‘FASHIONS OF THE MIND’: MODERNISM AND BRITISH *VOGUE* UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF DOROTHY TODD

by

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Introduction

> *Vogue* has no intention of confining its pages to hats and frocks. In literature, the drama, art and architecture, the same spirit of change is seen at work, and to the intelligent observer the interplay of suggestion and influence between all these things is one of the fascinations of the study of the contemporary world.[1]

This brief description on the contents page of the Early April 1925 'Early Paris Openings and Brides' issue of British *Vogue* not only summarises the ideas that would be expressed within the current issue, but indeed within the entire publication under the editorship of Dorothy Todd. The 'study of the contemporary world' and the 'interplay of suggestion and influence' are accorded the highest emphasis, demonstrating Todd's intentions for *Vogue* between 1922 and 1926. The concept of the contemporary was essential to this vision for *Vogue* and all the more crucial to the early 1920s. Despite the trivialisation of fashion ('hats and frocks'), the study of the contemporary and fashion are inextricably linked. Though the opening sentence might be viewed as a disparaging account of fashion, the subsequent lines prove a defence of it, demonstrating the similarities between the subject of fashion and the other art forms of literature, drama, art and architecture. This simultaneously legitimises the entire idea of a fashion magazine and the overwhelming presence of what would have been considered 'high brow' art forms in a magazine supposedly solely concerned with fashion. However, what is crucial is the interplay between these art forms. This was what defined Dorothy Todd's *Vogue*.

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[1] Anonymous. 'Contents Page'. *Vogue*, Early April. 1925: xiv. Access to *Vogue* archives from the British Library

'The highbrow editress of Vogue magazine'[2]

Little is known of Dorothy Todd's early life, although her contemporaries and staff at *Vogue* offered fleeting descriptions. In *Bloomsbury in Vogue*, Nicola Luckhurst identifies the most essential of these as:

> 'energetic, portly, determined, louche, exasperating, intelligent, raddled, commercial, 'imperious and enterprising', 'a short, square, crop-headed, double-breasted, bow-tied lady', 'the highbrow editress of *Vogue* magazine […] who then reigned over certain aesthetic circles in London'.[3]

Todd became editor of British *Vogue* in 1922, having spent the previous six years in Condé Nast's headquarters acclimatising to the '[*Vogue*] policies and format.'[4] However, by 1926, Todd proved to have disregarded these policies in the eyes of Nast and 'got the sack from *Vogue*, which owing to being too highbrow [was] sinking in circulation'.[5] It is this precise highbrow quality which Todd brought to the publication that I intend to explore. Luckhurst describes this as Todd's 'transformation of Condé Nast's product – a women's magazine whose staple elements were high society, the rich and famous, plus high fashion – into a review for the avant-garde'.[6] This encapsulated the zeitgeist of the time and more importantly, the many facets of modernism. This is demonstrated by the avant-garde writers and artists who contributed to *Vogue* and were featured within its

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[2] Cecil Beaton, *Photobiography* (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1951), p. 34.
[3] Nicola Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue* (London: Cecil Woolf, 1998), p.3.
[4] Edna Woolman Chase, *Always in Vogue* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1954), p.151.
[5] Vita Sackville-West to Harold Nicholson September 1926 in *The Man Who Was Vogue,* Caroline Seebohm (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), p.127.
[6] Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue*, p.3.

pages during Todd's editorship. Contributors included Wyndham Lewis, Pablo Picasso, Marie Laurencin, Man Ray, HD, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell, Leonard Woolf, Vita Sackville-West and Clive Bell. According to Lawrence Rainey in *Institutions of Modernism*, 'Historians of Anglo-American literature often view 1922 as the *annus mirablis*' of modernist literature, due to the publication of both *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* in that year.[7] It is perhaps unsurprising that when Todd came to the helm of *Vogue* in the same year, modernism was the direction in which she wanted the publication to move.

In defining Modernism, David Harvey looks to Baudelaire's 1863 essay 'The Painter of Modern Life':

> Modernity…is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is the one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable.[8]

Using this definition of Modernism, the alliance with fashion is apparent, since fashion is by its very definition transient and fleeting. However, not all definitions or aspects of modernism relay the similarities between the two. Current critical definition of modernism is largely centred around the idea that modernism is defined through its opposition to literary traditions at the start of the twentieth century. This definition contributes to the vagueness and often conflicting characterisation of the movement.

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[7] Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* (London: Yale University Press, 1998),p.107

[8] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 10

However I intend to focus on a very specific aspect of modernism, since this was the facet that Todd herself propagated within the pages of *Vogue*. This is the idea of decorative modernism, often overlooked since it represents a seeming minority against a backdrop of mechanical, masculine modernity. This was not completely overlooked by Todd since there is an emphasis upon the avant-garde and futurism played a large part in the graphic representation of the magazine. It is important that despite focusing so definitely upon the decorative, Todd provided a holistic representation of modernism, this is because primarily she was concerned with the breaking down of boundaries. This is a concept that was prevalent within the fashion industry at this time. This derived from Parisian publications which portrayed the relationship between fashion and art, thereby questioning the boundaries that separate the two.[9] Elizabeth Wilson's very definition of fashion suggests that this removal of boundaries is intrinsic:

> Clothing marks an unclear boundary ambiguously, and unclear boundaries disturb us.[10]

Therefore it is possible to suggest that Todd's breaking down of the boundaries between fashion and literature or the superficial and the intellectual was simply necessary for a true fashion magazine of the time.

To provide an example of the shift from a focus on fashion to intellectual artistry of the kind I will be discussing in this thesis, it is interesting to compare two issues of *Vogue*, the first from Early January 1922 and the second Early October 1924. In 1922,

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[9] Boston Public Library, Fashion and Modernism : http://bpl.org/research/rb/fashion/case6.htm (accessed 27/01/2011).

[10] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (Rutgers: New Jersey 2003), p.2

Vogue was in every aspect a fashion magazine. In the Early January issue there were few deviations from this model, the only two being a William Strang exhibit and a review of a stage production of Peter Pan. Aside from these two articles, the only features, editorials and columns were fashion and beauty orientated apart from a few hostess tips. Advertisements followed much in the same vein, including 'This booklet tells you how to keep beautiful!'[11] What is more, the few literary articles included during this era, such as the column 'Turning over New Leaves', only appeared sporadically and were located at the very back of the magazine, interspersed with advertisements. Todd changed this dramatically, the October 1924 issue featuring an article entitled 'The Triumph of the Machine', a profile of Pablo Picasso, a profile of 'Women of Distinction in Literature' including Gertrude Stein, HD and Rebecca West, a feature by Edith Sitwell about Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson and Gertrude Stein, literary criticism by Francis Birrell including the poetry of George Moore and a profile of the Japanese novelist Murasaki by Arthur Waley.[12] The space dedicated to these features is also notably increased. Importantly, such articles occupied the space previously assigned to fashion and society. It is this journey and the reasons for these decisions that I will explore.

In this thesis I examine Todd's transformation of the magazine from a women's fashion magazine into a literary and cultural representation of modernism during the early 1920s. As Christopher Reed notes, there has until recently been considerable reluctance amongst critics to study the articulation of modernism in *Vogue* and thus 'Dorothy

[11] Advertisement. "This booklet tells you how to keep beautiful!". *Vogue*. Early January. 1922.
[12] Dorothy Todd et al, *Vogue*. Early October. 1924.

Todd's *Vogue* has slipped from critical view, overlooked altogether or obscured in condescending stereotypes about fashion magazines.'[13] Increasingly, however, *Vogue* is recognized as playing a significant role within the historical materiality of modernism as it was disseminated and received in the 1920s.[14] Critical studies typically remain largely focused upon the contributions of Virginia Woolf and the rest of the Bloomsbury group. I intend to adopt a more holistic approach in order to demonstrate the main aspects of British *Vogue* during Todd's time, looking at a variety of contributors centred around a number of themes. The first of these will be explored in the chapter 'Fashion and Celebrity', where I will examine why modernist highbrow writers were compelled to contribute to such a magazine in the first place, and consider the interdependent relationship between seemingly elite and highbrow literary modernism and the popular culture of fashion and celebrity during this time period. In the second chapter I will look more closely at the progression of the role of literature in *Vogue* between 1922 and 1926. From the numerous modernist writers who regularly contributed, the various book reviews, author profiles and original poetry indicate how literature became the prime focus for many issues of *Vogue*, specifically during the years 1924 and 1925. However Todd's vision was not concerned with writers alone; the magazine's overarching interest, prevalent throughout the pages of *Vogue*, was with the reader. The chapter exploring 'The Female Reader' will investigate the relationship between *Vogue*'s intentions and its reader. For a women's magazine during the early 1920s this is of utmost importance.

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[13] Christopher Reed, "A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name: Sexual Subculture during the Editorship of Dorothy Todd", *Fashion Theory* 10, no. 1/2 (2006): p. 40.
[14] Jane Garrity 'Virginia Woolf, Intellectual Harlotry and 1920s British *Vogue'* in *Woolf in the age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. Pamela L. Caughie (Garland: London 2000) p.192

Todd's decision to expose her readers to a world not readily accessible to many of them was essentially the controversy that led to her removal.

CHAPTER 1: Fashion and Celebrity

'This Complicated Age Exacts Simplicity in Its Homes: But All's a Matter of Fashion'[15]

In this chapter I will explore the journey of the role of fashion in *Vogue* from 1922 until 1926. I will also look at the way in which the magazine exposed its readers to literary celebrities and the reasons why such writers contributed to a seemingly superficial publication. Though fashion seems the main focus of *Vogue*, this was only true in the years preceding and following Todd's editorship. The pages of Todd's *Vogue* played with the notion of fashion. It still looked at the latest in trends and the names to watch, however this changed from the 'right' designers to the 'right' writers. Interestingly, throughout this era in *Vogue*'s history, fashion and literature seem mutually exclusive, with room only for a primary focus on one, creating a symmetry between the way in which each is presented from the start to the end of this time period. Throughout *Vogue*'s history it is concerned with the 'current' and the 'new'. Todd transformed this from the current and new in the mode, to the current and new in poetry and prose. As a result, these contributors and subjects of *Vogue* became, for its readers, modernist celebrities.

When British *Vogue* was launched on September 15th 1916 it did not contain all of the features of American *Vogue*. According to Edna Woolman Chase it contained:

[15] Victoria Sackville-West, 'Fashions in Decoration.' *Vogue*. Early April. 1924: p.61

> mostly fashion material, the idea being that gradually we would insert local features – society, shops, entertainment – which would naturally be of greater interest to British readers.[16]

This description implies that if there were any intentions of inserting highbrow literary material, they were certainly in the distant future. Todd nevertheless managed this within a few short years. Due to the limited information available about Dorothy Todd we are unable to definitively know which her first and last issues for *Vogue* were, however the development of the magazine is obvious when looking at the archives. In the Late March 1922 issue of *Vogue* (The Smart Spring Fashions Number), we are unable to see trademarks of Todd's editing style, whether due to her absence or an attempt to follow the '*Vogue* Policies and Format'.[17] However we are able to see the focus upon fashion within this issue. The main features within this issue are: 'It is the Mode that makes the Manners – Mighty is the power of fashion, which has in recent seasons led its devotees from discretion to ways of desolating licence – and back again', 'Paris makes youth in the image of the mode', 'Fashion and the Fashion makers – fashions, like food, must be properly assimilated, and only such of them as agree with one's individuality should be attempted', 'At the Annual Couturiers' Ball given in Paris Poiret Dazzles the Thousand Eyes of Night', 'Street Dress for Early Spring', 'The Inexpensive Dance Frock', 'Light Dresses for Spring and Summer 'and 'The Limited Incomes Spring Budget' amongst many others. For example in this issue there is a two page spread dedicated to 'The

[16] Chase, *Always in Vogue* p.130.

[17] Chase , *Always in Vogue*, p.151

Possibilities of Suede', this feature contains very little writing, in fact only a small 21 line paragraph accompanied by five sketches of differing ways for women to wear these suede items:

> This soft suede hat for the country is pliable enough to be bent into any shape, and is carried out in a delightful shade of rust colour with jade green stitching.[18]

There are only two points within the entire magazine that deviate from this stereotypical fashion focus. The first is an article entitled 'Two Painters and an Illustrator' about the work of Hesketh Hubbard, Walter W. Russell and Claude Shepperson. The other is an advert for 'Distinctive overalls', something which does not seem congruent with the '*Vogue* Policies and Format', nor necessarily appealing to their desired reader, although advertising quotas may explain this.

