

IN THE SHADOWS OF WINDOW DISPLAYS: THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF FASHION
RETAILING IN SHEFFIELD & COLOGNE, 1890-1914

By

Marissa Knaak

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

History – Doctor of Philosophy

2025

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a comparative study of the labor in department stores and fashion retailing at the turn of the twentieth century in Sheffield and Cologne. I argue that these stores were industrialized workplaces that were built on the skilled labor of women. My study shows that lower-middle-class identity existed as a material reality built by people's belief in it rather than explicitly clear economic conditions. My work attempts to bring questions of gender to social and labor history and to bridge the divide between ideas of production and consumption by focusing on the workers in retailing. The primary methodology is comparative, but this study is also supported by methodologies and theories in gender studies. The comparative lens provides insights into the similarities between the two national contexts which supports a discussion of the western European middle classes and their social position. Differences between the contexts highlight the malleability of the department store form as an industrialized employer. Furthermore, a gendered approach to labor history gives store employees and owners agency in the productive retailing process. Three of the four chapters focus on different aspects of department and fashion stores. The first presents my broad argument about the social and cultural capital fashion retailing work provided and the ways in which this aspect outweighed other considerations for workers. The second argues that the spatial aspects of stores and cities directly impacted people's experiences and understandings of retailing. The third and fourth claim that shop employment was skilled and included tangible and intangible aspects, both of which were vital to success. Ultimately, this study resituates department and fashioning stores within larger industrialized contexts of labor and distribution.

Copyright by
MARISSA KNAAK
2025

To Agnes, Dorothy, Susan, Ethel, Mary Ann, and all the women, named and unnamed, these pages, it has been a joy to meet you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people to thank for their support of me and my work over the last six, or sixteen, years. Near and far, these people have offered support, feedback, and camaraderie without which this dissertation would not exist.

At Michigan State, I would like to thank my committee for their work with me over the last six years. I have deeply appreciated the thematic approach provided by Dr. Charles Keith, which has impacted my view of the empires within this study. I thank Dr. Sean Forner for supporting my love and use of theory while challenging me to reach outside my comfort zone. Dr. Aminda Smith has unfailingly supported me from my first semester at MSU and has provided confidence in my abilities when I needed it. Dr. Karrin Hanshew has read or listened to every version of this project. She has provided valuable feedback and conversations which have clarified and pushed my thinking beyond what I believed I could achieve.

I am also grateful for the other faculty and staff at MSU who I have worked with in various capacities. I would particularly like to thank Dr. Gillian Macdonald for pulling me into the world of digital methods. Working with her introduced me to the potential of 3D modeling, which heavily supports elements of my analysis, and has shaped how I plan to share this work with a wider audience.

The research for this study was funded through the History Department, including the Milton E. Muelder Graduate Fellowship, and the College of Social Sciences Research Scholars Award. The archivists and librarians at the Sheffield City Archives and the Sheffield Local Studies Library assisted me in finding sources and people and offered kindness to an early career researcher. I also thank Dr. Ute Planert and her students for listening to and providing feedback on an early version of this research, as well as contacts within Cologne during my research visit.

Just as important as the academic supports to my work have been my peers and friends, near and far. At MSU, my fellow graduate students Scott, Sam, and Caitlin, as well as many others have provided stimulating academic spaces. Scott has been a friend and comrade from the start; Sam has waded into the theory deep-end frequently; and Caitlin has helped me clarify and reorganize multiple times. My friends from CHI, especially Ashley, Madison, Rylee, and Priyanka, have carried me during these final months with their laughter. Far from MSU, many friends have supported this dream and my work for decades. Megan has talked through more than one project since we met and never questioned this path. Kristen has been my loudest cheerleader across states, countries, and time zones. Sarah provided guidance from someone who has been here and shared her hard-earned tips.

My family has supported my academic goals from the time I started my undergraduate degree. If they have questioned the specifics of my work, they have less often questioned why I have chosen this path. My sister Meredith has always had a ready distraction and has suffered through more than one trip to department stores which I analyze rather than shop in. My parents, Marian and Mike, have listened to more conversations about academia than not. My mother particularly has answered more phone calls about writing and grammar than anything else for years. All three have shaped and supported me in invaluable ways.

