Harrison *First Years Work* pp. 68 – 75; N. Stanley *The Extra Dimension* p. 154.
[187] Nick Stanley has analysed the composition of the panel during the period 1937 – 1945 and identified the total number of responses as 1894 men and 953 women. Excluding those who only replied once, the male panel numbers 680, the female panel 415. Stanley *'The Extra Dimension'* p. 155.
[188] Madge & Harrison *First Years Work* p. 63-65.
[189] Stanley *'The Extra Dimension'* pp. 147 – 155.

As far as the smoking survey was concerned, MO did not see this as a problem as they formed their own social distinctions.

> There are, as you can see from the compartments in railway trains, two groups in society, Smokers and Non-Smokers, which cuts across all other groups, whether of sex, age, class, profession, politics or religion. The smokers are the majority group.[190]

This affected the design of the questionnaire. Firstly, there was no question 'Do you smoke?'. It was simply assumed that the respondent would. The first questionnaire did not refer to non-smokers or not smoking at all, apart from one question which asked whether the respondent had ever tried to give up or cut down their smoking. The somewhat longer second questionnaire similarly assumed that the respondent would smoke, beginning 'Why did you start to smoke?'. It did, however, include a question for and about non-smokers.

> What is your attitude, if a non-smoker, to smokers, or if a smoker, to non-smokers? Have you noticed that when a non-smoker declines a cigarette, he is often complimented on being free of the smoking habit?

Despite MO's preconceptions about the functioning of society and the existence of hidden structures of social consciousness, the responses to the smoking survey provide valuable material on the attitudes and behaviour of individuals in their own right. Gender perceptions of smoking and smokers, questions of health and the effects of smoking, and the economic implications of smoking for individuals are all issues which MO were not addressing specifically, but which emerged as broad themes throughout the responses. These gender distinctions and class pretensions were central both to respondents' identity formation and the way in which they portrayed themselves to others.

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[190] Madge & Harrison *First Years Work* p. 12.

Smoking as a symbol of gender

The smoking survey of 1937 netted responses from fifty women, two of whom had answered both questionnaires, and responses from 180 men, nine of whom had answered both questionnaires. Proportionately more women than men described themselves as non-smokers (six women out of fifty, ten men out of 180), but in both cases, smokers were in the majority. However, certainly among the women, what constituted a smoker was somewhat ambiguous. The quote below was typical of several women who said they only smoked occasionally.

> I am a very occasional smoker. In the last few weeks have smoked one cigarette when out to tea…I smoke socially - that is, when offered one when I go out or occasionally when a traveller offers one.[191]

One woman could recall the times and dates of her cigarettes in the previous two months,

> I had a friend here from June 25th to 28th and we smoked one "Picadilly" cigarette each after luncheon and tea. I visited an acquaintance in July and smoked one De Resyke (*sic*) cigarette after tea. Between June 28th and July 12th I smoked one cigarette each morning at about 11am and on two occasions smoked one in the evening at about 7.30 pm. These were Player's.[192]

The attention to brand names was not remarkable, as the example in MO's questionnaire detailed them. But what this did show, coupled with her answer to question four ('How much do you spend on smoking in an average week?) was that her smoking habits were very much governed by others.

> I do not buy cigarettes unless I am visiting or expecting a friend who smokes, then I buy a 6d packet of her favourite brand. This year I have

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[191] MOA TC63/1C/CHM; See also MOA TC63/1C/GH; MOA TC63/1A/AF; MOA TC63/1C/EEL.
[192] MOA TC63/1D/LT.

> bought one packet 'Piccadilly' and 2 packets 'Player's' total 1/6. Also one box matches price 1d.[193]

This respondent focused on smoking as part of being sociable. This was felt just as much by men as women. Indeed, the need to conform to social expectations by smoking was something which was stressed by male respondents in particular.

> Smoke very little – usually only when in company – to be sociable.[194]

> I smoke so little that to cut down would mean stopping altogether and I do not intend to do this as I find that if one is continually refusing cigarettes one is regarded as a crack or being too superior to the failings of one's fellow beings.[195]

The awkwardness of continually refusing cigarettes was highlighted by another respondent,

> (Started smoking) in order to be sociable; also because I heard it was soothing. I did not care for it; the taste burned the inside of my mouth, smoke made my eyes smart
> (Continued) in order to be sociable. I have never acquired the taste to any great extent, never mind if I don't smoke... Felt awkward, even prudish, in continually refusing.[196]

Even among those who smoked more regularly, the social aspect of smoking was stressed. This was evident on a personal and a symbolic level. Many of the respondents started to smoke as part of a desire to 'fit in' with their contemporaries. In this context, the symbolism of smoking was also important and quite specifically gendered. For men, it was seen as a symbol of masculinity, and this was given as the stimulus for starting to smoke.

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[193] MOA TC63/1D/LT.
[194] MOA TC63/2D/SWJ.
[195] MOA TC63/2A/GWE.

I started smoking cigarettes at 16, largely because I thought it was manly and I wanted to know what it was like.[197]

I started to smoke about the age of sixteen or seventeen because I thought it was the thing to do… I continued smoking because I wanted to show everyone that I was to be reckoned a man.[198]

> Because I wanted to show people I was no longer a 'kid' – I didn't start till I was nearly 18…I enjoyed it (*smoking*); it made me feel that I was a man, I looked at other people in buses etc of my own age to see whether they were smoking; if they weren't, I felt that I was more of a man than they were.[199]

This image was often reinforced externally, as some men refer to pressure from girlfriends and relatives to 'be a man and smoke', while other respondents note that men who didn't smoke were somehow 'unmanly'. What is also notable about these quotes is the perseverance required to start enjoying smoking.