Not only does the amount of fashion content featured within the magazine by 1924 drastically change, but the way in which fashion is approached from then on is altered. To take a comparative example, the Late September 1925 (Autumn Forecast and Millinery Issue) contained very little about the coming season or the newest hats, and instead a number of features on art and cultural themes: with literature such as a piece written by Aldous Huxley entitled 'The Horrors of Society – The unutterable boredom involved in the diversions of the leisured classes', literary analysis by Richard Aldington on 'Modern Free Verse – The First of a series of articles dealing with the free verse

[18] Anonymous. 'The Possibilities of Suede.' *Vogue*. Late March .1922: p. 56

movement in England and America, its history and its results' and an original poem by Osbert Sitwell entitled 'P.P.S and RSVP – Einsteinismo per le Danni' instead taking precedence. There are also both architecture and art features such as 'A Prophetic portrait by Arnold Ronnebeck based on modern tendencies in architecture' and 'Brilliant Figures in Modern Paris: Philippe Soupault, Arthur Honnegger, Constantin Brancusi, Ludmilla Pitoeff'. Such features often utilised two pages of print, alongside photographs and sketches. Continuing later in the magazine in column format, there was little room for the amount of fashion that was seen in March of 1922. As previously suggested roles of fashion and literature between 1922 and 1926 are mutually exclusive. This does not relate purely to the space provided for each, but the attitude within the magazine. For example, the original literature feature 'Turning over New Leaves', appeared in alternate issues (sometimes less) and was not awarded the same significance that fashion features were at its time. Fashion articles were typically placed at the start of the magazine, were decorated with many sketches, often followed on from issue to issue, and were accorded two pages. In stark contrast, 'Turning over New Leaves' was the last article in the magazine, interspersed with advertisements and was in a column format. This format gradually reversed with the introduction of more and more intellectual articles. Edna Woolman Chase recognised this shift:

> Fashion Miss Todd all but eschewed, and our service features – Seen in the Shops, Smart Fashions for Limited Incomes, the Hostess and Beauty articles – were given short shrift.[19]

[19] Chase, *Always in Vogue*, p.151-2

Woolman Chase notes that it was not only fashion articles that were being replaced, but all articles with a superficial leaning. A feature entitled 'For the Hostess', for example, was replaced by X. Marcel Boulestin's articles such as the regular feature 'Finer Cooking', which maintained an intellectual stance and did not simply provide the modern hostess with tips on table decoration. The use of X. Marcel Boulestin in the first place served to intellectualise the feature, since he was both famous and well respected at the time.

This gradual introduction of highbrow material into British *Vogue* culminated in the Early October 1924. In this issue the fashion features were relegated, for the first time in *Vogue*'s history, to the back of the magazine and were presented in a columned format. Despite it being the 'Paris Openings and Olympia Number' there are only four fashion articles totalling nine pages, most consisting of very little text, many images and often multiple features on the same page. In the same issue, however, there were nine articles under the title 'special features' which included varied articles such as 'The Triumph of the Machine', 'Some Distinguished Women Writers' and 'The Latest Criticism' all of which were granted at least one full page of text. This is especially interesting when considering the fact that Todd achieved this whilst under numerous editorial constraints.

> Nast for instance required each issue of *Vogue* to contain two full-page 'society' photos. 'In my early days with British *Vogue*,' Harry Yoxall recalled later, 'we kept a full-time assistant in the art department, air-brushing out the wrinkles and

> slimming the hips of our society.' How the highbrow Miss Todd must have despised such observances.[20]

The limitations that Todd worked under may go some way to explain the reason for her not eradicating fashion features entirely. Although Edna Woolman-Chase has suggested she gave fashion features 'short shrift', this was not entirely true. Dorothy Todd not only turned ideas on fashion into 'special features', but changed the way in which her readers regarded fashion by amalgamating her ideas on modernism with those of fashion.

But All's a Matter of Fashion

During the latter years of her editorship Todd altered not only the amount of fashion within the pages of *Vogue*, but also the content of that fashion. For example in the Early October 1925 issue, there is a fashion feature that has avoided eschewal by Todd, 'Frocks Prove their Chic by Turning their Unusual Backs', seemingly of the '*Vogue*' style, similar to those fashion features displaying the latest from the mode and of the same ilk as appeared before Todd's editorship. However, there is a small yet significant difference in the sketches that accompany the piece; the women depicted are not surrounded by suitors, posing at a dressing table or at a party. Rather, standing almost arm in arm, the women are depicted musing over paintings within a gallery. This contrasts with the image of the 'fashionable' *Vogue* woman previously portrayed and perhaps suggests that it is

[20] Seebohm, *The Man Who Was Vogue*, p.128

fashionable to maintain an interest in art and not necessarily only in the company of men. Though only a small demonstration of Todd's altered portrayal of fashion, we are able to see this in more depth in other areas of *Vogue*. This is exemplified by an article featured in the Early April 1924 issue, 'Fashions in Decoration' by Victoria Sackville-West. Commissioning a writer such as Sackville-West in the first place to write an article on fashion illustrates Todd's ability to appeal to the consumer whilst maintaining her modernist aesthetic, thereby creating an intellectualised version of the *Vogue* format. Though the article appears concerned with interiors and decoration, in reality it is an essay exploring the very nature of fashion, its passing trends and seeming ephemerality:

> There can be no Absolute, no final right or wrong, but only fashion – only that indefinable spirit abroad in the air by which its insidious whisper persuades members of the same generation to the same way of thinking.[21]

In this quote we are able to see Sackville-West's fear of the power that fashion holds over society. The use of terms such as 'insidious whisper' conjures Svengali like images. Though defined as fashion, 'members of the same generation to the same way of thinking' could just as easily be describing concepts of conformity or mass culture. Many writers for *Vogue* during this time demonstrated similar anxiety, including other members of the Bloomsbury group. Writing of this time in literature, Andreas Huyssen suggests many writers' of the 1920s fear 'contamination'.

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[21] Victoria Sackville-West. 'Fashions in Decoration.' *Vogue.* Early April. 1924: p.61.

> The nightmare of being devoured by mass culture through co-option, commodification, and the 'wrong' kind of success is the constant fear of the modernist artist, who tries to stake out his territory by fortifying the boundaries between genuine art and inauthentic mass culture.[22]

Here it is possible that Sackville-West is demonstrating an anxiety expressed by other writers for Todd's *Vogue*, namely Virginia Woolf. It is possible that according to Huyssen, Sackville-West's submission to participating in something so concerned with mass culture (*Vogue* and moreover, fashion) reveals her anxiety as a modernist writer that she will not only become contaminated but consumed by this.

However, Huyssen's description is one that describes canonical masculine modernism. This is exemplified by his suggestion that mass culture was associated with the feminine, therefore Vita Sackville-West's feminine, decorative writing did not necessarily adhere to his view of the contamination anxious masculine modernist. As a result there is also evidence of Sackville-West's sense of empathy, not only with the subject but with the reader also; her sometimes dichotomous style of writing can be seen to derive from an intersection between the writer, the audience and the subject, something which is not 'fortifying the boundaries' but destroying them. As a modern reader, the intellectual reputation of Vita Sackville-West in comparison to the superficiality of

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[22] Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other' in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism,* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1986), p.51.

fashion seems paradoxical. However, Lawrence Rainey suggests that this is a trait that in fact defines modernism and the time in which Sackville-West was writing:

> Modernism's ambiguous achievement, I shall urge, was to probe the interstices dividing that variegated field and to forge within it a strange and unprecedented space for cultural production, one that did indeed entail a certain retreat from the domain of public culture, but one that also continued to overlap and intersect with the public realm in a variety of contradictory ways.[23]

In the latter half of this chapter, I will further explore the reasons why writers and artists chose *Vogue* specifically out of the 'variety of contradictory' outlets, but Rainey's suggestion demonstrates the way in which many modernists accepted the contradiction of participating within mass culture despite harbouring a contamination anxiety. Nicola Luckhurst acknowledges that this tension was particularly common within many *Vogue* features:

> In general the highbrow features swing from inclusiveness, giving the impression that *Vogue* is a small coteries journal, to the satirical or pedagogic, conveying a sense of the authors' uncertainty about communicating with an anonymous mass readership through a popular medium[24]

[23] Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism*, p.3.
[24] Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue*, p.16.

The idea of inclusiveness is certainly present within 'Fashions in Decoration' with the use of inclusive pronouns, 'We turn the pages and smile; yet our own childish fingers touched those furbelows and that taffeta…'[25] Whilst suggesting unity with her reader, we are also able to see the modernist aspects of the article in the above quote, such as the emphasis on both memory and the sensory. The notion of unity advances to community with the introduction of the idea of 'Englishness' to the article. This allows Sackville-West and her reader to unite, and simultaneously suggests that fashion is not simply of a 'generation' but also of a 'nation', thereby attributing even greater significance to the notion of fashion in English consciousness.

Only four issues prior to Vita Sackville-West's article, there had appeared one exploring similar ideas in the Early February 1924 issue. This article was entitled 'Fashions of the Mind', and although no name was attributed to it, was actually an abridged version of an article by Raymond Mortimer in the September 1923 issue of *Vanity Fair.*[26] During Todd's editorship there were many features that were superfluously given the title 'Fashion'. For example: Aldous Huxley's feature 'A History of Some Fashions in Love', which had very little to do with the idea of fashion and was rather a literature feature based upon seminal love stories.[27] Interestingly this is the same concept as David Garnett's feature also exploiting the title of 'fashion': 'Fashions in

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[25] Victoria Sackville-West. 'Fashions in Decoration'. *Vogue.* Early April. 1924: p.61.
[26] [26] *Vanity Fair* has often been viewed as the more intellectual and controversial of the two Conde Nast products. Christopher Reed argues that Todd was affected by the American *Vanity Fair* far more than the *American Vogue*, thereby suggesting that exchanges of articles such as Mortimer's aligns the two ever closer.
[27] Aldous Huxley. 'A History of Some Fashions in Love'. *Vogue*. Late August. 1924: p.49.

Lovers - The author of 'Lady into Fox' shows how many modes in lovers literature reveals and that though the perfect lover varies from age to age, riches and devotion are always in fashion'.[28] The repeated use of fashion, teamed with 'modes' and 'age to age' reads as typical for *Vogue*'s fashion features, therefore it is possible that this was a technique Todd used to assimilate these features into her 'fashion' magazine and coax certain readers into reading such articles. However, 'Fashions of the Mind' goes further than Huxley and Garnett's articles in demonstrating the necessity for the title. The writer adopts the same technique by littering the article with references to 'Modern Paris' what is 'chic' and numerous sartorial metaphors. We are able to see the same vein as Sackville-West's article and indeed the very philosophy of Todd's *Vogue.*

> Fashions in religion, in philosophy, in literature, and in the arts generally, do not change as quickly as they do in millinery, but they change quite quickly enough.[29]

Much like the editorial introducing the Early April 1925 issue, we are able to see the writer breaking down the boundaries of fashion and intellectual culture by showing the similarities and therefore validity of fashion to religion, philosophy, literature and the arts. The entire article continues to toy with this idea, that the great metanarratives of any generation are a form of fashion. The author is keen to point out that this does in no way belittle them, rather demonstrates a transitory nature. The author also suggests a similar reluctance to Sackville-West for blindly following 'fashion'. 'Even the most intelligent

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[28] David Garnett. 'Fashions in Lovers'. *Vogue.* Late September. 1923.
[29] Anonymous. 'Fashions of the Mind'. *Vogue.* Early February. 1924: p.49

people are rather like sheep, and enthusiasm is as infectious as influenza.'[30] This renunciation of those who slavishly follow fashion seems contradictory within a fashion magazine, specifically since the author even makes reference to following the fashions of a fortnightly magazine. Here we are able to see the pedagogic tone Luckhurst describes since the author not only educates the reader on the following of fashion, but the start of fashions and the inevitable demise of fashions. However, there are many ideas that not only adhere to those on fashion, but those expected within a fashion magazine. This is the idea of innovation and the new which is celebrated throughout *Vogue* and indeed the 1920s 'For fashion means change, and change, in the long run, improvement.'[31] The disowning of the previous generation in favour of the current 'Bright Young' generation is an idea that was common throughout this period and that is certainly prevalent in the pages of Dorothy Todd's *Vogue*, 'For if the young find mental dowdiness ridiculous, the old call mental chic immoral.'[32] In his book *Bright Young People*, DJ Taylor looks at the creation of a group of young people during the 1920s who were deeply opposed to their parents' values and generation as a whole, resulting in what the press branded 'High Bohemia'. *Vogue* seems to cater to the zeitgeist of these people and writes to the young reader who feels akin to the Bright Young Person, from Taylor's description: 'the elements that would subsequently be associated with the Bright Young People: glamour, money, famous names and lashings of snob appeal' it is unsurprising to see the alliance that this generation found within the pages of *Vogue*. [33] These Bright Young People who

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] DJ Taylor, *Bright Young People: The Rise and Fall of a Generation 1918-1940* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2007), p.16.

were able to influence their generation were extremely concerned with parties, cocktails and jazz. However, they also expressed a deep interest not only in the world of literature, but in the world of art at large.