Finally, to the younger versions of myself, who hoped and believed this was a goal worth achieving. Thank you for putting in the work to make it a reality. We did it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Making the Lower Middle Class a Reality	43
Organizing & Orientating: A Spatial Understanding of the Class and Gender of Department and Fashioning Stores.....	99
Fashion as Labor: Women’s work in stores of all sizes	175
Standards of Beauty and Behavior: Aesthetics & Comportment in Department Stores.....	233
Epilogue	285
BIBLIOGRAPHY	290
APPENDIX A: Margarete Böhme’s <i>W.A.G.M.U.S.</i> synopsis and characters	303
APPENDIX B: Visualizations of Family Trees and Maps	309
APPENDIX C: John Walsh 1899 Store 3D Model.....	317

Introduction

It is a summer evening in 1905, and you are approaching the new store in the city center. You are still a block away, yet you can see the lights illuminating the windows of the new department store building. You approach the windows and see a lifestyle played out in dioramas behind plate glass. You pass through the main entrance, walking over the mosaic of the store's name, and enter a grand hall with skylights and chandeliers. You wander through jewelry, perfume, hats, gloves, shoes, books, and maybe sewing notions. You decide to see what wonders the upper levels hold and make your way to the grand staircase – you will save the elevator for your descent. On the upper floors you see all types of clothing for women, men, and children, outfits and separates, formal and everyday, and home décor, linens, and furniture. The sales floors stretch on and on, with more goods than you can count. It is beautiful.

What you probably did not think about were the workers: the people who located and sold products, who directed you throughout the store, who altered garments, who delivered the goods to your home, who designed the displays, and who cleaned the floors and windows. Shop employees were meant to be invisible and forgettable. The most visible were the sales assistants and other front-of-house staff, who directly and frequently interacted with the general public. Every other employee, however, worked behind the scenes to facilitate leisured shopping, what we would consider browsing or window shopping. At the end of the nineteenth century, this type of shopping was in its infancy and the creation of a specific environment within this fashion retailing space was part of the work needed to do that work.

Thus, a group of young people enter our view, some in small groups and some alone. Many of them are young women, with neat dresses with pinned-up hair and simple hats. These women include many sales assistants – the “shop girl” of popular novels and plays who worked

in sales and, presumably, wanted to raise her social standing – but workroom hands and servants also trek to the store in the morning. They enter the store through a door at the side or around the back: away from the beautiful displays and bright lights. They have come from different locations throughout the city, where they live with their families or in rented rooms. In some stores, commuting workers meet up with those who live at the store in the cloakrooms. In other stores, workers pass the owner and his board, whose gaze marks the prompt and the tardy. After depositing their outerwear, employees disperse to the different departments and sections.

The new department stores of Europe and North America in the late nineteenth century did not exist in isolation. They were part of a spectrum of fashion retailing, which included small, single-concern businesses and front-room dressmakers and tailors. From front rooms to department stores, these businesses were involved in the trade of clothing and accessories for both the person and the home. They included drapers, hosiers, milliners, tailors, dressmakers, haberdashers (dealing in sewing notions and articles). Department stores continued to branch out into shoes, books, stationary, jewelry, furniture, and heavy home goods, like ironmongery and flooring. At the turn of the twentieth century, women were a significant part of the workforce across businesses of all sizes.

My dissertation is a comparative study of the labor in department store and fashion retailing at the turn of the twentieth century in Sheffield, England, and Cologne, Germany. It uses these two, mid-sized commercial cities to show the significance of fashion retailing to provincial centers and the ways in which fashion retailing functioned in industrial societies outside the capital cities. I argue that these stores were industrialized workplaces that were built on the skilled labor of women. Industrial workplaces are those which include mechanized or standardized practices that promote efficiency, have specialized positions which divide workers,

and are businesses that participate in the larger industrial society. Fashion retailing included mass-produced goods in their inventories, which needed to be turned over quickly to optimize profits. Within fashion retailing, many workers were separated into different areas, either production or sales, and within sales across departments. Part of the industrialization of work was the perceived “deskilling” of work which often accompanied the feminization of the labor force. This study moves away from the popular and scholarly interest in the consumption element of fashion retailing to the work of production within it. This shift allows me to show the ways in which women’s work in fashion retailing was part of the larger industrialized societies of the time, rather than a separate part of those economies. Refusing to silo parts of economies not only integrates women’s work more firmly in the study of industrialization but also presents a more complex picture of society at the turn of the twentieth century. Industrial society shaped experiences of class and gender for all employees, shaping their (and our) conception of department stores through the twentieth century. The societies of Germany and Britain at this time were wholly industrialized and no element was free from the totalizing nature of capitalism.