I started smoking when I was fifteen… a girlfriend wanted me to be a man and smoke. I began to heed her advice and maintained the habit for six months, mainly out of bravado, getting very little enjoyment out of it. But I got into the habit of inhaling and now really enjoy a cigarette.[200]

I used to go dancing at a lot of 'tanner hops' and one had to have cigarette(s) to offer to partners. But it was the remark of a girlfriend which decided me to have a real try at smoking. She said a man looks so 'lost' at a dance without a cigarette in his mouth. I had to persevere for weeks and I thought I would never acquire the taste for tobacco.[201]

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[196] MOA TC63/2A/IC.
[197] MOA TC63/3D/PJT.
[198] MOA TC 63/2D/HN.
[199] MOA TC63/3B/JR.
[200] MOA TC63/2C/CF.

> When young, my girl asked why I did not smoke, not wishing to appear poor and unmanly, I started the habit.[202]

The association of smoking with masculinity seemed to stem from parental influence and from the behaviour of older men, most of whom smoke. In other words, the influential men in male respondents' lives were smokers.

> Ever since childhood I have always had a desire to smoke, possibly because my father smoked a pipe. I had subconsciously been accustomed to associating smoking a pipe with an air of peace and tranquillity.[203]

> I believe it was because I was always used to the sight of my father smoking a pipe...He obviously enjoyed it and it seemed a real pleasant and grown up thing to do. I can remember feeling terribly green, but the pleasant effect of the first puffs and the manliness of smoking easily triumphed.[204]

It is interesting to note what this concept of 'manliness' seemed to embody. It appeared to be concomitant with adulthood, a fact which was emphasised by concurrence of starting work, leaving home or joining the Army with starting smoking. It was also associated with financial ability: the respondent quoted above did not wish to be thought poor. The concept of 'manliness' was both a feeling within oneself and a way of portraying to others that one was adult.

> My position in business being a responsible one for a youth I did not want clients to think I was too young to deal with them. I think that the use of cigarettes helped me to bridge the gulf of youth and responsibility.[205]

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[201] MOA TC63/3A/WJN.
[202] MOA TC63/2B/BH; See also MOA TC 63/2B/BH.
[203] MOA TC63/2C/BG.
[204] MOA TC63/2C/HEWG; See also MOA TC 63/2D/JEM.
[205] MOA TC63/3D/PJT.

> I thought men who smoked had an air of importance and nonchalance which non-smokers lacked. I have always, even now, been taken for less than my years, and I thought an occasional cigarette would make me appear older.[206]

If smoking was so strongly associated with masculinity, both in the eyes of the men who smoked and in the opinion of the women around them, the question arises as to what smoking symbolised for women. In a sense this is a harder question to answer, as there were fewer responses, but some impressions can be gathered. The association with adulthood remained, but it was more an appearance to be portrayed to others rather than a feeling in oneself.

> I began to smoke when I went to college because I thought I was young and green and ought to try to look a little more grown up. I was taught to smoke during my first week there and remember wondering what it was about it that people found so attractive.[207]

> I had my first cigarette on board ship on a cruise when I was 18 and trying to give the impression of sophistication to a blasé young man.[208]

> I was fourteen when I took it (*smoking*) up properly – just about the time when I was allowed to go to the theatre at night and go to late parties… and somehow I associate smoking with these, considering it very grown up and sophisticated, and smoked and smoked.[209]

> I first began to smoke at about the age of seventeen for effect and to appear grown up i.e. at dances – where in those days in our circle parents were present and some of the elderly women would look rather disapprovingly at girls who smoked.[210]

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[206] MOA TC63//2B/CHBC.
[207] MOA TC 63/1C/EK.
[208] MOA TC63/1B/RB.
[209] MOA TC63/1C/PP.
[210] MOA TC63/1D/GHW.

Aside from the desire to appear grown up and sophisticated, smoking was also seen by some women as a way of asserting themselves as equals, both in business and familial contexts.

> Continued (smoking) because I liked it and because very useful on boards and committees where one was the only woman.[211]

> (started smoking) chiefly to establish my right to do so in the rooms of a maiden lady who objected to my women callers smoking. "I'd sooner see a drunken man than a smoking woman" said she.[212]

> partly bravado, as heard that the Director did not approve of women on the staff smoking and I thought if the men smoke I jolly well will smoke too.[213]

This would suggest that women were appropriating cigarettes for different purposes in different contexts. The desire to appear sophisticated was to conform to a certain ideal of femininity, such as that portrayed in advertising, magazines and the cinema, while the use of cigarettes in board meetings and to assert one's equality in other situations suggested the desire to compete equally in a masculine world. To smoke in the latter context was to self-consciously adopt masculine behaviours as a symbol of that equality.

References to smoking being 'somewhat fast' and 'not done' emphasise the challenge which women smokers were presenting.[214] One older woman took a certain pleasure in others' surprise at her smoking.