Though I have demonstrated the opposition between fashion and literature during this time, Todd utilised other mediums to alter her choice fashion content. This is evident in many of the art features, two of these examples are: 'A Famous Artist Analyses the Slim Silhouette- art and science, diplomatically combined can solve for many women the agonising problem of the fashionable figure by Leon Bakst' and 'Artists and the Influence of Fashion – the evanescent modes and manners are caught and immortalized by the sensitive brush of the artist'. [34] Within these articles we are able to see similar attitudes to the literary fashion articles.

> Being primarily, a painter, the art of costuming appeared to me, at first a sort of delightful game. But, by imperceptible stages, I came to appreciate the more serious ramifications of the subject, and so, by degrees, I became a direct collaborator with the couturiers and with the directors of the theatres.[35]

Bakst confirms the boundaries between high and low, art and fashion. His trivialisation of fashion by declaring it a 'delightful game' mirrors the stereotypical ideas on fashion

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[34] Leon Bakst. 'A Famous Artist Analyses the Slim Silhouette'. *Vogue*. Late November .1923: p.60: Anonymous. 'Artists and the Influence of Fashion'. *Vogue.* Late March 1924: p.49

[35] Leon Bakst. A Famous Artist Analyses the Slim Silhouette'. *Vogue*. Late November. 1923: 'p.60

which were not only evident in the pages of modernism and Todd's *Vogue* alike, but by today's critics' wide berth of the subject. However, what is interesting is Bakst's acknowledgement of the 'ramifications' of fashion. This reflects ideas other contributors to *Vogue* professed. For example, Virginia Woolf in her renowned book *Orlando* explores the greater power that fashion is able to hold over us:

> Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us…Thus there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.[36]

These greater implications of clothing that both Bakst and Woolf pronounce exemplify the very ethos of Todd's *Vogue*, that fashion and intellect can co-exist harmoniously if a little unexpectedly. This is echoed in the article 'Artists and the influence of Fashion' where the writer has difficulty separating the two concepts:

> In the larger sense, no artist is free from the influence of a prevailing fashion. As a sensitive man – every artist must be that – he is of those certain to feel a reaction from existing phenomena.[37]

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[36] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando:A Biography* (London: Hogarth Press 1928), p.170
[37] Anonymous. 'Artists and the Influence of Fashion'. *Vogue.* Late March. 1924: p.49

This writer acknowledges fashion as a signifier of a time or generation, that its existence is always a unique 'phenomena'. Once again fashion is treated in a greater sense, rather than marginalising its significance. It is important to note that whilst Todd 'All but eschewed fashion', she also allowed it a greater significance than simply 'the Possibilities of Suede'. Articles by prominent writers and artists opened up to her reader a new way of thinking about fashion, rather than simply eschewing it. Whilst it is easy to suggest that Todd's intentions were to eradicate fashion from the pages of *Vogue*, I do not believe this is true. Rather, elevate it since this was part of the project of breaking down the boundaries between high and low. Whilst many modernists may have opposed this, it is evident that many modernists held similar opinions on these lower art forms such as fashion and thereby *Vogue* provided them with an outlet for these opinions, hence their inclusion in the project.

We Nominate for the Hall of Fame

Todd's intention was to raise *Vogue* from the lowbrow reputation of a women's fashion magazine and elevate it to the levels of intellectual highbrow, yet the question remained: why did so many modernist writers contribute to its pages? In this section I will look at possible reasons why artists and writers renounced the stereotypes of high modernism by contributing to a magazine that was at the centre of mass consumer publishing. I will explore the way in which Todd created celebrities for her readers out of the writers and artists who chose to contribute. Though many of Todd's contributors were already

famous, I would contend that it was the way in which she presented them to her readers that was different, creating literary celebrities for an audience who would not necessarily have been exposed to these individuals.

Once again it is evident that between the period of 1922 and 1926 the magazine's approach to its contributors was drastically altered. In 1922 there were no author attributions or bylines for the articles. Moreover, the only profiles featured within the pages of *Vogue* were those of designers, royalty, actresses (occasionally) or the ever-present members of high society. As Harry Yoxall declared, Todd was *required* to promote these society features, which continued throughout her editorship. However, as shall be illustrated, the profiles which she chose to celebrate in *Vogue* changed considerably throughout her time.

Through the years of 1922-1926, one is able to discern a progression in the kinds of publicity she created for her contributors within the pages of *Vogue*. The Early December issue of 1924 saw the debut of a new weekly feature entitled 'We Nominate for the Hall of Fame', through which Todd promoted her almost exclusively modernist nominees. T. S. Eliot's nomination, in which he is described, slightly tongue-in-cheek, as being in possession of 'metaphorically the highest brow of any man alive', indicates the selection criteria. The nominees were often featured elsewhere within the same issue. For example, in the Late May 1924 issue, Sacheverell Sitwell's poem 'The Fiery Torch' was a few pages away from Raymond Mortimer's review of Edith Sitwell in 'New Books for

the Morning Room Table', both of which were presented along with the Sitwells' nomination for the 'Hall of Fame':

> Because they have created a new style in prose, poetry and decoration: because of their intense interest in all the arts: because they are the children of Sir George Sitwell and Lady Ida Sitwell: because they are all great travellers: because they have all written poems: because in addition to this Mr Osbert Sitwell has stood for Parliament, written satires, and is about to publish a book of short stories: because Miss Sitwell edited 'Wheels' and has just published a new poem, 'The Sleeping Beauty'. Because Mr Sacheverell Sitwell's book on Southern Art has had the most appreciative reviews of any book published this year: because of their witty contributions to 'Who's Who': because of their production of 'Façade' at the Aeolian Hall last year: because they have been caricatured by Max Beerbohm: because they are serious artists who know how to be amusing: because they are such admirable hosts and have such an interesting collection of pictures.[38]

Their nomination (accompanied by a picture) provided the ever-important reader with all of the necessary knowledge of each of the Sitwells. This allowed the reader not only to understand subsequent conversations (or in the Sitwells' case society gossip) or articles written about them, but also ignited an interest which would be satiated within the very same or next issue. Todd utilised this technique in many other formats. If a regular contributor either had a new book or exhibition then they would almost definitely either

[38] Anonymous. 'We Nominate for the Hall of Fame'. *Vogue*. Late May. 1924: p.49

feature in 'New Books for the Morning Room Table', or be reviewed by Roger Fry. This was taken further with profiles provided for many of the contributors, important writers and artists of the time. For example the articles written by Edith Sitwell, analysing the works of famous female writers such as Dorothy Richardson, who herself contributed to *Vogue*. The profile of Marie Laurencin (another regular contributor), written under the pseudonym Polly Flinders, is particularly interesting since it constantly associates Laurencin with Sappho and highlights the homosexual undertones of Todd's *Vogue*.[39] Both Christopher Reed and Lisa Cohen suggest Todd's overt homosexuality found a place within the pages of *Vogue* in many different ways, this particular profile being one of them.[40] Therefore we are able to see the way in which Todd's aesthetic and agenda are constantly at the forefront of her publication.

The picture and above description of the Sitwells allows the reader to feel a sense of familiarity with the three sibling writers (and indeed all of the nominees throughout the feature). This is especially important for the regular contributors since the reader would be accustomed to their writing, yet this exposure to them as people rather than purely writers creates the notion of celebrity. The above description appeals to readers with numerous interests, not purely literature based; for example, in the reference to Sir George and Lady Sitwell and Osbert's forays into parliament. This also allows the reader to understand the importance and talent of the writers who are providing articles on

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[39] Polly Flinders. 'Marie Laurencin'. *Vogue.* Late January. 1925: p.40
[40] Christopher Reed, 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name': p. 39-71; Lisa Cohen, '"Frock Consciousness": Virginia Woolf, the Open Secret, and the Language of Fashion' *Fashion Theory* 3. no. 1/2 1999: p. 149-174

varied topics such as 'Spain' by Sacheverell Sitwell. [41] Every regular and sporadic contributor was featured within the pages of the 'Hall of Fame'; Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, Aldous Huxley, Raymond Mortimer, Brancusi, Wyndham Lewis, Edwin Muir, Seigfried Sassoon, Conrad Aiken, Nancy Cunard, Dorothy Richardson, Georges Braque, Richard Aldington, T.S. Eliot, H.D., D.H. Lawrence, Havelock Ellis, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, and Sigmund Freud amongst numerous others. However, what is interesting is that the nominees are solely intellectual figures. There is not a single fashion designer or society belle amongst them. Unlike the society celebrities Condé Nast was keen to promote, the prerequisite for all members of the 'Hall of Fame' was a significant achievement within the world of literature or art. In April 1926 the name for the feature was changed into 'Our Contemporaries'. We are able to see the focus upon the young and innovative generation through this rebranding. As previously suggested, *Vogue* was aware of the trend for the new and was keen to accommodate the Bright Young generation.

This Complicated Age Exacts Simplicity in Its Homes

In the spirit of inclusiveness, *Vogue* continued throughout Todd's editorship to allow their reader access into the homes of people of interest. In 1922 these people were typically high-profile members of society and occasionally royalty. For example, the Late March 1922 issue contained a two page feature on 'The Villa Medici at Fiesole, the Beautiful Early Renaissance House in which Princess Mary is Spending her

[41] Sacheverell Sitwell, 'Spain'. *Vogue*. Early February. 1925.

Honeymoon'[42]. However, in the late October 1924 issue there appeared a feature entitled 'Unity in Diversity – the house of Mr Osbert and Mr Sacheverell Sitwell'. Firstly, this was a departure from what had been featured in the previous years, once again it shows how Todd maintained the feature (i.e. fashion and in this case, celebrity) but altered the focus and content to suit her literary aesthetic. Secondly, this was a way in which the Sitwells' profiles were promoted within the magazine and their 'avant-garde' or bohemian' personas were cultivated, creating literary celebrities within the pages of *Vogue*. This is highlighted in the article itself, 'It is the character, not his possessions that gives the room its quality.'[43] The feature highlights the owners of the house rather than the interior per se; it is about the Sitwells and their personalities. For this is what was created for the readers, personalities, which in turn led to the creation of celebrities. Allowing access into the houses of people such as the Sitwells' returns to the idea of inclusivity with the reader, yet this in turn contrasts to the ideas of exclusivity of modernism. Christopher Reed writes of this feature:

> Some of the elements identified in the Sitwells' interior – African carvings and postimpressionist French paintings – are associated with mainstream modernism, though both the female authorship of the French painting and its imagery of spectators bathed in the glow of stage lights tie it to the gender-bending, theatrical aspects of modernity celebrated in *Vogue*.[44]

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[42] 'Anonymous, 'The Villa Medici at Fiesole' *Vogue.* Late March 1922.
[43] Anonymous, 'Unity in Diveristy' *Vogue*. Late October. 1924: p.53
[44] Reed. 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name'. p. 391

Reed acknowledges the need to view the article in terms of 'mainstream modernism' yet also suggests the dichotomy involved. What is interesting is the way in which he specifies the unique type of modernism which existed within the pages of *Vogue*. Reed creates a semantic field of theatricality with an audience 'spectators' and an atmosphere 'glow of stage lights'. This recognises the element of construction within the article and its subject. The Sitwells are turned into a spectacle for the reader, who is allowed privileged access into their world. However, this access is under the control of the Sitwells themselves and, perhaps more importantly, *Vogue*. F.R. Leavis in his book *New Bearings in English Poetry* even associated the Sitwell's with the world of celebrity above the world of literature, declaring 'The Sitwell's belong to the history of publicity rather than poetry.'[45] It is here that we are able to see the writers' authority in the creation of their own celebrity and return to the question of why they would participate in the spectacle of *Vogue*.

In his book *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity*, Aaron Jaffe explores the way in which canonical modernists found a place within the emerging culture of celebrity during the 1920s. In many circumstances this extended beyond the interests of the work itself but to the interests of the writer:

[45] F.R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation* (London: Penguin, 1982), p.58.