Furthermore, my dissertation shows that lower-middle-class identity existed as a material reality built by people’s belief in that identity rather than explicitly clear economic conditions. To many people, lower-middle-class belonging was important to maintain as a method of differentiation from the working classes rather than as a claim to the status of the upper middle class. In the end, my work contributes to ongoing efforts to bring questions of gender to bear on social and labor history and bridges the divide between ideas of production and consumption by focusing on the workers in retailing.

For both Britain and Germany, the period from 1890 to 1914 was a time of wide-reaching economic and social transition.¹ Nineteenth-century industrialization introduced large-scale changes to technology, transportation, and social organization. The rapid expansion of heavy industry and transportation networks created new urban centers and different concentrations of wealth. These changes had an influence on contemporary understandings of gender, reshaping, in particular, who does what work, how that work is valued, and more broadly, who may be involved in which aspects of social and political life. Comparing Britain and Germany allows me to compare similar national contexts in a limited geographic region. Although there are important differences between the two nations, by the end of the nineteenth century, in both countries the industrialization of heavy industry had significantly impacted economic organization, population centers, and understandings of wealth (among other effects). Further, many workers in these industries had formed unions and working-class political parties were gaining strength. With these larger social changes, so, too, did the retail landscape change. How and where shopping happened and what people bought were all shifting throughout this period. Therefore, the turn of the century presents a moment of opportunity, where scripts, categories, and definitions were being contested.

The comparison between Britain and Germany is tied to the periodization of this study. The almost twenty-five-year span of 1890-1914 is characterized by stability and instability in both countries. Stability provided by the slowing pace of industrialization, increased national unity, and a lack of European military conflict. (Conflict and war in the colonies was increasing but was removed from the lives of many people). Many of the worst consequences of industrialization had been mitigated and the pace of change across economies and sectors had

¹ David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological change and industrial development in Western Europe from 1750 to the present* (Cambridge University Press, 1969).

slowed. Further, members of the early industrial bourgeoisie had gained standing in the rising middle class through the consolidation of economic capital and the use of social and cultural capital. By the end of the nineteenth century, Britain and Germany were similar in economic and industrial output and in other socio-cultural factors. Instability was caused by international competition for economic markets and colonies and an increasingly polarized political climate, militant suffragettes in Britain, increasing popularity of the SPD and power in Germany, and the rise of anarchism across the continent.² Competition abroad, including for colonial holdings, had some effect on fashion retailing, for example on which products were available. Generally, however, the largest political concern about department stores was whether legislation should work to constrain them in terms of scale, workers conditions, hours of operation, or taxation. Additionally, new leisure activities and free time changed people's relationships with each other.³ Specifically, women had new possibilities to be out in public, especially to see other people shopping and be seen shopping. Finally, contributing to both stability and instability were perceptions of modernity and the time in which these people were living. One's position in society affected what they thought about the era.

Generally, industrialization included the mechanization of production, the increasing scale of that production, and the inclusion of new technology. In Britain, the industrial revolution started with mechanized looms for the mass production of textiles. These textiles were produced with cotton from the American south and British colonies.⁴ The industry was aided by

² Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 103-105, 89-90, 95-97.

³ Lynn Abrams, *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (Routledge, 1992).

⁴ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (Vintage Books, 1966); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (Vintage Books, 2014).

protectionist trade regulations, which limited the importation of printed cloth from India.⁵ Coal mining, steel production, and transportation all benefited from changes in technology—coal to power it, steel to build it, and trains to transport goods and people. Across the century, different industries evolved and were incorporated into the global, mass-production system. Britain's success in the process was not straightforward or without conflict. In Germany, industrialization happened in the second half of the century but by the turn of the century, their economy threatened that of Britain and the United States. As Blackbourn and Eley argue in *The Peculiarities of German History*, German industrialization was accomplished unevenly and faster than in Britain or the United States.⁶ Part of the periodization of this study are the general similarities between the larger socioeconomic situations of Britain and Germany. The Rhineland included significant textile production. German production of chemicals, industrial dyes, and other synthetics were significant to this economic success.⁷ Although Germany did not have the same imperial markets, continental Europe, particularly to the east, provided customers. As different industries boomed, the international markets opened. Furthermore, colonies and imperial reach were significant to both national politics and social imaginaries.⁸

⁵ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 47-52.