> At home, of course we offer (cigarettes): if out usually wait to be asked, though carry my own (some people are most shocked to see me

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[211] MOA TC63/1B/TB.
[212] MOA TC63/1B/DG.
[213] MOA TC63/1D/GHW.
[214] MOA TC63/1C/MER – This respondent also notes – 'There are still people in this small town who think it wrong to smoke and my elderly aunts think it shocking for women to smoke.'

> smoke or never imagine I'd do such a thing, so they don't offer). I get great fun out of this![215]

Men were not asked specifically what they thought about women smoking, although one respondent did suggest it as a possible question.[216] However, many of the responses to the question of whether "Ladies First" was the rule when offering round cigarettes give some ideas of attitudes. So do comments which were made spontaneously. Very few men stated outright that they did not like to see women smoking,[217] and the prevailing attitude seemed to be acceptance of the habit among women. The exception to this was women smoking on the street, [218] or women smoking pipes or cigars, especially if done in public.

> One woman smokes a pipe which embarrasses nearly everybody as she smokes it in public.[219] (*male respondent*)

The suggestion, however, that women did not really smoke properly or enjoy smoking was made on a number of occasions and respondents also suggested that this was a waste of cigarettes.

> Girls are merely copying when they smoke and the girl non-smoker friends of mine condemn those of their sex who do smoke because they say "it isn't a thing that enhances the charm of a girl". I know girls who really do not smoke, though they think they do, and get through a number of their boyfriends fags. They suck in a little smoke, keep it in their mouths for a few minutes and then puff it out with an accompanying gasp.[220] (*male respondent*)

The predominant custom seemed to be to offer cigarettes to 'Ladies first', although that was by no means a rule. The extent to which such a thing was generally consciously thought about is questionable, given the fact that MO posed the question.

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[215] MOA TC63/1C/EC.
[216] MOA TC63/3C/RAS-W.
[217] MOA TC63/2D/SWJ.
[218] See for example MOA TC63/2D/GL.
[219] MOA TC63/2d/AFJ.

It would have been more interesting to see whether the same responses would have arisen to an open question. However, what seems more certain is that women were not expected to offer cigarettes to men or to light their own cigarettes if male smokers are about. As one male respondent stated 'it is generally considered the man's duty to provide and offer cigarettes to women'.[221]

One of the main differences that emerge in the reasons women gave for smoking as opposed to those given by men was the reference to weight and weight control. Smoking was referred to as a way of 'trying to eat less',[222] of helping 'not to eat sweets and chocolate'[223] and as 'a substitute for eating'[224] among other things. This was not mentioned at all among the male respondents. Certainly the idea that smoking promoted weight loss was one which was actively marketed by the tobacco companies from the 1920s onwards.[225] But women's use of cigarettes to manipulate body size, in the 1930s as much as now, reflected wider cultural phenomena concerning the construction of femininity both at an individual and a societal level. Again this seems to suggest that women were smoking to conform to a certain ideal of femininity, but one which affected their corporeal reality, rather than merely the image they presented to others.

Although the social pressure to smoke was felt equally by both men and women, this was gendered. Smoking was, I would argue, still seen as predominantly a masculine habit, and although increasing numbers of women were smoking, it was still done within the framework of a masculine discourse. Smoking may have been associated with adulthood, but the association was overwhelmingly with male adulthood with its connotations of financial independence and social responsibility. It was seen to lend men maturity and gravitas, while male non-smokers were perceived as childish and inexperienced. Such disparagement did not extend to female non-smokers. Moreover, what was moderation for a man was different than what was perceived as moderation for a woman. One respondent, for example, while writing on one hand that 'non-

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[220] MOA TC63/2B/GWC; See also MOA TC63/3C/BS; MOA TC63/2C/BG; MOA TC63/3C/RAS-W.
[221] MOA TC63/2B/KFC.
[222] MOA TC63/1B/DG.
[223] MOA TC 63/1B/RB.
[224] MOA TC63/1B/TB.
[225] A.M. BRANDT 'Recruiting Women Smokers: the engineering of consent' *Journal of the American Women's Association* 51:1&2 (1996) pp. 63 – 66.

smokers are priggish and narrow and even puritanical' and that he himself would 'always accept an offered cigarette', then went on to say that he protested when the girl he liked smoked too much – 'it is lowering to one so fine and it is doing her no good'.[226] Most of the women who responded to Mass Observation's study smoked occasionally, overwhelmingly in social situations as part of their social persona, suited to certain times and occasions, rather than the 'matter of course' way men smoked. And while those women who did smoke saw it as one way they could assert independence and maturity, this was overwhelmingly in masculine contexts, such as in business and the boardroom. Women smokers in the survey may have thought their smoking challenged the masculine discourses surrounding the habit, but their male counterparts caricatured such behaviour as an awkwardly performed affectation. Moreover, for as long as smoking among women remained imbued with overtones of sophistication and grown-up sexuality, and some of the respondents identified it as such, women smokers were still seen as objects of desire rather than independent career women. The 'torches of freedom' were just as equally tools of seduction, and could be used as such (this can also seen to be empowering though). In short, the respondents to Mass Observation's study, while accepting smoking among women as a part of life, saw it as a different entity to smoking among men.