> Modernism's crowning successes often depend on their promotion among non-readers, a network of cultural producers not necessarily concerned with putting the aesthetic artefacts themselves first.[46]

Jaffe's suggestion demonstrates the importance of self-promotion to modernist writers. Within this self-promotion we are able to see the self-constructed nature of the modernist persona. Though this seems to contrast with the traditional view of these modernists, Jaffe suggests that it is in fact part of this:

> Modernist culture pairs descriptive claims about a whole way of life with prescriptive formulas about arts and culture. Modernism is more than just the instances of conscious 'modernist' artistry.[47]

The elite aversion to mass culture and consumerism that is associated with the modernist artist, Jaffe argues, was just as much a self-fashioning tool as self-promotion within the very same mass culture. It is interesting, then, to consider *Vogue* as a platform that provided these artists with a means to promote themselves to non-readers. Christopher Reed suggests that the idea of mass culture anxiety is one that was retrospectively placed on this time period, arguing that,

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[46] Aaron Jaffe, *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005), p.6
[47] Ibid.

> The intervening eighty years have imposed…thick sediments of cliché and presumption over the rich soil of the 1920s, a remarkably inventive era when the hierarchies now associated with modernism had yet to acquire their authority. To attempt to return to the 1920s on its own terms is to discover a culture flourishing with many of the transgressive pleasures—of wit, mass culture, self-conscious performativity—that postmodernism later claimed for itself in contrast to the ossified modernism of the intervening years.[48]

We are certainly able to see this 'self-conscious performativity' in Todd's contributors. In using the example of the writer Virginia Woolf, this becomes increasingly apparent. Much has been written over Woolf's anxiety surrounding *Vogue*, Todd and fashion in general. For example her declaration that 'the worship of fashion, the buying of clothes 'trivial'' since it is the 'masculine values that prevail', and her personal feelings towards Todd which varied from fascination to repulsion (something which is often attributed to Todd's overt homosexuality).[49] Yet it is her writing for *Vogue* which is given the most debate, both by Woolf herself in diaries and letters, but also by her contemporaries and critics. She discusses the 'morality of writing for *Vogue*', describes it as 'sell[ing] [her] soul to Todd' and declares it 'a vulgar paper called *Vogue*'. [50] Yet she nevertheless wrote four features for the magazine, was photographed for it, and fiercely defended her

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[48] Reed. 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name'. p. 41.
[49] Virginia Woolf,. *A Room of One's Own*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1981b [1929]) p.4.
[50] Virginia Woolf in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf: A Change of Perspective Vol.3, 1923-1928.* ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), p. 159, 250, 130.

choices to do so. Once again we return to the question of why. Virginia Woolf provides us with the answer herself in her diary:

> Did I put down my progress towards Perpetual Immortality […] I asked Todd £10 for 1000 words: she orders 4 articles at that fee: Harper wishes me (I think) to write an American Browns & Bennetts; & *Vogue* (via Dadie) is going to take up Mrs Woolf, to boom her: & - & - & - So very likely this time next year I shall be one of those people who are, so father said, in the little circle of London Society which represents the Apostles, I think, on a larger scale. Or does this no longer exist? To know everyone worth knowing. I can just see what he meant; just imagine being in that position – if women can be.[51]

Regardless of the magazine, Woolf's main priority (and possibly that of many of the other *Vogue* modernists) was contemporary notoriety. Todd was able to provide this within the 'little circle of London Society', and did for so many of these writers. Edna Woolman Chase concedes that 'A high percentage of young Englishmen [Todd] picked out when they were boys have won laurels in their various fields'.[52] Whether this was from Todd's ability to discover potential, or her promotion of these individuals is not clear. Although Woolf suggests that her main objective for writing in *Vogue* is fame, she also provides another reason for participating in this unlikely collaboration:

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[51] Virginia Woolf in *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Vol. 2, 1920-1924*. ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth Press 1978), p.319.
[52] Chase, *Always in Vogue*, p.131.

> I've been engaged in a great wrangle with an old American called Pearsall Smith on the ethics of writing articles at high rates for fashion papers like *Vogue*. He says it demeans one. He says one must write only for the *Lit. Supplement* and the *Nation* and Robert Bridges and prestige and posterity and to set a high example. I say Bunkum. Ladies' clothes and aristocrats playing golf don't affect my style; and they would do his a world of good. Oh these Americans! How they always muddle everything up! What he wants is prestige: what I want, money.[53]

Woolf displays her monetary intentions, although these seem at odds with a later admission that *Vogue* and the *Nation* paid the same prices. However, she also displays her ethical stance on writing for 'fashion papers like *Vogue*'. Her playful suggestion that *Vogue* would do Smith 'a world of good' demonstrates her alliance with the lowest aspects of the world of *Vogue*, despite Smith's suggestions. It also demonstrates her immunity as a modernist from contamination of the kind Huyssen suggests and Smith seems to indicate. This therefore suggests that modernists are simultaneously able to participate in the world of mass culture and consumerism whilst maintaining their relevance within the modernist movement. Jane Garrity utilizes the theory of Frederick Jameson to suggest that it was the accomplishments of cultural paradoxes such as Todd's *Vogue* that not hindered, but advanced the modernist movement through the 'conditions of possibility'.[54] Todd's commodification of that which was by definition elite, and

[53] Woolf in *Letters Vol 3*, p 154.
[54] Garrity, 'Virginia Woolf, Intellectual Harlotry and 1920s British *Vogue'* p.190

promoting it amongst an elite readership is what created these ‘conditions of possibility’, albeit in an unpredictable and surprising manner.

CHAPTER 2: Literature

'Turning Over New Leaves'

During Dorothy Todd's time as editor, the pages of *Vogue* feature countless forays into the world of modernist literature. Richard Aldington, literary editor of the modernist magazine *The Egoist* between 1914 and 1916, wrote a number of reviews, features and profiles for the magazine under Todd, and it is by looking closely at these that we are able to see this prominence. A significant article for the magazine is Aldington's profile of T.S. Eliot, his successor at *The Egoist*. The distinction with which Aldington and *Vogue* regard Eliot demonstrates the transformation of the magazine into a 'review for the avant-garde'.[55] As previously mentioned, book reviews in *Vogue* were not an alien concept, with the succinct and sporadic column entitled 'Turning over New Leaves'. However, by the mid 1920s, *Vogue* had established its intentions within the literary arena through features such as Aldington's on Eliot, titled: 'T.S. Eliot, Poet and Critic – A Scholarly and Austere Modern Whose Classicism and Coherent Thought is of Serious Importance to His Generation'.[56] The title immediately classifies Eliot as a 'modern' to its reader, and introduces the way in which Aldington will continue to approach Eliot's work throughout the article: in relation to Eliot's innovation and contribution towards the modernist movement. This simultaneously informs the reader of Eliot and his works, his prominence within the modernist movement and the movement itself. Once again the emphasis on generation brings the idea of the current and innovative to the forefront and includes the reader within contemporary literary history.

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[55] Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue,* p. 3.
[56] Richard Aldington. 'T.S. Eliot Poet and Critic'. *Vogue*. Early April. 1925: p.71.

According to Mahood, during the 1920s, *Vogue* ' sought a double readership – the readers of fashion magazines and readers of Aldous Huxley, Edith Sitwell and Virginia Woolf – in aligning itself with England's social elite and the *avant garde*'.[57] This is evident in many of the articles, not least in Aldington's profile of Eliot. The picture of Eliot appearing on the opposite page once again turned him from a writer into a celebrity. The actual picture seems to be an amalgamation of the world of *Vogue* and the world of modernism, with Eliot, cigarette in hand, perusing a book. According to Judith Brown in her study of the intersection between glamour and modernism, this squarely placed him within the world of glamour: 'Slim, streamlined, ephemeral, and ultimately deadly, cigarettes produced, through their veil of smoke, a sense of style, transgression, and danger that, together, created glamour.'[58] Aldington mirrors this within the article by accentuating the cutting-edge nature of Eliot's work as one would the latest trends from Paris. Aldington takes this further by even acknowledging the seemingly incongruent notion of fashion, commenting that 'If [Eliot] chose to play the game of Fashion he might easily aspire to the intellectual dictatorship of Mayfair'.[59] Despite his inclusion of *Vogue* ideas and attempts to appeal to his reader, there seems like Sackville-West reluctance towards this. The above sentence demonstrates a mocking attitude to the world of fashion and thus the publication and its reader. Other writers took this further, satirizing their reader, as Aldous Huxley did in his feature 'The Dangers of Work – a warning against the possible ill-effects of our excitement concerning the dignity of labour'. [60]

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[57] Mahood, 'Fashioning Readers: The avant garde and British *Vogue*, 1920-9', p. 42.
[58] Brown, Judith, *Glamour in Six Dimensions: Modernism and the Radiance of Form,* (London: Cornell University Press 2009), p.2.
[59] Richard Aldington. 'T.S. Eliot Poet and Critic'. *Vogue*. Early April. 1925: p.71
[60] Aldous Huxley. 'The Dangers of Work'. *Vogue*. Late April. 1924.

Many of *Vogue*'s highbrow contributors seemed to write specifically for *Vogue*, creating many unexpected articles. For example, in the same issue (The Royal Wedding number) Aldous Huxley writes on 'The Wedding Breakfast' and Osbert Sitwell explores 'Bridal Journeys'.[61] This can even be found in the space dedicated to literature, 'New Books for the Morning Room Table'. Raymond Mortimer writing on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* finds a way in which to appeal to the fashion-minded reader:

> We live in an age of terribly swift disintegration. A hundred institutions from the Austrian empire to petticoats, from horse-traffic to autocratic Monarchy, have vanished, or are vanishing, beneath our eyes. But all of them – except petticoats – are replaced by something fresh.[62]

Here we are able to see the direct juxtaposition of the two differing worlds which Todd's experimentation with *Vogue* brought together. We are also able to see the double readership which many modernists conceded to write for. This experimental union fragmented the boundaries separating modernism from consumer culture. This resulted in many physical examples of these two opposing notions, which creates a sense of discord for the modern reader. For example, an issue containing an article 'Dead nature or Life - reflections on the art of Mr Wyndham Lewis and certain theories of the dead nature school' also contained a feature in close succession entitled 'Chins and Noses- How

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[61] Osbert Sitwell. 'Bridal Journeys'. *Vogue*. Late April. 1923.
[62] Raymond Mortimer. 'New Books for the Morning Room Table'. *Vogue*. Early June. 1925: p.60.

Much they add to the difficulties of our choice in hats and how careful we should be to take them into consideration'.[63] This uncomfortable juxtaposition is most obvious within the archives through advertisement features since they represent the visual portrayal of a consumerist culture. No matter how innovative and highbrow the articles inside the magazine were, the advertisements maintained the traditional consumerism for which *Vogue* was renowned; for example an Elizabeth Arden advert utilising the slogan ': A Woman's First Wish – To Be Beautiful'.[64] While many modernist contributors were acutely aware of the implications of writing for *Vogue*, few expressed any professional dilemma in being included within (and paid by) the magazine, demonstrating the material reality of modernist publications in the period, in which writers such as Woolf, Eliot or Huxley could be found within the popular pages of a fashion magazine as well as in the more exclusive covers of small modernist magazines and coterie journals. Whilst grappling with her discussion with Pearsall Smith over the ethics of writing for *Vogue*, Woolf, for example, reveals Duncan Grant's (another of Bloomsbury's contributors) opinions on the matter: 'Duncan's argument is that if Bloomsbury has real pearls, they can be scattered anywhere without harm'.[65] It is clear that Duncan Grant's articles do not differ in content or style to those for highbrow magazines, this is also clear for many other writers. Woolf herself though evidently divided by the ethical implications, agreed that it was not necessary to cater to the *Vogue* audience, noting that 'Todd lets you write

[63] Anonymous 'Dead Nature or Life' and Advertisement 'Chins and Noses'. *Vogue.* Early June. 1923
[64] Elizabeth Arden Advertisement. 'A Woman's first wish – to be beautiful' *Vogue.* Early July. 1922
[65] Virginia Woolf, *Letters Vol.3* (28th January 1925) p.158.

what you like, and its your own fault if you conform to the stays and petticoats'.[66] Woolf was clearly opposed to those writers who 'conform to the stays and petticoats' of the pages of *Vogue*. It is also evident that Todd was unconcerned with catering to her readership at the cost of modernist writing (a probable factor towards the poor circulation of her *Vogue*). This suggests that while a number of writers did find this necessary when writing on literature, many others felt it irrelevant to adhere to the stereotypes of not only a women's magazine, but a fashion one. Woolf declares that not only did she not cater for the fashion readership, but in fact that her writing for *Vogue* was of equal calibre to her writing for literary publications such as the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Nation and Athenaeum*. Once again this is revealed in a letter to Pearsall Smith:

> I had planned such a trap for you – I did send one article to *Vogue*, but it was intended for the *Nation*, and just about to be printed, when Todd became clamorous, and rather than write specially for her, I snatched it from Leonard [Woolf, literary editor of the *Nation and Athenaeum*], to his fury. And I hoped you would detect signs of Todd and *Vogue* in every word.[67]

Woolf reveals an important factor towards the modernist contempt for *Vogue*, the idea that one interprets *Vogue* ideas within these articles, purely because they appeared within the magazine. It is also important to note that both Woolf and presumably Smith, regarded Todd as akin to the 'stays and petticoats' of *Vogue*, rather than the modernist highbrow aspects which she clearly promoted and sought out above all else. It is possible

[66] Virginia Woolf, *Letters Vol.3* p.158
[67] Virginia Woolf, *Letters Vol.3* p.157-8

that Woolf herself had fallen victim to the idea that because Todd was so intrinsically linked to the pages of *Vogue*, that she too held the same superficial ideals.