⁶ David Blackbourn & Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 292.

⁷ Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850-1914* (Cornell University Press, 1996), 9; Volker Berghahn, "Growth, industrialization and social change," in *Nineteenth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1780-1918*, ed. John Breuilly (Arnold, 2001), 68, 189; Thomas Mergel, *Köln im Kaiserreich, 1871-1918* (Greven, 2004), 222-227.

⁸ Edward Ross Dickinson, "The German Empire: An Empire?" *History Workshop Journal* Autumn, no. 66 (2008): 129-162, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbn028>; Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880-1940* (Cornell University Press, 2015), 26.

For more on German colonialism see: George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Cornell University Press, 2000); Nancy R. Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Duke University Press, 2001).

The mass production of goods influenced distribution and retailing of them. Goods had to be sold to the general public, and, often, the demand for these products needed to be created or increased. Part of this system was the creation of style and taste, which were imbued with social meanings.⁹ The expansion of middle class came as the trappings of a middle-class lifestyle become cheaper and more easily obtained. Industrialization was not merely a facet of heavy industrial production but changed total social arrangements. In this study, I consider society as a whole industrialized and unable to escape the totalizing nature of capitalism. One element of which is the ideology of industrial capitalism, where profits are made through the creation of surplus value through mechanization, specialization, and exploitation. Retailing experienced these changes even as continuities of practice supported innovations. Additionally, retailing could not escape industrialization because the industrialization of manufacturing created products that did not simply disappear from the factory and appear in people's homes. While manufacturers did engage in some practices which created demand for their products, retailers did the majority of this work, including in advertising and transportation.

Cologne and Sheffield were major provincial cities at the end of the nineteenth century. Both were established centuries before and had identities beyond component parts of their respective empires.¹⁰ Cologne, for example, was significant on the Rhine for the transportation of goods, and, increasingly, for the chemical industry. Sheffield had long been a global center of production for cutlery and steel. I chose these cities because they were not the capitals or financial centers of London and Berlin and had populations with the ability to support a range of fashion retailers. One of the major advantages of this approach is that more people had

⁹ Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (Yale University Press, 2006), 19-20; Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (University of California Press, 1996).

¹⁰ Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, 4-8, 17, 115; Joseph P. Huffman, *The Imperial City of Cologne: From Roman Colony to Medieval Metropolis (19 B.C.-1125 A.D.)* (Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

experience in living in or traveling to regional centers than to the capitals. This approach breaks strict urban/rural or metropole/periphery dichotomies into spectrums, where people existed in a variety of spaces that could be multiple things simultaneously. Although Sheffield was significant in the history of industrialization, neither features in the comparative historiographies of nineteenth century industrialization in Britain and Germany.

The differences between Sheffield and Cologne further provide opportunities for comparison that complicate macro-narratives of Germany and Britain. One of the main differences between the cities was the religious composition of the population and of the department store owners. Cologne was primarily Catholic: in 1910, over 78% of the population was Catholic, while roughly 19% were Protestant; less than 3% were Jewish.¹¹ Despite Jews' small presence in the city, they played a prominent role in the evolution of its department stores. The largest department store chain in Cologne was owned by Leonhard Tietz, a Jewish immigrant from the eastern part of the empire, whose family owned or was connected to almost every major department store in Germany. In Sheffield, the majority of people belonged to the Church of England or local Methodist congregations.¹² In the city, Methodism had gained prominence, especially among shopkeepers.¹³ John Walsh, the epitome of department store owner in the city, was an Irish immigrant but was not ostracized in the same way as other immigrants in both countries. Another difference between the two cities was the composition of the economy. Sheffield's economy, for hundreds of years, was centered on cutlery and steel production.¹⁴ Contrarily, Cologne did not have a set industry. By the end of the nineteenth

¹¹ Greven's *Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgegend, insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1914), I Teil.

¹² Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, 207-211.

¹³ Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, 140, 208-9.