Smoking and social identity

Aside from issues of gender identity and smoking raised by the responses, the extent to which smoking was used to signal social identity was also apparent. This was not only evident in the ritual passing around of cigarettes in a group or in smoking to be sociable, but in the care and consideration of what brands one smoked and where. For some respondents, the desire not to be thought mean[227] expressed itself not only in the handing around of cigarettes, but in the choice of brand.

> Although my first choice was Player's Weights for cheapness, when I went out to work and started to smoke in earnest I purchased Waverly

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[226] MOA TC63/2A/HAB.

[227] Many of the responses to the question 'What is your attitude to non-smokers?' style the non-smoker as mean and anti-social, but without evidence from other sources, this should be treated with caution as MO have set up the dichotomy between smokers and non-smokers.

> which happened to be in demand among my particular friends.[228] (*male respondent*)

Other respondents expressed an awareness of the expense to the other person of smoking too many of their cigarettes.

> Most smokers accept what is offered. A few apologetically prefer their own brand. On the other hand, one or two people who come to my rooms apologise if they do not smoke their own cigarettes all the time. Conventions seem to vary about this. The underlying motive may be something like this: "I must pretend that my hostess's cigarettes are better than mine. Yet, I must not smoke too many at her expense."[229] (*female respondent*)

> I have noticed at home and at other peoples houses that when cigarettes are being offered round the host often points out that you are in his (or her) household you should smoke his cigarettes rather than your own. When I go to see my sister and her husband we nearly always have arguments as to whose cigarettes we should smoke, both sides pointing out that it is their turn to give them to the other. This is not mere politeness, but mostly consideration for one another's pockets.[230] (*female respondent*)

There was also a certain class consciousness which was expressed in the brands people smoke and in etiquette in offering cigarettes.[231]

While the majority of the respondents smoked and many of the answers suggested a widespread acceptance of smoking socially, it was not an unqualified acceptance of the habit. Responses to the question 'Do you ever feel ashamed of smoking? Do you feel it is a bad habit, and if so why?' reveal various attitudes, as do spontaneous remarks on health concerns, money spent and the general 'fug' which was evident in

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[228] MOA TC63/2B/WC.
[229] MOA TC63/1B/TB.
[230] MOA TC63/1B/KLB.

public places. The consensus, both among men and women, seemed to be that smoking was not a bad habit, unless indulged in to excess. The concerns voiced about excessive smoking focused on disquiet at being a 'slave' to the habit, its economic implications and the effects on health. The extent to which respondents believed tobacco could be harmful to the health varies from the belief that it is totally harmless to both the smoker and others,[232] to the uncannily accurate analogy used by one respondent to describe the harm done.

> I do not imagine that moderate smoking has killed anyone, but smoking in excess must have its effect on the heart and nerves, as well as the passages of the throat and nose. And I should say that effect could be compared to that of hard water on the average boiler and pipes![233]

Nonetheless the feeling that it might be harmful was confined to smoking in excess. Its benefits to the nerves and as a stimulant were highlighted and one respondent noted that her doctor had encouraged her to smoke because of her nerves.

> I am a non-smoker only because it does not appeal to me. I have no prejudice whatsoever in the matter and have several times tried to acquire the habit. On one occasion this was at my doctors suggestion. He said, "Don't worry about things (I have forgotten the immediate), but sit down quietly and have a cigarette. I tried more than once, but it seemed an unconscionable effort to keep the thing alight and it gave me no pleasure or satisfaction.[234]

The impact of the Second World War

The social position of smoking among women at the end of the interwar period was different from that in 1919 in both shape and form. Despite some resistance to the

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[231] MOA TC 63/3C/EJS; MOA TC63/1B/MC; MOA TC63/1B/MC; MOA TC63/1B/TB
[232] See for example: MOA TC63/3C/EJS '(Smoking) only seems a bad habit when done continuously and without thought. Does not seem bad in moderation. Cannot think of any other habit so apparently harmless'.
[233] MOA TC63/2B/JYD.

spread of the habit, more women smoked and did so more openly than they had in the two decades previously. This was part of more general growth in the popularity of the cigarette. After becoming the established way of smoking in the First World War, the temporal and spatial presence of the cigarette had increased throughout the interwar years, despite the depression and a decline in the acreage under cultivation in the United States. On the eve of the Second World War, the financial correspondent of *The Times* noted that 'the tobacco habit shows no signs of lessening its hold on man (or womankind)', a statement which was indicative of the way the cigarette had eroded gender boundaries.[235] However, as this chapter has argued, smoking was still not 'the matter of course' it was for men. The social spaces and circumstances where female smoking was acceptable remained fewer than those enjoyed by their male counterparts. Despite the encroachment of smoking into almost every sphere of life, both public and private, the question of when and where smoking was acceptable, and by whom, was still delineated along gender, and to a lesser extent, class lines. The pressure was social and moral, driven by prevailing notions of what constituted respectable femininity and framed in medical terminology. What the rest of this chapter will argue is that it was the economic and social dislocation of the Second World War that caused such conventions to crumble.

The predominant trends in tobacco consumption during the First World War were a switch to the cigarette as the most popular way of consuming tobacco and an increase in that consumption. A lesser trend, but still a noticeable one, was both the increasing involvement of women in the provision of cigarettes for their men and the consumption of cigarettes by certain groups of women as they took on a new social and economic role in the conditions of war. The conditions of war arguably provided the initial impetus for women to smoke more without undue criticism, and increasing numbers did so in the interwar period, albeit with the constraints mentioned above. Similar social and economic mechanisms in the Second World War served to augment the erosion of the gender boundaries surrounding smoking already underway. However, arguments against the spread of the habit both in general in the First World War, and against women smoking in the years following, were paralleled by resistance to the further expansion of the habit during the Second.