It is clear that neither *Vogue*, nor Todd adhered to these stereotypes and in fact found more alliances with the pages of the *Nation* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, than *Women's Weekly*. Once again it is the writing of T.S. Eliot which demonstrates this. Aldington's aforementioned profile of Eliot echoes the esteem with which literary critics today regard Eliot and historically which granted him canonical status. Aurelia Mahood suggests that in fact, though addressed to a non-specialist reader, the overall content and style mirrors that which appeared in more highbrow publications such as the *Weekly Westminster*.[68] What is more significant, however, is that the article contradicts reservations towards Eliot's work such as those demonstrated in literature specialist magazines like the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Nation*, both of which produced less favourable reviews of *The Waste Land*.

'The Perfect Representative of Modernity'[69]

Though Dorothy Todd attempted to portray modernism as a movement to her readers, the end product was a biased and personal interpretation of modernism. As suggested through the coverage of Eliot and the way in which his writing was regarded, *Vogue* portrayed many aspects of canonical modernism. This included exposure of Wyndham Lewis, James Joyce, T.E. Hulme, D.H. Lawrence and Ezra Pound amongst others. There

[68] Mahood. 'Fashioning Readers: The avant garde and British *Vogue*, 1920-9'. p.41.
[69] Paul Morand. 'The Perfect Representative of Modernity'. *Vogue*. Early March. 1924.

were also numerous articles that corresponded to certain aspects of modernism, for example an article entitled 'Machines and Emotions' discusses a more feminised version of futurist ideas. These are also displayed within many architecture features such as 'The City of the Future', where Arnold Ronnebeck sketches an angular futuristic version of urban architecture 'based on modern tendencies'.[70] Futurist art was also utilized for many of the eye-catching cover illustrations. However, the type of modernism that Todd portrayed within the pages of *Vogue* largely differed from this, and was far more English in its focus and orientation. As evident from the list of contributors, the Bloomsbury Group played a significant role in the intellectualisation of *Vogue* under Dorothy Todd's editorship as did the Sitwells and a writer who featured prominently in their *Wheels* anthology, Aldous Huxley. It is unsurprising that *Vogue* appealed to writers of literary and artistic cliques since the amalgamation of artistic forms demonstrated by these groups was reflected in the intentions of *Vogue*. The ways in which the magazine juxtaposed modernist ideas demonstrates this. For example an article appearing in the Early January 1926 edition declares that 'Cubism deserves to be ranked with Broadcasting and the theory of Relativity as an invention characteristic of our time'.[71] This quote demonstrates the way in which *Vogue* was propagating modern thoughts and ideals as a whole, rather than a singular entity. Again, this is mirrored by the modernist writing included during the time.

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[70] Anonymous. 'Machines and Emotions' *Vogue* Late May. 1924: page; Arnold Ronnebeck. 'The City of the Future' *Vogue*. Late September. 1925: p.55

[71] Anonymous, 'The Cubist School' *Vogue*, Early January 1926

In a significant article on the relationship between fashion and modernism entitled 'Fashion/Orientalism/The Body', Peter Wollen declares that, 'the first wave of historic modernism developed an aesthetic of the engineer, obsessed by machine forms and directed against the lure of the ornamental and the superfluous'.[72] Utilising this definition of modernism, it is possible to argue that Todd's *Vogue* merely promoted the writings of famous authors, not modernist ideals and exposure to modernist writers since there was so little of this 'historic modernism' amongst the articles in *Vogue.* Todd's *Vogue* did not often feature early avant-garde and adopted the more contemporary 1920s modernism, though this seems predictable, it is important to demonstrate that Todd was focussed on certain areas of modernism in comparison to traditional canonical modernism in its entirety. However, Wollen continues to discuss how the functional and the ornamental are just two of the antimonies that make up the contradictory movement that was modernism. He suggests the importance of the feminine and the decorative to modernism as a whole, thereby suggesting that the mechanical aesthetic was not the only valid form of modernism. Reed also discusses the evolution of modernism as a 'cascade of oppositions' and in addition to the qualities described by Wollen, suggests the opposition between heroism and housework. [73]

> In Germany influential critics such as Julius Meier-Graefe and Karl Schefflew during the first decade of the twentieth century switched from celebrating the links between abstract art and applied decoration to policing the border between

[72] Peter Wollen. 'Fashion/Orientalism/The Body'. *New Formations* 1 1987: p.5.
[73] Christopher Reed, *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture and Domesticity* (New York: Yale University Press 2004)

> them. In England, the chief competitors for avant-garde status were Bloomsbury and the Vorticists led by the painter Wyndham Lewis, and their struggle too, played out over the issue of domesticity.[74]

From this we are able to see the way in which *Vogue* adopted a more 'domesticated' form of modernism, since *Vogue* was literally bringing modernism into the houses of its readers, typically privileged career-less women. Despite an elitist readership the project of *Vogue* was to expose the reader to modernism through equating the fashionable with what is modern, to be fashionable meant to buy clothes from certain designers but also to decorate your house with modernist designs, paintings, sculptures. This is furthered by the fashionability of reading difficult and sophisticated books – or at least to be able to talk about their authors without having to read the work, which *Vogue* of course helped. As a result *Vogue* can be seen to have domesticated modernism through the promotion of this fashionability. Whilst *Vogue* was actually bringing the reader into the houses of modernists and vice versa, other avant-garde figures were forcefully moving away from this. Therefore, despite futurist architecture and Lewis' nomination to the hall of fame, the aspect of modernism which Todd was exposing her readers to was an oppositional, decorative modernism. It is the promotion of this undercurrent of modernism which Reed labels the 'Amusing Style' that may have appealed to these literary cliques. [75] I argue that it is because of this amalgamation of styles, ideals and values that groups unified in their own assimilation identified to. It is evident that the Bloomsbury group, the Sitwells and

[74] Ibid.
[75] Reed. 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name'. p.43.

Aldous Huxley all regularly contributed not least because of self-constructive promotion or monetary benefits, but because *Vogue* appealed to their own sense of 'Amusing Style'.

This promotion of certain aspects of modernism can be seen in the original work that *Vogue* featured by its contributors, specifically the poetry. Though categorized as an imagist, H.D.'s poem *Song*, which featured in the Early May 1924 issue, demonstrates the confluence between modernism and decoration:

You are as gold
As the half-ripe grain
That merges to gold again,
As white as the white rain
That beats through
The half-opened flowers
Of the great flower tufts
Thick on the black limbs
Of an Illyrian apple bough.

Can honey distill such fragrance
As your bright hair –
For your face is as fair as rain,
Yet as rain that lies clear
On white honey-comb

Lends radiance to the white wax,

So your hair on your brow

Casts light for a shadow.[76]

Within this poem, we are able to see aspects of canonical modernism. The reference to 'an Illyrian apple bough' demonstrates a retrospective towards the classics which is evident in the majority of canonical modernist works. However, what is completely absent from this poem is the idea of the mechanical or technological. The emphasis is upon nature through the repeated references to rain, flowers, honey and the cyclical. This is further accented through the sensory nature of the poem, highlighting the idea of human experience. This is what makes this poem appeal to its reader since the mechanical had, as it were, gone out of fashion after the war. The emphasis on the visual with the emphasis upon flora and colours demonstrates the ornamental nature of the poem. H.D's poem adheres to Pound's manifesto as published in the magazine *Poetry*, suggesting that Imagism is 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'.[77] Todd's intentions were to appeal to the intellect of her reader; therefore we are able to see the way in which she found this aspect of modernism most suitable for the pages of *Vogue*. However, I believe that it is the emphasis upon the sensory and ornamental which allows the *Vogue* reader to appreciate H.D.'s poem since it holds a universal appeal rather than one which could only be appreciated by the literary

[76] H.D. 'Song'. *Vogue*. Early May. 1924: p.32.
[77] Ezra Pound in William Pratt, *The Imagist Poem, Modern Poetry in Miniature* (Story Line Press, 1963, expanded 2001)

elite. Writing of Edith Sitwell's 'Façade' in the Early July 1923 issue, Gerald Cumberland admits

> I failed sometimes to follow her in application of her method, but I have no doubt that my failure was due to the novelty and daring of that method.[78]

This confession is similar to other writers of *Vogue*, such as Aldington in the aforementioned Eliot profile; 'Never mind, for the moment, the actual and possible defects of this intellectualism; admire its energy of destruction and construction, its beautiful precision, its austere efficiency.'[79] The way in which these writers approach the *Vogue* readers is not one based upon theory, form or method, but one based upon artistic appreciation. As Pound suggests, it is the emotion which the reader is able to capture from the moment, emotion that the non-specialist reader of *Vogue* is able to identify with, not necessarily the form or method.

Despite assumptions that the *Vogue* reader is unconcerned with literary technicalities, the modernist writers often appealed to this, possibly from 'pedagogic' intentions. This is evident in yet another of Aldington's articles for *Vogue*, this time in a two part feature entitled 'Modern Free Verse'. This was marketed to readers as a 'Series of Articles Dealing with the Free Verse Movement in England and America, its History and its Results'.[80] From the focus on History we are able to see the educational tone these

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[78] Gerald Cumberland. 'A New Entertainment'. *Vogue*. Early July. 1923.
[79] Richard Aldington. 'TS Eliot, Poet and Critic'. *Vogue.* Early April. 1925: p.71.
[80] Richard Aldington. 'Modern Free Verse'. *Vogue.* Late September. 1925: p.57

articles adopted. Aurelia Mahood acknowledges Aldington's specialist tone by showing Aldington's articles as a precursor to those written by Edmund Wilson in *Axel's Castle* six years later.[81] Indeed Aldington adopts both a 'pedagogic' and a specialist tone in order to inform his reader, this is especially prominent in the first of the two articles where the focus is largely on the history and origins of Modern Free Verse. Not only does he discuss the history of the movement but also its cultural origins, acknowledging the relatively slow development in English speaking countries in contrast to countries such as Germany, Spain, Italy and Russia. Rather than simply discussing the current nature of the movement, this introduction allows his non-specialist reader to understand the subsequent article and feel confident in their knowledge of modern free verse. In an advertisement for *Vogue* published two years after Todd's editorship, the importance for this knowledge is demonstrated: 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing…The woman who studies *Vogue* never makes mistakes; she knows not only half the truth but the other half which compliments it.'[82]

Despite being published in 1928, the advert picks up on ideas created under Todd's editorship by articles exactly like Aldington's. Even Edna Woolman-Chase acknowledges that 'we have within limits used features in line with the kind of thing Dorothy was promoting,' thereby demonstrating that the ideal of the *Vogue* woman in 1928 had its basis in Todd's editorship and in these very articles. [83] It is in the second of the two articles that Aldington is able to focus on the contemporary state of the

[81] Mahood 'Fashioning Readers: The avant garde and British *Vogue*, 1920-9', p.42.
[82] Advertisment. 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing' *Vogue*. January. 1928. P.72
[83] Chase, *Always in Vogue*, p.132.

movement; it is here that Aldington returns to the style of many *Vogue* articles, such as his own on T.S. Eliot. He does not only discuss the works of individuals, but the way in which these works come together simultaneously to form a movement. However, he also promotes the work of important poets. Once again there is evidence of the *Vogue* style through portraits of each poet and the focus upon contributors and those often featured within the magazine to further their celebrity status.