¹⁴ Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, 37, 66, 111, 159.

century, the suburbs were home to companies involved in metalworking, chemicals, with banking, insurance, and tourism also significant.¹⁵

In both cases, however, Cologne and Sheffield were large cities, with variations in their populations that made each significant to their regions. The comparative study of each challenges the well-loved narrative of individual, innovative men who revolutionized retailing. Instead, we see ambitious men with access to resources adapting to changing business practices as the result of larger social changes, where success was not limited to a department store empire. The differences between the largest stores remain important can be ascribed to social differences rather than the importance of an individual. Further, comparing small and large businesses supports the comparison of the cities as the differences between different sizes of business become ones of scale rather than of individual genius. Finally, dispelling the innovative entrepreneur myth allows us to focus on the workers making those ideas realities. The material realities of fashion retailing required daily labor, which was demanding and increasingly done by women.

Locating the Lower Middle Class

Class is one of the organizing principles of society. Thus, it has been theorized upon almost constantly for the past two hundred years. It is impossible to avoid Karl Marx's conceptualization of class under capitalism given its centrality to studies of labor. However, building on Marx with Pierre Bourdieu and other recent studies by historians and sociologists, I construct a theory of class that incorporates multiple facets of life and identity to consider the larger experiential nature of class. Class as an ordering principle, a belief system, and a way to define material realities was contested on multiple levels and subject to constant negotiation.

¹⁵ Mergel, *Köln im Kaiserreich*, 223, 225, 226.

None of the historical subjects discussed thus far could extricate themselves from classed society nor could they think beyond or outside the class system. Thus, ideology and belief both structure material experiences and vice versa.

In this study, I focus on the standing of the middle class, especially the lower middle class. Looking at the distinctions between the lower middle class and those both above and below highlight the ways in which class was not merely an economic concern, but also a social and cultural construction. Thus, while income presents an easy way of determining class standing, this approach leaves out far more than it includes. Of particular importance was the ability of people to claim middle-class belonging and for that claim to be recognized. One of the logics of the middle class is that anyone can become part of it and that social standing is a result of one's efforts rather than a combination of social forces.¹⁶ Through the nineteenth century, as white-collar jobs developed, the people who held them separated themselves from the working classes, for, if one was not working class, one was middle class, since few people could hope to gain upper-class status. These people became the lower middle class, for whom maintaining this position was paramount and was achieved by presenting difference to the working class.

The British middle class can be divided into the traditional middle class and the new middle class. The traditional middle class was composed of property owners who pursued incomes, for example in the commercial trades, rather than living on rents as the aristocracy or higher gentry did.¹⁷ The new middle class includes both the shop keepers and employees discussed in the following chapters. Small shop keepers, particularly artisans and tradesmen had been part of the middle class in previous centuries, but new shopkeepers benefited from changes

¹⁶ Hadas Weiss, *We Have Never Been Middle Class* (Verso, 2019), 1-8, 22-28.

¹⁷ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, 3rd edition (Routledge, 2019), 20.

in the socioeconomic context which impacted the flexibility of the form. Department store owners rose through the ranks of the middle class alongside other industrialists, like factory owners. They made claims to upper-middle-class status through their family structures and behaviors and lifestyles. The lower segment of the new middle class was composed of employees working on a salary and in new managerial positions.¹⁸ Shop assistants were increasingly part of the lower middle class. Their work distinguished them from the working class, but, generally, their financial situations did not allow employees to rise the class ladder in the same way as owners did.

In German society, definitions of the middle class have been frequently debated by the general public and within academia. The *Mittelstand* was composed of the skilled professions (doctors, lawyers, and the like), professional military men, artisans, and, increasingly, public servants. As bureaucrats and clerks increased their numbers through the nineteenth century, more people were included in the group. One element of the *Mittelstand* identity before the last third of the nineteenth century was education and cultural capital. For the clerks, state employees, independent artisans, and small shopkeepers, appearance and presentation were key in defining themselves as separate from the working class.¹⁹ Clerks in this case included people employed in offices and as sales assistants.

There is no shortage of Marxist interpretations of class. Marx's claims that the guild masters, petit bourgeoisie, and manufacturing middle class were disappearing has been contested by their continuation.²⁰ However, what concerns us here is Marx's focus on the economic

¹⁸ Crossick, *Lower Middle Class*, 13-14.