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[234] MOA TC63/1B/MC.
[235] *The Times* 27 August 1938 p. 16 col. b.

Prioritisation of tobacco in the Second World War

As the war loomed, financial analysts were confident that tobacco securities would maintain a high investment status.

> *Prima facie* the experience of 1914 – 1918 would suggest that both consumption and profits are likely to expand... owing to the consumption by troops oversea(s)[236]

Indeed, almost as soon as the war broke out steps were taken by the government to ensure a supply of tobacco to troops serving overseas, and The Overseas Leagues Tobacco Fund was restarted 'to meet the urgent need for British cigarettes at the Front'.[237] It was endorsed by the Secretary of State for War, Leslie Hore-Belisha, who was quoted as saying,

> believe me, from my own personal knowledge there is nothing more appreciated at the Front than a good supply of cigarettes.[238]

The First World War was recent enough in memories for his words to find resonance in the ears of the general public, who donated over a million cigarettes in the first week.[239] The government also immediately acknowledged that tobacco was a necessity of war-time life, for both troops and civilians, although the latter were frequently urged to limit their consumption in the national interest. Almost as soon as war was declared, the question of tobacco for troops came up in Parliament and the Financial Secretary to the War Office, V. Warrender, assured the house that he would take steps to secure the supply of cigarettes.[240] In the ensuing months, the tobacco industry was brought under strict government control, as a Tobacco Controller, Alexander Maxwell was appointed by the Board of Trade, to oversee the importation of tobacco leaf, its manufacture and distribution. The government's policy was to

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[236] *The Times* 26 October 1938 p. 13 col. b.
[237] *The Times* 4 October 1939 p. 3 col. b.
[238] *The Times* 4 October 1939 p. 5 col. f.
[239] *The Times* 7 October p. 3 col. f; 13 October 1939 p. 5 col. g.

meet demand among civilians, but to effectively check that demand by steep rises in duty, which were passed onto the consumer. From a level of 9s. 6d. per lb. at the beginning of 1939, duty had reached 35s. 6d. per lb. by the end of the war.[241] While there was no official rationing introduced on tobacco during the war,[242] consumption was checked by rationing of manufacturers' production, increased cost to the consumer and shortages of supply. The latter was particularly acute in the early 1940s, and the government ran several campaigns to try to get people to limit their consumption.[243]

As in the First World War, the problem was one of shipping space. As Alexander Maxwell said in his appeal to the public to show restraint in buying cigarettes for Christmas in 1943,

> I don't think that we can ask the Americans to let us have more tobacco for Christmas and I don't think we can ask our Minister of War Transport for more ships.[244]

Concern over shipping space was also expressed by the general public. In 1941, Mass Observation carried out a survey on smoking to compare with their 1937 survey. Non-smokers, they argued, were hostile to smokers, a fact which was 'traceable to the present unpatriotic behaviour of smokers in not cutting down their smoking in the national interests... A waste of money, a waste of shipping space.'[245] This was seen to impact particularly on children, who were deprived of essential food and nutrients. As the majority of non-smokers, women too would have been affected by the priority given to tobacco. The comments in Mass Observation's report were echoed in the pages of the press. In 1942, Marie Stopes, a former advisor to the board of the NSN-S,

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[240] Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Session 1939 – 40 vol. 360 col. 916 2 May 1940; col. 1061 7 May 1940; vol. 361 col. 19 – 20 21 May 1940, col. 417 28 May 1940.
[241] B.W.E. Alford *H.O. & W.D. Wills* p. 402 – 403.
[242] Rationing was suggested when shortages were particularly acute in 1941 and dismissed as an option. Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Session 1941 – 42 vol. 377 col. 1798 – 9, vol. 378 col. 551.
[243] National Savings Campaign Advert, *The Times* 21 April 1942 p. 3. Rather ironically *The Times* ran the advert next to an advert for Abdulla 'Fifth Avenue' cigarettes. See also Parliamentary Debates House of Commons vol. 367 col. 428 – 9, col. 910, vol. 369 col. 294, 1018 – 9, 1138; vol. 370 col. 152 – 3; vol. 373 col. 764 – 5, col. 2132 – 3; vol. 374 col. 1934.
[244] *The Times* 4 November 1943 p. 4 col. e .
[245] MOA FR 979 *Smoking: a comparison with the results of 1937 survey published in First Years Work 1941* p.5.

wrote to the *Times* that 'the people who are responsible for the lack of corn are the smokers, who have burned thousands of tons of ships cargoes to their own or their neighbours detriment'.[246] Another correspondent, while also concerned about the amount of 'valuable cargo space... devoted to the importation of tobacco' also questioned the wisdom of providing so many cigarettes for troops on health grounds.