Aldington's style for a literary article featured in *Vogue* contrasts with those of other regular contributors such as Aldous Huxley. In looking at Huxley's literary articles in contrast to those of Aldington we are able to assess the overall literary tone that *Vogue* upheld throughout 1922-1926. In an article featured in the late September 1924 issue entitled 'Popular Literature' for example, we are able to see the contrast. Huxley's article is incredibly self-reflexive. It demonstrates the very phenomenon Aaron Jaffe returns to explore over eighty years later; the idea of the popular in the face of modernist literature, or more accurately the place of modernist literature within a culture concerned with popularity and celebrity. Huxley returns to the *Vogue* contributor's model tone of oscillating between inclusiveness and instruction. This is achieved through allowing the reader privileged access to the world behind literature, revealing monetary intentions, the strive for popularity and the fragility of artistic morality. It is this idea of inclusion, specifically in the literary world which contrasts that of Aldington who though educating the reader, often supplied boundaries between them and the world of literature. In the spirit of inclusion, Huxley repeatedly refers back to himself, reminding the reader of the construction of the article and his own place within the world. In a review attributed to

Virginia Woolf of Huxley's *Limbo*, she expresses a warning against this very self-reflection, observing that 'He is not merely clever, well read, and honest, but when he forgets himself he discovers very charming things'.[84] However it is this awareness that allows Huxley to create the ironic tone that he repeatedly returns to throughout his articles for *Vogue* and indeed in his fiction at large. This did not always sit well with the *Vogue* ideals. As previously suggested, the *Vogue* contributions led to some unlikely articles which only served to further the hybridised atmosphere of *Vogue*. One of these is the article by Huxley entitled 'The Horrors of Society'. Although in keeping with Huxley's cynical disillusionment, the content of this piece is highly unexpected within the pages of *Vogue*. [85] For example the subtitle reads 'the unutterable boredom involved in the "diversions" of the leisured classes', a surprising comment in a magazine with a regular society feature entitled 'Crowded Hours of a Glorious Life'. Huxley continues throughout the article to condemn the typical *Vogue* reader, specifically in terms of their appreciation of the arts.

> All fine and important things are degraded; all values are overturned. Men and ideas are prized in this polite society, not for their intrinsic merit, but because they happen, for one reason or another, to be fashionable.[86]

Here we are able to see stereotypical ideals, as often displayed within canonical modernism, of an aversion to mass culture; Huyssen's contamination anxiety. It is the

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[84] Virginia Woolf unsigned review in *TLS* in *Aldous Huxley* by Conrad Watt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1975), p. 42
[85] Aldous Huxley. 'The Horrors of Society'. *Vogue*. Late September. 1925: p.54
[86] Ibid

idea that art is valued purely in relation to its popularity that demonstrates the modernist fear. Huxley's marked choice of the word 'fashionable' demonstrates the irony with which he is approaching his readers of a fashion magazine. Once again, Luckhurst's suggestion of *Vogue* as, 'satirical or pedagogic, conveying a sense of the authors' uncertainty about communicating with an anonymous mass readership through a popular medium', is evident within the article.[87] Although the majority of Huxley's articles adopted this stance of satirising his privileged reader, Woolf warned him of this years earlier in the same review of *Limbo*:

> It is amusing; it is perhaps true; and yet as one reads one cannot help exclaiming that English society is making it impossible to produce English literature. Write about boots, one is inclined to say, about coins, sea anemones, crayfish – but, as you value your life, steer clear of the English upper middle classes. [88]

Whether writing for them or for readers of literature, Huxley favoured this sense of irony. However, typical within articles featured in *Vogue*, there is another facet to Huxley's writing and sense of irony.

> What of [highbrows]? They ought, of course, by definition to be superior to the lowbrows, Experience, alas, gives the lie to *a priori* definitions. I am inclined to think that, on the whole, the highbrows are almost worse than the lows.[89]

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[87] Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue*, p.16
[88] Virginia Woolf unsigned review in *TLS* in Donald Watt, *Aldous Huxley,* p. 42
[89] Aldous Huxley. 'The Horrors of Society'. *Vogue*. Late September. 1925: p.54.

Here we are able to see a form of camaraderie between Huxley and *Vogue*, not least because *Vogue* was regarded by many (such as Pearsall Smith) as a superficial publication with superficial features, but because *Vogue* was able to embrace this and promote its own irony the articles work well within the magazine. This can be seen by the inclusion of articles such as the above by Huxley, or an article entitled 'Highbrow and Lowbrow Melodrama' in Late November 1923, the use of Polly Flinders' pseudonym (often thought to be Todd herself) and the culmination in a jazz article written by a certain 'A. Highbrow'. *Vogue*'s self-awareness reflects that of its modernist contributors. By satirising its readers and own place within culture *Vogue* was able to find alliances with modernist writers who felt unease with the publication for these very same reasons.

From these examples we are able to see that literature in the pages of *Vogue* was above all else concerned with boundaries. This did not always take the expected form of separating high and low, but often included the destruction of these boundaries. The choice of many modernists to align themselves with *Vogue* as a superficial publication is mirrored with an equal number of modernists defending the magazine's intellectual credibility or in fact their own maintenance of literary sensibilities. However, what is obvious is that these boundaries existed. This was in part due to the history of the publication as a fashion magazine, but more importantly for the writers due to their readership, and this was often an equal cause for anxiety.

CHAPTER 3: The Female Reader

'Consumers and Producers of Avant-Garde Culture'[90]

Writing of another Condé Nast magazine of the time, Michael Murphy declares that:

> *Vanity Fair* would market modernity not only by transcribing it, but by *embodying* it as well. In a sense, the magazine simply *became* modernism for many of its readers.[91]

This was also certainly the case for Dorothy Todd's *Vogue*. Throughout this chapter I will discuss the significance of the reader to the construction of Todd's *Vogue* and the impact it was intended to create. With articles on art, music, travel, architecture, interiors, food, literature, and a heavy emphasis on the 'younger generation', *Vogue* allowed its readers to be exposed to every aspect of modernity imaginable, and the differing ways the movement could be translated into their own lives. This is especially relevant to both *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue* due to their readerships being almost solely women. As Mahood suggests, 'The project of *Vogue* might then be imagined as the production of an *au courant* femininity.'[92] The femininity of *Vogue* was different in many aspects to that of the previous incarnations of the magazine; this is demonstrated in the regular features about golfing and automobiles, something which *Vogue* obviously thought of importance to their current readers despite not necessarily in-keeping with traditional forms of

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[90] Reed. 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name'. p. 44
[91] Michael Murphy, 'One Hundred Per Cent Bohemia' in *Marketing Modernisms: Self Promotion, Canonization, Re-reading*, eds, Dettmar and Donald Watt (Ann Arbor: Univeristy of Michigan Press 1996): p.64
[92] Mahood 'Fashioning Readers: The avant garde and British *Vogue*, 1920-9', p.38.

femininity. *Vogue* was able to provide an insight into a world that many of its readers would not have had access to, such as the current society parties, inside the houses of writers and artists or features on exotic countries and general travel. These topics were not present in the pre-1922 *Vogue,* and the literary articles were more likely to be found in other publications such as the *Times Literary Supplement* or *Nation and Athenaeum* rather than women's or fashion magazines.

At its very core, *Vogue* was pitching at mass culture (hence sales, not content, were the main priorities when it came to Todd's removal). Modernism and the avant-garde, however, are traditionally defined in opposition to mass culture. As Andreas Huyssen writes, 'Modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture'.[93] Nonetheless, Todd's modernist aesthetic found an unexpected ally in this 'conscious strategy of exclusion'. For although it appealed, out of necessity, to a mass market; in reality *Vogue* wrote for an elite readership. As Harry Yoxall explains,

> Condé was the first to recognize and proclaim the theory of the 'class magazine'; that is, the magazine with a specialized readership, preferably free spending, which would respond naturally to the advertising of certain kinds of manufacturers and merchants.[94]

[93] Huyssen *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, p.vii.
[94] Harry Waldo Yoxall, *A Fashion of Life* (Heinemann: London 1966) p.79

Between 1922 and 1926 *Vogue* cost one shilling. It advertised holidays to Morocco and Algeria, with travel features on Hawaii and Tunisia and there were issues every year dedicated to summer travel and winter travel. In 1922 the pages feature an advertisement for the Red Cross pearl necklace to be purchased at Christies for £22,000 and the designers featured the most regularly were Poiret and Chanel. Though there was advice for 'limited incomes' each season, the extravagant features far outweigh the frugal. By appealing to readers who could afford such luxury, it simultaneously reminded the less privileged readers of the social boundaries. Todd's use of intellectual features and contributors proved to create further boundaries for those accustomed to reading *Women's Weekly*. Modernism was established under the boundaries of art and commerce and mass and elite, *Vogue* established its own boundaries which allowed this modernist aesthetic to flourish.

Having previously discussed the 'pedagogic' tone of articles, I will explore in this section the other ways in which *Vogue* advised its readers. Though statistics for this time only allow us circulation figures, it can be assumed through the content and advertising that *Vogue* was appealing to the wealthy or aspirational woman more than likely without a career. However, as Reed acknowledges, 'training audiences in new ways of reading was a constant preoccupation during Todd's years at *Vogue*'.[95] Whilst Todd's *Vogue* found it imperative to educate their readers in literature and the arts they were not limited to these topics alone. 'If you absorb *Vogue* regularly issue by issue…you gradually become imbued with the *Vogue* idea and unconsciously you grow wise…', declared an

[95] Reed. 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name'. p. 58

advert for *Vogue* in late October 1923, demonstrating the way in which *Vogue* attempted to cultivate its readers in every manner.[96] It was not purely the ideas that *Vogue* promoted but changing an entire way of thinking for their female audience. At a basic level, Todd provided her reader with alternative topics for them to take an interest in. Not only this, but she educated these readers on these topics as evident in the 'Modern Free Verse' series of articles. By replacing fashion articles with those on art, literature, architecture, drama, even golfing and cooking, this provided women with a different option, one which they had not necessarily been previously catered for.

> The far more interesting implication of Todd's editorial guidance in the 1920s was that her mix of models created a magazine that brought its readership of British women a mix of modernity defined not only by new trends in hemlines, but by new claims for women as both consumers and producers of avant-garde culture. [97]

Reed's use of the word 'models' demonstrates the way in which *Vogue* provided women with an example that they were able to follow or aspire to. The phrase 'consumers and producers of avant-garde culture' demonstrates the discerning way in which readers of *Vogue* were able to view the cultural and intellectual movements which were developing around them. It shows the way in which *Vogue* allowed women to participate, not just observe, in society. This is most evident, as shall be illustrated, through looking at the writing of Edith Sitwell for the magazine under Todd's editorship.

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[96] Advertisement. 'If you absorb *Vogue* regularly'. *Vogue.* Late October. 1923: p.73
[97] Reed. 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name'. p. 44

Women and the Future

In a number of articles Sitwell both explored and exposed her readers to the world of the female writer. As with Aldington's literary articles, Sitwell's charted the historic achievements of female authors as well as the significance of contemporaneous women. These articles allowed women to not only understand the workings of modernism and its importance, but to see the role of women within this. One of these articles is 'The Work of Gertrude Stein', which appeared in the Early October 1925 issue. Sitwell begins by placing the writer in literary history for her readers; once again there is a focus upon the current generation and the innovation which this brings. Stein is painted as a 'pioneer' bringing life to the dead, mirroring Raymond Mortimer's description of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* in the face of 'disintegration'. As a result, this places these revolutionary female writers in direct opposition to the previous 'dead' and 'disintegrated' generation. Sitwell supports her argument by looking to Robert Graves, re-emphasising for the reader the relevance of Stein to the literary world. Much like Richard Aldington and Gerald Cumberland, Sitwell makes concessions for her *Vogue* reader, admitting that 'Miss Stein is, at present, a writers' writer – and often exceedingly difficult at that'.[98] Thereby allowing the reader permission to find Stein's work 'exceedingly difficult' yet the phrase 'writers' writer' once again creates a boundary between that of modernist writer and mass culture reader. Sitwell's declaration that Stein was a 'writers' writer' is also interesting

[98] Edith Sitwell. 'The Work of Gertrude Stein'. Early October. 1925: p.73

because Sitwell aligns herself with Stein in terms of their status as writers. The alliance of the two writers is evident in the subtitle which reads: 'A Modern Writer Who brings Literature Nearer To the Apparently Irrational World of Music'.[99]

The association between modernist poetry and music had been made by Sitwell herself two years earlier with the performance of *Façade* to William Walton's music, an event which was reviewed in the Early July 1923 issue of *Vogue*. Throughout the article Sitwell's use of language reflects that which she is discussing:

> Language had come to be a threadbare thing, too tired to move, - with words grouped together in little predestined families, bloodless and timid. Miss Stein brings back life to these dead creatures[100]

Sitwell's use of language is far from 'bloodless and timid'; in writing of Stein's innovative use of language, Sitwell's own use of poetic language allows the reader to understand the capability of their instructor. Sitwell continues the article in a manner which leads her reader through the methods of Stein's writing, focussing very little on the content, unlike other *Vogue* contributors. She writes, for example, 'I do not quote this because I find it as beautiful as other work by Miss Stein, but because we see the processes of her thinking'.[101] Although adopting a simplistic form of explanation for her non-specialist reader, Sitwell is determined to explain the complexity alongside the

[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

simplicity of Stein's work. This allows the female reader of *Vogue* to become imbued with the idea of female modernist writing, not only this but understand 'not only half the truth but the other half which complements it'.