¹⁹ Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe*, 14-15.

²⁰ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 474. For different discussions of this see: Geoffrey Crossick, editor, *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914* (Croom Helm, 1977); Christopher P. Hosgood, "The 'Pigmies of Commerce' and

components of class. His examples in *Capital, Volume One* were based in heavy industry—agriculture, iron production, and textiles and cotton.²¹ He uses the mechanization of textile production to discuss the changes in value creation. It was the mechanization and industrialization of production techniques that fed the creation of surplus value and the elimination of craft from production. It is easy, in these cases, to see how the guild masters and their peers could have disappeared. Furthermore, as the wealth gap increased, those in the middle would have been stretched thin. When we turn to the masters and tradesmen from whom the department stores descended, we see support for Marx's proposition that they disappear. However, we also see their perpetuation.

Various theorists of class have tried to account for the difference facets of the lived experience of class within modern societies. One of the largest gaps in Marx's conceptualization is the absence of non-financial considerations of class. Max Weber notably adds conceptions of religion and social life, particularly in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.²² The role of religion in determining people's attitudes and behaviors helps us to understand the complexities of life. As we will see in chapter three, religious beliefs motivated contributions to charities and influenced how store owners saw their relationships to their employees and the dynamic between the two. Religious impetuses help explain behaviors and policies that do not obviously serve profit margins. Although useful, Weber does not consider other aspects of social and cultural life.

the Working-Class Community: Small Shopkeepers in England, 1870-1914" in *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 439-460.

²¹ Karl Marx, "Capital, Volume One," in *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 304, 314-315, 329-333.

²² Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

Pierre Bourdieu's ideas of habitus and different forms of capital add more to our consideration of class in the retailing universe. Habitus is how one understands and moves through the world around them, and it is unconscious and embodied.²³ One's habitus is based on social position and background. It consists of practices and norms that are learned and frequently unquestioned. Many of the "rules" of habitus are not expressly stated anywhere, but it becomes part of the tempo of people's lives, guiding interactions and acting as the "organizing principle of their actions."²⁴ As people follow the rules of a habitus, the rules become naturalized and lose connection to the material events which precipitated their creation. Following the rules and not questioning their provenance or who benefits from them rewards people within the habitus.²⁵ There is always the potential for an individual to act differently and "break" a rule but knowingly doing so is disincentivized. Within the habitus, there are rules of societies and cultural norms, which are explicit and come with rewards and punishments when an individual follows or breaks them.

Within a society, according to Bourdieu, there are different types of capital. Most commonly, the only type of capital identified is economic, which is a material wealth or resources. Economic capital provides people the ability to not only meet their needs but also to access some of the other forms of capital. Despite the ability to buy the trappings of the landed gentry or the old money families, those with new wealth could still be seen as outsiders.²⁶ We will see some elements of this with the Leonhard Tietz family. The other forms of capital, social

²³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

²⁴ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 17-18.

²⁵ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 22.

²⁶ The Oxford English Dictionary traces the terms *nouveau riche* and *parvenu* to the late eighteenth century. In the Google Books Ngram Viewer, the three terms, "new money," "parvenu," and "nouveau riche" all appear with greater frequency than "bourgeois" between 1785 and 1920 in the English corpus. While this example includes many other variables and nuances, it does show the relative frequency of the four terms in the books which have been digitized in the Google Books project.

and cultural, are symbolic, which means the value they carry is not a direct translation of their monetary value, but, instead, is from their relative meaning within a social group.²⁷ Social capital is that which relates to an individual's place in society and their ability to leverage relationships and positions for their or their family's benefit. According to Bourdieu, "manners (bearing, pronunciation, etc.) may be included in social capital insofar as, through the mode of acquisition they point to, they indicate initial membership of a more or less prestigious group."²⁸ Belonging in certain groups holds more social capital than other groups. "Manners," or, as I will call it later, comportment, are theoretically open to anyone to learn, but for those with higher means, the opportunities for so doing are higher and the costs lower. Cultural capital, the other form of symbolic capital, comes from knowing and wielding knowledge of culture and what is valued within a culture. Some of this can be seen in the distinctions between "high" and "low" culture and what types of are interpreted as prestigious or popular. Cultural capital comes from knowing the distinctions between the two, familiarity with articles of high culture, and deploying that knowledge.²⁹ Bourdieu compares academic qualifications in cultural capital to money in economic capital because once one has qualifications, they do not need to be constantly proved.³⁰ Social, economic, and cultural capital are all material forms of capital and are learned or acquired through socialization. The value of social and cultural capital depends on the society within which one operates, which makes both subject to contestation within and across societies.