> These men are being trained to fight for their lives. Yet were they being trained for a soccer cup-tie, or a boat race, can it be doubted that their smoking would be seriously restricted, if not stopped altogether? ... The cigarette smoker impairs the oxygen –carrying capacity of his blood by the carbon monoxide which he inhales from his cigarette. At the same time, he often ruins his digestion and diminishes his resistance to respiratory infection.[247]

His sentiments were echoed by another correspondent who noted that digestive disorders such as duodenal ulcer were the chief cause of invaliding from the services. He blamed this on tobacco, concluding that 'the health and physical efficiency of the Army, Navy, and Air Force would quite certainly benefit by the strict rationing of tobacco'.[248]

However, smoking also had its supporters, who again drew on the notions of the cigarette as a solace to troops in 'lonely and somewhat uncomfortable R.A.F and Army station(s)'.[249] In 1944, an appeal to members of the public for cigarettes for troops picked up on this idea.

> May I speak to your readers about the comfort of the lads on the western and Italian fronts, for the sixth Christmas of the war. So many of them will spend it amid rain and mud, under the grimmest of fighting condition! They will need all the comfort and good cheer we can send them.

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[246] Letter from Marie C. Stopes, *The Times*, 30 December 1942 p. 6 col. g.
[247] Letter from Maurice Cassidy, *The Times*, 17 April 1942 p. 7 col. e.
[248] Letter from Andrew Hurst, *The Times*, 23 April 1942 p. 7 col. c.
[249] Letter from an R.A.F. officer, *The Times*, 21 April 1942 p. 5 col. e.

> Cigarettes are the first priority with most of them and our fund, to date, has already distributed more than 700 000 000 cigarettes. We have repeatedly been told 'No gift more welcome'.[250]

When the shortage of tobacco grew really acute in 1944, home supplies were cut by 10% in order that troops fighting abroad should not face any shortages.[251] However, the impetus for the government to maintain the supply of cigarettes to the civilian population until this date was undoubtedly the same as their motivation in the First World War, namely, a desire to maintain revenue. An exchange of letters in *The Times between Eleanor Rathbone,* a prominent interwar feminist who became a Member of Parliament in 1940,[252] and Alfred H. *Dunhill, the director of an* established London tobacco house, illustrate this point. Prompted by a suggestion by Eleanor Rathbone to the House of Commons in November 1943 that the imports of tobacco be curtailed in favour of food tonnage,[253] Alfred Dunhill wrote to *The Times* that,

> a further plea for the maintenance of tobacco imports at their present level, which Mr Churchill may be excused from advancing, is that tobacco duties brought in the huge total of £302 000 000 and may this year bring £350 000 000 into the national revenue. I am a tobacconist, not a politician, but I take pride in serving my country as an unpaid tax collector, and claim that the huge tobacco revenue paid by smokers is a worthy contribution to the war effort.[254]

In her response, Eleanor Rathbone agreed that the maintenance of tobacco imports had its fiscal advantages, but suggested that the sum could be raised by other, more direct means of taxation and that,

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[250] Cigarettes for the Troops *The Times* 2 December 1944 p. 5 col. e.
[251] *The Times* 2 September 1944 p. 2 col. d .
[252] B. Caine *English Feminism 1780 – 1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[253] Eleanor Rathbone repeatedly brought up the question of the shipping tonnage used by tobacco in Parliament. In her November question, she noted that the shortage of shipping was one of the main difficulties impeding the transfer of threatened victims of nazi persecution to countries of safety, the export of foodstuffs to Greece and India. Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Session 1942 – 43 vol. 393 col. 1083 – 1084 9 November 1942. See also Vol. 387 col. 1190 17 March 1943; vol. 389 col. 35 4 May 1943; vol. 395 col. 1706 16 December 1943.
[254] Letter from Alfred H. Dunhill *The Times* 29 November 1943 p. 5 col. g.

> with a moderate reduction of tobacco imports, some ships could be diverted to carry food to famine stricken India, Greece, Belgium or/and to carry threatened victims of Nazi persecution to countries of safety.[255]

However, the stark reality was, as Mr Dunhill proceeded to point out, that there was no other commodity which would produce a revenue even approaching that produced by tobacco.[256] This was picked up also by a Mass Observation respondent who believed that the government ought to make an appeal to smokers to restrict their consumption but that they were afraid to risk 'any loss of public favour and taxation revenue that might result.'[257] And, despite the heavy duty and the shortages of tobacco, consumption continued to rise. As Mr Dalton, the President of the Board of Trade pointed out in December 1943,

> the troops and many other sections of the community were smoking more than was the case before the war and the total consumption (has) increased by 20 – 25%.[258]

By the end of the war, per capita consumption had risen by at least 20% among men and by 150% among women.[259]

The growth of smoking among women during the Second World War

The increased prevalence of women smokers was a trend noted repeatedly by Mass Observation, who related it to 'social pressure and nerve strains' which extended 'from battlefield to shelter and A.R.P. and Home Guard to the Home itself'.[260] The notion that smoking would ease anxiety was reiterated at a personal level. One respondent recalled that her doctor suggested she try smoking 'when she was

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[255] Letter from Eleanor Rathbone *The Times* 4 December 1943 p. 5 col. d.
[256] Letter from Alfred H. Dunhill *The Times* 20 December 1943 p. 8 col. a.
[257] Mass Observation File Report 979 *Smoking: a comparison with the results of the 1937 survey published in First Years Work* 1941 p. 5.
[258] *The Times* 1 December 1943 p. 8 col. e.
[259] Wald et al. *UK Smoking Statistics* p. 13.
[260] Mass Observation File Report 3192 *Man and His Cigarette* p. 79.