This was not the first time *Vogue* or Sitwell had focussed on the work of Stein. Exactly a year earlier, Sitwell had published 'Three Women Writers', an essay that featured Stein alongside Katharine Mansfield and Dorothy Richardson. True to *Vogue*'s promotional ethos, opposite this in the same issue (which was supposedly the Early Paris Openings and Olympia Number) the work of Gertrude Stein was featured in an editorial entitled 'Women of Distinction in Literature', which also displayed the writers HD, Rebecca West, FM Mayor and Viola Meynell. The positioning of these two articles once again shows the way in which *Vogue* was determined to promote certain modernist writers in a celebrity culture. This is demonstrated through the use of photographs by artists such as Man Ray and the portraits which could be considered unconventional for writers. This demonstrates the way in which *Vogue* was suggesting the burgeoning fashionability of female writers to their female audience, perhaps in the hope of encouragement of either reading or writing. Sitwell begins in almost the exact same manner as her piece on Gertrude Stein, placing these writers in terms of both history and the future. This allowed the female reader to acknowledge the changing role of women that they had already experienced and look to the future for even further improvement. Despite championing the female writer, Sitwell does not offer a biased account, offering criticism in equal measure to compliment. I believe that despite the title this offers an account of three writers, not on the basis of their sex but on the merit of their writing.

This allows the reader to see the equality with which female writers are considered rather than the constant references to difference in sex which other articles feature so heavily.

Dorothy Richardson supplies such an article to the Early May 1924 issue of *Vogue*. However, the amplification of differences in sex proves to demonstrate the plight of the female in a masculinised world:

> And their crying up, or down, of the woman of to-day as contrasted to the woman of the past is easily understood when we consider how difficult it is, even for the least prejudiced, to *think* the feminine past, to escape the images that throng the mind from the centuries of masculine expressiveness on the eternal theme.[102]

The mere fact that Richardson was able to write on these matters demonstrates the openness of Todd's *Vogue* in educating its female readership on far more than fashion. The ideas expressed here by Richardson of the past are ones that seventy years later critics would express about Richardson's present. In the 1980s, Bonnie Kime Scott argues, within literary criticism:

> [Modernism] was unconsciously gendered masculine... Typically, both the authors of original manifestos and the literary historians of modernism took as

[102] Dorothy Richardson. 'Women and the Future'. *Vogue*. Early May. 1924: p.32

> their norm a small set of its male participants, who were anthologized, taught, and consecrated as geniuses.[103]

Scott demonstrates the way in which through the almost exclusive publication of men, the entire movement of modernism became gendered to future readers. However, Todd allowed contemporary readers access to this alternative facet of modernism which affected the way in which her readers viewed the entire movement. This was not a new message for Todd, whom, in an article written in 1923, suggests that 'Women are said to be less law-abiding than men, which since men make most of the laws is not surprising. But we venture to think that there may be other reasons.'[104] This provides women with an alternative view on many things not just modernism. Richardson, for example, questions the way in which her readers regarded literature, the past and the image of woman in general, noting that 'Even the pioneers of feminism, Mill, Buckle, and their followers, looked only to woman as she was to be in the future, making, for her past, polite, question-begging excuses'.[105] Richardson acknowledges the lack of attention granted to her subject matter, this alerts the reader to the unique nature of her article. Once again, emphasis is placed upon the idea of time, specifically the past and the future. This reflection of the past incites the 1920s female reader to question their own role within their own generation and social constructs. Richardson simultaneously connotes the future allowing readers to take an active role in their joint future. Richardson does this by repeatedly referring to the distance from the past, writing that 'Since the heyday of

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[103] Bonnie Kime Scott and Mary Lynn Broe, eds, *The Gender of Modernism : a critical anthology*, (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1990) p.2
[104] Anonymous (attributed to Todd) 'Who Breaks Pays' *Vogue.* Early April. 1923.
[105] Dorothy Richardson. 'Women and the Future'. *Vogue*. Early May. 1924: p.32

Meredith and Hardy battalions of women have become literate and, in the incandescence of their revelations, masculine illusions are dying like flies'.[106] This allows women to understand the possible repercussions of their actions, specifically through an active interest in literature. It is articles such as this which truly demonstrate the way in which *Vogue* was attempting to cultivate its reader into an 'intelligent observer' able to understand the 'study of the contemporary world'. [107]

The importance of looking to the past is once again confronted in another of Edith Sitwell's articles focussing on the works of female authors, this time on 'Jane Austen and George Eliot'.[108] Here Sitwell does not ignore the issue of sex, and in fact confronts it directly through her choice of authors. However, to this subject she adds the idea of 'femininity' and 'masculinity', something equally important to biological sex during these years with the works of Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud circulating:

> [Jane Austen] is the woman-writer par excellence. How can one compare her with poor George Eliot, trying so hard to be feminine and never quite succeeding, longing to be masculine in her art and never quite succeeding there either?

Only three months later, Virginia Woolf was to print an article supposedly not intended for *Vogue*, comparing the very same authors on the very same grounds. In 'Indiscretions' Woolf states

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Anonymous. 'Contents Page'. *Vogue*, Early April. 1925: p.xiv.
[108] Edith Sitwell. 'Jane Austen and George Eliot'. *Vogue*. Late August. 1924: p.32

> [George Eliot's] big nose, her little eyes, her heavy, horsey head loom from behind the printed page and make a critic of the other sex uneasy. Praise he must, but love he cannot; and however absolute and austere his devotion to the principle that art has no truck with personality, still there has crept into his voice, into text books and articles, as he analyses her gifts and unmasks her pretensions, that it is not George Eliot he would like to pour out tea. On the other hand, exquisitely and urbanely, from the chastest urn into the finest china Jane Austen pours, and as she pours, smiles, charms, appreciates – that too has made its way into the austere pages of English criticism.[109]

What is interesting in both writers' depictions of the same authors is that both women punish George Eliot for her lack of femininity in the exact same way the male critic does. Sitwell's declaration that George Eliot never succeeded in either being feminine or writing like a man, and labelling her with the piteous adjective 'poor', reveals the notion that a deviation from the feminine is ultimately a mistake. This is echoed in Woolf's description; however both writers echo the concerns of Richardson and Scott, suggesting that not only is the production of the canon a gendered practice, but the reading of it also. Each writer is positively reclaiming the term 'feminine', implying that the female writer should not try to imitate male writing, but neither should she write according to male ideals of what the feminine is, she should write as a woman, a female, herself. Woolf

[109] Virginia Woolf. 'Indiscretions'. *Vogue*. Late November. 1924: p.47

continues to raise the reader's attention to the prejudice of the literary system in the same ironic manner.

> But now perhaps it may be pertinent, since women not only read but sometimes scribble a note of their opinions, to enquire to their preferences.[110]

Woolf's use of the word 'now' reminds the reader of their own generation and therefore their own power within that generation. The use of 'now' and 'sometimes' demonstrates Woolf's irony, since clearly women not only read but (more than 'sometimes') wrote previous to 'now' because of the writers she has just discussed. The sentence demonstrates to the reader that they within this generation now have power equal to that of the male critic if they choose, rather than simply accept the 'masculine illusions'. It is also important for the 1920s female reader to see the way in which female writers are freed of their femininity or masculinity and therefore the reader herself is permitted freedom from these stereotypes also.

Other than articles, there were also a number of ways in which *Vogue* advocated a non-traditional, modern view of femininity. This was often obvious in the sarcastic and ironic tone which it adopted for many of the articles, specifically the cartoons. In a cartoon entitled 'Inappropriate Presents' the inversion and breaking down of sex boundaries are evident. This is most prominent in relation to a particular recipient of an

[110] Ibid.

'inappropriate present', an actress who accidentally receives cigars and male pyjamas. Her reaction:

> "Good old Alcestes," she wrote, "How you do keep up with things. The pyjamas are quite too lovely, and the smokes are the best I have ever hit. No one has ever given me a present I have been so delighted with.[111]

This is not of Havelock Ellis' sexual inversion, this demonstrates the fashion for sexual inversion, the flapper's liberty towards traditional sexual boundaries through smoking the masculine cigar rather than the feminine cigarette and adopting the traditional attire of the man. However, critics such as Luckhurst suggest that these articles were not significant enough to provide an impact on *Vogue's reader*, arguing that 'Despite commissioning articles from significant women writers of the day, sometimes on feminist topics *Vogue* was never 'in danger' of becoming a feminist magazine'.[112] This contrasts to *Vanity Fair* which was considered the main competitor to Todd's *Vogue*. *Vanity Fair* was considered the magazine which was 'allowed' to be intellectual and subversive. In 1914, for example, *Vanity Fair* declared that: 'We mean to make frequent appeals to [women's] intellects…we hereby announce ourselves as determined and bigoted feminists'.[113]

It is true that alongside articles such as those written by Sitwell, Richardson and Woolf, there were also many which propagated the female stereotype, such as 'The

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[111] Charles Martin. 'Inappropriate Presents'. *Vogue*. Early December. 1925: p.84.
[112] Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue,* p.16
[113] Reed, 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name', p. 43.

Importance of Being Beautiful', which appeared in the Early June 1924 issue, well into the editorship of Todd.[114] A particular article which demonstrates *Vogue*'s sometimes traditional view of the woman is in an article by Sydney Tremayne from the Early September 1923 issue entitled 'A Career for Women: Being Beautiful'.[115] Considering *Vogue* did not publish any form of alternative articles on careers, it is possible to see that *Vogue*'s attempts at feminism were not extensive. However, Christopher Reed acknowledges that many of the fashion and beauty articles were drawn from Condé Nast's New York and Paris offices and therefore Todd held less control over these.[116] However, Todd's influence can be seen in other less than feminist articles, such as a series written by famous French actress Cecile Sorel the first of which was entitled 'Mesdames, Soyez Coquettes!'(How the technique of coquetry can be raised to a fine art). With the promotion of celebrity and the French influence, this article reflects many that Todd commissioned. However, it also endorses an antiquated message which once again relies on a stereotypical image of femininity based purely on outward appearance. An opposition to the 'Inappropriate Presents' cartoon is that entitled 'Sophie Discovers Herself: Five Annual Stages in the Development of the Debutante' by Benito in the Early February 1926 edition which interestingly appears after the former so one would expect it to hold a less traditional view. In this cartoon 'Sophie' (who bizarrely does not actually appear in the cartoon save for text to represent her thoughts and opinions) has five suitors to choose from, who in turn define her personality. There are a number of deviant features present in the cartoon and an overall sarcastic tone such as the declaration that

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[114] Anonymous 'The Importance of Being Beautiful'. *Vogue*. Early June. 1924.
[115] Sydney Tremayne 'A Career for Women: Being Beautiful', *Vogue*, Early September. 1923.
[116] Reed, 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name', p. 46.

‘my husband is the only man I have ever really been in love with’ after being wooed by the other four gentlemen and the declaration that ‘I must get a salon’. However, though the article may be attempting to question these traditions, it instead serves to propagate them with the title of the cartoon suggesting that a debutante is in fact defined by her suitors and in the cartoon ultimately the answer is money.

Despite this inability to fully assimilate feminism into its pages, *Vogue* does question the values of the previous generation in favour of the new and innovative. As previously suggested, the idea of the ‘Bright Young’ generation was imperative to the tone of *Vogue*. However, it was also one which questioned traditional values. Once again this is exemplified by the irony of a cartoon, this time in ‘A Complete Set of Flappers’. This cartoon exposes the dichotomy of both, insulting and reifying the flapper’s image. Whilst demonstrating the often negative stereotypes of flappers, it in turn gives the female reader permission to challenge the way that women act, by acknowledging these characters as ‘types’ it suggests the popularity and existence of such women. However, the writers of *Vogue* often depict the contemporary generation in a far more flattering light, this is often in relation to their intellectual and cultural achievements. For example, in ‘New Books for the Morning Room Table’, Raymond Mortimer proudly declares:

> Belonging as I do to the generation of which Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell are brilliant representatives and having been an early admirer of their work, I find a malicious pleasure in watching the change of attitude towards them

> of the older generation…once more the old have to confess that they were wrong. And that is very good for the old, as anyone young will tell you.[117]

This demonstrates the way in which the young were placed in opposition to the old rather than in harmony. It also demonstrates, as have other articles, the way in which *Vogue* promoted the positive fashionability of the younger generation, so often in contrast to that of the old. Mortimer not only establishes the young as fashionable, but also as intellectually superior with their ability to appreciate new ideas. This is evident in a review of Aldous Huxley, in which he states:

> The Older generation, for the most part, detests Mr. Huxley. If you have a trace of Victorianism in you, if you have any respect for conventions, if you are a churchwarden, a member of the Primrose League, an optimist, a sentimentalist, an admirer of Mr. Galsworthy or the Royal Academy, you will disapprove of Mr. Huxley as much as of the Bolsheviks, cubism, cocktails, shingled hair and psychoanalysis.[118]

This description continues to outline a list of things one who does approve of Huxley would both like and dislike. If Mortimer's lists were not enough to understand that Huxley was to be admired for his intellect and his generational appeal, *Vogue* emphasises this through an editorial by Huxley on 'Popular Music' within the same issue. Mortimer's

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[117]Raymond Mortimer. 'New Books for the Morning Room Table'. *Vogue*. Early July. 1924: p.49
[118] Ibid

aligning of Huxley with cubism and psychoanalysis demonstrates Huxley's cultural significance to the current generation. Conversely he paints Huxley as a fashion product through placing him in opposition to the older passé generation.