jumpy... (he) thought it might have a steadying effect'.[261] In the report of their survey of attitudes towards smoking carried out in 1941, MO quotes one female respondent as saying,

> when I was in London during the heavy raids, I found smoking a great help and should have found it very difficult to give up then.[262]

Another female respondent similarly remarked,

> my (cigarette) consumption has gone up over 100%. It started in September last during the Blitz. I found smoking kept me from getting jittery. I got fidgety and unstrung and found a cigarette seemed to help me.[263]

The author went on to describe the dislocation which he perceived women to feel

> if her children are evacuated, her husband called up, the average housewife is left in the same surroundings, with the same round of familiar routine. Her leisure occupations are restricted, her opportunities for mixing with other people reduced. Wartime conditions have broken the habits of work and leisure for most women, without providing the opportunity for compensation. In addition to the material dislocation, there are also anxieties about menfolk and children, uncertainty and tension, personal danger and lack of sleep, rising prices, blackouts...'[264]

Another report, detailing reactions to the London blitzkrieg, noted that '50% of the women observed were doing nothing at all or just smoking ... (they) were too tired after an endless succession of alarms to have much enthusiasm for anything'.[265] The cigarette provided some kind of solace and comfort in that situation. In contrast to the

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[261] Mass Observation File Report 979 *Smoking: a comparison 1941* p. 28.
[262] Mass Observation File Report 979 *Smoking: a comparison 1941* p. 10.
[263] Mass Observation File Report 979 *Smoking: a comparison 1941* p. 11.
[264] Mass Observation File Report 979 *Smoking: a comparison 1941* p. 13.
[265] Mass Observation File Report 520 *Women and Morale* p. 9 – 10.

situation in the First World War, where smoking was associated with brazen young women on the munitions, women smoking in the Second World War did not seem to fall into any particular class or age category. One of Elizabeth Robert's respondents, for example, noted that she was forty when she began to smoke in the Second World War. [266]

There were also more positive reasons to smoke, aside from as a reaction to the stress of bombing and the war. United States GI's were, as one British serviceman is said to have put it, 'over paid, over-sexed and over here'. Paid four times the basic British pay, they 'drove huge flashy cars, dispensed nylons, candy and packets of Lucky Strike and gave their girlfriends a taste of glamour at the American dance bases'.[267] In his book on the Second World War, John Costello quotes a woman called 'Mary' talking about her love affair with an American G.I.

> One weekend... he came round about dusk in a jeep carrying a hold all. 'There' he said, 'take a peek'. It was full of tinned goods, butter sugar, sweets, coffee, sheer nylons – not forgetting cartons of cigarettes.[268]

The dances at American bases were smoke-filled affairs.[269] Glamour in wartime was also evident in the movies. Continuing a trend from the 1930s, smoking had lost many of its bad girl associations by the outbreak of the Second World War. It was used to portray intimacy and courtship, a commodity very much in short supply as men were called up and sent to fight. However, despite the clouds of smoke and the sensuality in *Casablanca*, neither Ingrid Bergman nor her female co-stars are ever offered or seen smoking a cigarette.

Nonetheless, the Mass Observation's 1941 report also detailed resistance to the spread of smoking among women on economic, moral and medical grounds, echoing the rhetoric of criticism in the interwar period. As one woman put it,

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[266] ERA *Barrow and Lancaster* Mrs W.1.B (b. 1900) p. 59.
[267] Howell *In Vogue* p. 160.
[268] J. Costello *Love, sex and war: changing values 1939 – 1945* (London: Guild Publishing, 1985) p. 23.
[269] A. Calder *The People's War: Britain 1939 – 45* (1969, London: Pimlico, 1992).

> (I am) quite used to men smoking; don't see why they should not if they get any comfort from it. Women ditto, but to let the habit get hold of them seems pitiful, especially when money is wasted on smoke which is actually needed for necessities. (I) can't bear to see a woman smoke all over a baby's head; loathe the sight of a young girl smoking just because she thinks it is the right thing to do. Loathe still more seeing an old woman smoking'.[270]

Proportionately more of the objections to women smoking came from women.[271] Criticism was largely that 'with many women smoking is nothing but a pose, just a 'done thing' that they don't enjoy'. However, the response of one man to the question suggests that no matter how women smoke, it will be perceived as wrong by their male counterparts.

> I think girls waste cigarettes by not inhaling the smoke sufficiently, and at the same time they do not appear sufficiently feminine if they do inhale in the same way as a man.[272]

While the notion that women don't smoke properly mirrored the opinions of some of the 1937 survey respondents, such criticism was augmented in 1941 by the feeling that 'they (women) have not the same right to smoke as men, and are now depriving them of their hard-won smokes'.[273] Another (female) respondent suggested that 'it must be very annoying to men that women smokers use up such a large proportion of their supplies'. In June 1941, the issue was raised in Parliamentary Questions when it was alleged that some tobacconists were refusing to supply women with cigarettes.[274]

The notion that men had more right to supplies of tobacco was mirrored in comments which criticised heavier smoking among women, while accepting the same behaviour among men. One (female) respondent to MO argued that 'Habitual smokers among

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[270] MO FR 979 p. 31.
[271] 9% of the male respondents and 18% of the female respondents objected to smoking among women.
[272] MO FR 979 p. 32.
[273] MO FR 979 p. 31.
[274] Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Session 1940 – 41 vol. 372 col. 469 – 70 17 June 1941.

women are worse than men. (Such women smoke) even when doing household work and cooking and ... even when speaking to another person. I once saw a woman coming down the steps of a bus with a cigarette in a long holder in the mouth'. She attributed the 'craze' for smoking in woman to the cinemas. Another man said that he was not keen on women smoking a lot 'except on odd social occasions'. Some of the men who objected to women smoking perceived the habit as unwomanly. As one respondent put it 'I dislike women smoking, chiefly because it gives their breath a masculine smell'.[275] In other words, many of the constraints on women smokers and the gendered perceptions of the habit which had existed prior to the war were still extant. On a different tack, *Vogue* also entered the debate in August 1942. In response to cuts in the supply of cosmetics, an article argued that 'cosmetics are as essential to a woman as a reasonable supply of tobacco is to a man'. This argument reinforced the idea that smoking was a necessary part of male, as opposed to female, existence.[276]

The way in which attitudes towards, and perceptions of, smokers remained gendered is also evident in the letters pages of *The Times*, where a debate began in 1944 about whether women should smoke on the street. Even among those tolerant of women smoking, this seemed to be the last taboo. To quote one correspondent,

> women have as much right and, in these trying times, as much need to smoke as men. But I do not think it is wholly Victorian prejudice which makes it disagreeable to see them doing so in the street. It somehow distracts from a certain fastidiousness of the bearing in which women always surpass men.
> As a hardworking young woman remarked recently, 'I find it necessary to smoke a great deal, but I would no more think of doing so in the street than I would of eating a bun while walking along Piccadilly'.[277]

The Times ran a leader on the subject, admitting that it would 'rouse stormy emotions', but suggesting that the correspondent quoted above was more worried

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[275] MO FR 979 p. 32.
[276] Howell *In Vogue* p. 163.
[277] Letter from Geoffrey Howard *The Times* 2 November 1944 p. 5 col. g.

about his own sense of propriety than that of the female smoker. Such objectors believed that,

> woman, having learnt to smoke gracefully indoors, has not yet mastered the art in the fresh air, but still has a slightly self-conscious mien, as if defying the lightning of the public gaze. They (*those objecting to the habit*) may also accuse her of a too free and easy, assured and as it may be, pendulous method, wherein the cigarette appears to hang from the lips by a thread. But if they are honest, they will admit that many of their own sex are equally to blame... The future is always unpredictable and it (*smoking among women*) may go out again, but it seems much more likely that not only Mars but Venus will be seen in the street – A-smoking her pipes and cigars and that we shall get used to the look of that.[278]

As one female correspondent put it more succinctly:

> If a woman wants to smoke in the street, why not?[279]

Why not indeed? Women in the forces and the NAAFI were provided with duty free supplies in the same way as men.[280] One of Elizabeth Robert's oral history respondents recalled that she started smoking when she worked in the NAAFI offices.

> *How old were you when you started smoking?*
> It was during the war.... When I was working at the NAAFI offices and when we used to sit round having a cup of tea where the canteen was, they would offer you one. It meant me buying a packet to give them one back, there would be about 6 or 7 of us around the table. I had a lot of figure work to do at the NAAFI and it ran into thousands of pounds and we had all the accounts to do. So to allow us to

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[278] 'The Look of the Thing' *The Times* 4 November 1944 p. 5 col. d .
[279] *The Times*, letter from Norah Young, 4 November 1944 p. 5 col. d.
[280] *The Times* 13 April 1943 p. 8 col. f.

> concentrate they allowed us to smoke at our desks. That's when I started.[281]

When it came to light that factory workers were leaving production lines to queue for cigarettes when they knew that shops had had a delivery, the government passed a regulation which permitted canteens in factories with over 200 workers to sell tobacco products. Some munitions factories also provided their workers with a ration of 40 cigarettes a week as an incentive to productivity.[282] As much of the factory work was taken over by women in the war, this played a crucial part in positioning tobacco more immediately in their lives, and also indicates the prevalence of the idea, on the part of the government and the populace, that tobacco was a necessity of wartime life, for troops and civilians alike, male as well as female. This point should not be overplayed however. As has already been illustrated – in the hierarchy of need, troops came before civilians, men came before women. In other words, those to be supplied with tobacco first were those of most direct importance to the war effort. This fact alone indicates how central the position of tobacco in society had become, and in comparison to the situation at the end of the First World War, it was a position more equally central to both sexes. And even those who continued to complain about smoking in railway carriages had to bow to the pressure of the war effort. Prompted by a Railway Executive decision to take firm action about passengers smoking in non-smoking carriages, the vocal objectors to the habit again got their pens out and sent off a volley of letters to *The Times*. But they were fighting the tide. As one correspondent put it, somewhat resignedly,

> While agreeing with all that Mrs Dyott Drayson says, I myself – a mere male in civilian clothes – would hesitate to request one of our uniformed guests, whether American or Canadian, to comply with the regulation, unless I could add to my request a statement that there is room for him in a smoking compartment.[283]

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[281] *ERA Preston 1890 – 1940* Mrs. H.&.P (born 1916) p. 42.
[282] B.W.E. Alford *H.D. & W.O. Wills* p. 400.
[283] *The Times*, letter from Mr. J. Wardale, 13 August 1942 p. 8 col. a.