Painting Huxley in this light returns to Mahood's suggestion that modernism became a 'mainstream fashion accessory in the 1920s'. It was through the promotion of modernism in the pages of *Vogue* that modernism was not only aligned with the fashionable, but essentially became fashionable itself. This was hand in hand with the appreciation of the 'new'. Michael Murphy agrees:

> It is easy to see the early twentieth century glossy magazine as both enabled by and participating in the proliferation of an especially self-conscious and important sense of what it meant to be modern – and even modern*ist*.[119]

Here we are able to see the association between being modern and being modernist, an association that Todd's *Vogue* was keen to promote. As demonstrated by Mortimer, an interest in or knowledge of modernist culture was demonstrating knowledge of modern, fashionable life. For this is what the '*Vogue* idea' was, a lifestyle. *Vogue* was not merely a magazine to its readers; *Vogue* provided many services in order to promote the lifestyle they featured on its pages. In Early April 1923 *Vogue* featured an advertisement for '*Vogue*'s Paris Information Bureau', which allowed English readers to utilise a service in Paris which provided them access to shoppers' and buyers' guides, motor cars and tea

[119] Michael Murphy, 'One Hundred Per Cent Bohemia' in *Marketing Modernisms: Self Promotion, Canonization, Re-reading*, p.64

rooms amongst other things. Five months later, in the Late September 1923 issue, there was another advert which demonstrated that *Vogue* had developed this service even further:

> You read *Vogue* but do you use its services? Paris Letters, Smart Fashions for Limited Incomes, Pattern Service, Department for the Hostess, Decorating Pages, Shopping Service, Paris Bureau.[120]

Once again this quote demonstrates the way in which *Vogue* was attempting to provide their readers with 'not only half the truth but the other half which complements it.'[121] The all-encompassing *Vogue* lifestyle inevitably promoted the '*Vogue* idea'. The implication that the *Vogue* reader travelled regularly to Paris was not necessarily true, since research suggests that *Vogue* appealed to those aspiring to a certain lifestyle, not exclusively those who already held this lifestyle, who could attend these parties and buy these clothes. This not only applied to fashions and travel, but to the entire modernist idea. Jennifer Wicke suggests this is not purely a '*Vogue* idea' but one which translated into its contributors, declaring: 'lifestyle is what Bloomsbury was selling.'[122]

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[120] Advertisement. 'You read *Vogue* but do you use its services?' *Vogue.* Late September. 1923.
[121] Advertisement 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing' *Vogue*, Early January.1928: p.72.
[122] Jennifer Wicke, '*Mrs. Dalloway* Goes to Market: Woolf, Keynes, and Modern Markets,' *A Forum on Fiction* 28, 1994: p.6

This is evident in the article written to commemorate thirty years of *Vogue* magazine, '*Vogue*'s Rôle' in Early February 1923.[123] The entire issue is centred around the idea of *Vogue* as a reflection of its readers' lifestyle from the title of the contents page 'Thirty Years in the Mirror of *Vogue*' to the subtitle of the article 'To Hold, as't were, the Mirror Up to Fashion'. With this as *Vogue*'s self appointed role (or 'self-conscious' as Murphy describes it), it seems incongruent that as a fashion magazine, fashion is not introduced as the main focus of this article. Instead the focus is lifestyle:

> In new fashions of behaviour, of decorating the home and the human body, of throwing paint upon canvas, notes into the air, and words upon paper, there are always some things in which the new is acknowledged to exceed the old and always many others in which the old passionately protests its supremacy over the new...But no matter which line is considered the line of beauty, which gesture accounted superb or set down as silly, the registrar who records them, the glass which mirrors them, should not be blamed. It is this rôle which for thirty years *Vogue* has filled.[124]

Although the anonymous writer does cement the article and *Vogue* into that of the fashion world as the article progresses, this introduction demonstrates an alternative view. Despite the article being only one year into Todd's editorship and not even within the height of the magazine's alliance with modernism, the intentions of the magazine are clear. The introduction re-iterates the popularly promoted idea that *Vogue* considered

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[123] Anonymous '*Vogue*'s Rôle'. *Vogue*. Early February. 1923: p.83
[124] Ibid.

'decorating the home and the human body' as of equal importance to 'throwing paint upon canvas' and 'words upon paper'. The flippant description of Art and Literature conveys that these were merely part of the modern(ist) lifestyle that *Vogue* was advocating to its increasingly modern(ist) female reader. What is particularly interesting about this article which is supposedly primarily concerned with *Vogue*'s role, is the emphasis the writer places upon the reader and the general public:

> If certain colours come into favour, it's not the costume designer, but the customer who decides to wear them. If certain strange shapes become the mode, balloons at the shoulder, bags at the wrist, bustles at the back, bunches in front, it's not the pages of the fashion papers that should be censured, but the lovely ladies who adopt these engaging deformities.[125]

Although speaking of fashion, it is evident that the writer is classing their reader as a 'consumer and producer' of this culture. Therefore, in the spirit of both the article and magazine, it can be inferred that the power this public consumer holds over 'decorating the home and the human body' is translatable into the arena of '[throwing] words upon paper'. The writer is acknowledging the importance of the reader, not merely in terms of an audience or artistic appreciation, but in more literal terms of money and influence.

Although *Vogue*'s circulation figures were dramatically lower than those of other women's magazines their advertising revenues were consistently higher, for example in

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[125] Ibid.

The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States 1880-1960, David Reed demonstrates that *Vogue*'s circulation figures were at less than a tenth that of *Better Homes and Gardens* in 1930, the advertising revenue was still almost half a million dollars more.[126] These figures demonstrate *Vogue*'s reliance upon readers in order to generate such high advertisement rates. This also suggests that many of the readers were as wealthy as the targeted advertisements indicate. Condé Nast himself admits this as the intention in an article on 'Class Publications', observing,

> I state it very mildly; as a matter of fact, the publisher, the editor, the advertising manager and circulation man must conspire not only to get all readers from the one particular class to which the magazine is dedicated, *but rigorously to exclude all others*.[127]

This demonstrates the significant importance of the reader to *Vogue* in comparison to other women's magazines at this time. Nast's statement also echoes the elitism of canonical modernism at this time, meeting the suggestion of many critics that *Vogue* was not necessarily a publication of mass culture but an elitist one. However, I would suggest the monetary preoccupations abolish this notion. Nicola Luckhurst articulates the oppositional nature of this hypothetical reader.

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[126] David Reed, *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States 1880-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997)
[127] Seebohm *The Man Who Was Vogue*, p.80.

> Who was the reader of *Vogue*?...While the complementary copy provided for the highbrow imports of the magazine, and indeed the tone of some of the highbrow contributors themselves, are complicit in such persuasion, other articles make little concession... perhaps they did not even read the highbrow features so plentifully commissioned by Dorothy Todd? Perhaps they were quite simply the masses – a mass of female consumers, interested in fashion, golf and decorating their coffee tables with the glorious colour of *Vogue* covers. (Incidentally, the only other element of colour in the magazine was the advertising spread on the back cover, often boasting the nutritional value of Bovril.)[128]

Though the readers of Todd's *Vogue* were undeniably 'consumers and producers' of culture, whether this was of an avant-garde sensibility or that of fashion is unclear.

[128] Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue,* p.14

Conclusion

'There never was such a paper'

> Dorothy Todd was a fat little woman, full of energy, full of genius, I should say. Good editors are rarer than good writers, and she was a great editor, and Madge Garland [Todd's Fashion Editor and lover] was her equal… Together these women changed *Vogue* from just another fashion paper to being the best of fashion apers and a guide to the modern movement in the arts. They helped Roger Fry in firmly planting Post-Impressionists in English soil and they brought us all the good news about Picasso and Matisse…They also gave young writers a firmer foundation than they might have had by commissioning them to write articles on intelligent subjects at fair prices. There never was such a paper.[129]

Even someone who not often expressed support for Dorothy Todd echoes this praise, written by the modernist writer Rebecca West. Edna Woolman Chase concedes that Todd 'had a gift, amounting to genius, for spotting winners'.[130] Ultimately, however, Todd's intentions for *Vogue* did not achieve the success envisaged and can be seen in many respects as a failure. However, the impact which she had upon the magazine was admitted by Chase after her dismissal and can be seen in its pages to this day. Though the current mode of *Vogue* is far from a guide to the avant-garde, literature and arts, there is

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[129] Rebecca West in *Recollections of Virginia Woolf* recounted in Luckhurst, *Bloomsbury in Vogue* p.24
[130] Chase, *Always in Vogue*, p.131.

evidence of such influence. *Vogue*'s website features numerous celebrity blogs, re-creating Todd's ability to break down the boundaries between reader and celebrity, thereby domesticating this glamorous world, amongst these blogs are the writers' views on art exhibitions, current and classic literature along with the 1920s style emphasis upon the current.[131] As both Rebecca West and Edna Woolman Chase suggest, many writers and artists would not have had the opportunity or exposure to succeed without Todd and her transformation of *Vogue*. Chase names these people of prominence as Cocteau, Gertrude Stein, Le Corbusier, Raymond Mortimer, Alan Pryce-Jones, Peter Quennell, David Garnett, The Sitwells and Aldous Huxley. Not only was Todd able to pre-empt the successful careers of these contributors, but also aspects of feminist theory and the unprecedented rise of celebrity culture.

Despite certain writers' desire to distance themselves from their participation in *Vogue* and from Todd herself, it is clear that this experience had a significant affect upon a number of writers. 'We sat in the meadow and discussed the future of Miss Todd', Vita Sackville-West wrote to Harold Nicholson in 1926:

> As [Raymond Mortimer] has probably told you, she got the sack from *Vogue*, which owing to being too highbrow, is sinking in circulation. Todd, a woman of spirit, though remonstrated with by Condé Nast, refused to make any concessions to the reading public. So Nast sacked her. She then took legal advice and was told

[131] *Vogue*.com, an example from the time of writing is 'Paul Smiths's Blog' which features many of the designer's choice exhibitions and books.
. http://www.*Vogue*.co.uk/blogs/fashion-designers/paul-smith/100823-.aspx (Accessed 4th September, 2010)

> she could get £5,000 damages on the strength of her contract. Nast, when threatened with an action, retorted that he would defend himself by attacking her morals. So poor Todd is silenced, since her morals are of the classic rather than the conventional order… This affair has assumed in Bloomsbury the proportions of a political rupture.[132]

Here we are able to see once again Todd in relation to her reader, this time in her refusal to 'make any concessions'. This may have two meanings, the first and likely of these is Todd's refusal to dilute her modernist intentions for *Vogue* to a more fashion-friendly one which would increase circulation. However it is possible to also view this as Todd's refusal to allow her reader a diluted version of modernism and to expect more from these women, therefore supplying them with such a publication. What is most interesting about this quote is the phrase 'So poor Todd is silenced'. This demonstrates Sackville-West's (and presumably Bloomsbury's view) that Todd was conveying a message that needed to be heard. Whether this was due to Bloomsbury's empathy with 'classic' (i.e. homosexual) morals, or the *Vogue* project of making modernism fashionable, it is unclear. However, the significance of this is evident in the final line. We are able to see the way in which Bloomsbury and other contributors regarded Todd, more importantly the necessity with which these writers viewed Todd's actions within *Vogue*. The fact that features by Todd's contributors continued after her dismissal demonstrates the impact that her editorship held over the pages of *Vogue*. That it is becoming increasingly popular

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[132] Vita Sackville-West to Harold Nicholson September 1926 in Seebohm *The Man Who Was Vogue*, p.127.

amongst critics to discuss Todd's previously ignored *Vogue* is exciting since its pages offer insight into a unique period of time where the boundaries between the elusive world of modernism and the exclusive world of fashion intersect and the view of canonical modernism can be reassessed. Such interest allows the current reader to understand the implications of Todd's *Vogue*, something wholly unique to its time which has yet to be reproduced.

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