²⁷ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 171-183.

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, "The forms of capital," trans. Richard Nice, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (Greenwood), 241-258, accessed via <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>.

²⁹ Some elements of this can be seen in Shaw's *Pygmalion* and the adaption *My Fair Lady*, when Eliza/Liza first meets Mrs. Higgins and the Eynsford Hills. Her presentation and mode of speaking fit the requirements of high society, but the story of her aunt's death does not. As Mrs. Higgins remarks, after the visit, "She's a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker's; but if you suppose for a moment that she doesn't give herself away in every sentence she utters, you must be perfectly cracked about her."

³⁰ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 187.

In the realm of retailing, we can see examples of a balance between the material forms of capital. Department store owners increased their economic capital, largely through the social capital they were able to utilize and then attempted to acquire the cultural capital of the upper classes. We can see this in the repeated westward movement towards rural spaces by the different department store owners in Sheffield. Department store managers rising into an owner's family by marriage are the epitome of this, and we shall see them below. The limits of new money show the borders of the upper-class habitus. On the other end of the spectrum, the women working as sales assistants lacked economic capital, often lacked social capital, but could operationalize elements of cultural capital to fit the requirements of their jobs.

There are two further, interrelated theoretical frameworks that influence this study. The first is sociologist Arlie Hochschild's conception of emotional labor. In *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild uses the work of flight attendants to investigate the creation of affective situations.³¹ Hochschild questions the differences between labor where a physical good is produced and on the labor in which a service is the product. She asks, "How can the flight attendant tell when her job is done? A service has been produced; the customer seems content. In the case of the flight attendant, the *emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself* ... Seeming to 'love the job' becomes part of the job..."³² This is accomplished through emotional labor, which is the work done to create and manage feelings in others, often while suppressing or denying one's own emotions. For flight attendants, behavior and appearance are a significant part of this labor, illustrated through the importance of constant smiling. The creation of an emotional or affective sphere requires work, thus it is part of the paid employment. It is worth quoting

³¹ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, 20th Anniversary ed. (University of California Press, 2003).

³² Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 5-6.

Hochschild at length on this point, as the comparison to turn-of-the-century department stores and sales assistants could easily be substituted for airlines and flight attendants. Hochschild says

The company lays claim not simply to her physical motions – how she handles food trays – but to her emotional actions and the way they show in the ease of a smile. The workers I talked to often spoke of their smiles as being *on* them but not *of* them. They were seen as an extension of the make-up, the uniform, the recorded music, the soothing pastel colors of the airplane décor, and the daytime drinks, which taken together orchestrate the mood of the passengers. The final commodity is not a certain number of smiles to be counted like rolls of wallpaper. For the flight attendant, the smiles are a *part of her work*, a part that requires her to coordinate self and feeling so that the work seems to be effortless. To show that the enjoyment takes effort is to do the job poorly. Similarly, part of the job is to disguise fatigue and irritation, for otherwise the labor would show in an unseemly way, and the product – passenger contentment – would be damaged. Because it is easier to disguise fatigue and irritation if they can be banished altogether, at least for brief periods, this feat calls for emotional labor.³³

Flight attendants produce the atmosphere of pleasant, relaxing travel in the same way that sales assistants produced the atmosphere of pleasant, relaxing shopping. Shopping and travel, since the changes in society of nineteenth-century industrialization, have become leisure activities for the middle classes. For new department stores at the end of the nineteenth century, selling the experience of shopping was just as important as selling products. The appearance and behavior of sales assistants was a significant part of this equation. Chapter four takes up this discussion and includes the ways in which comportment and presentation were products *and* sites of agency for fashion retailing people.

The concept of alienation exists within both Marx and Hochschild, and in my discussion of work, including comportment, I integrate their ideas. Marx conceptualizes alienation for craftsmen and workers in mechanizing fields. With industrialization and machination, these workers, primarily men, were no longer connected to the product of their craft or the process of making. Marx says, “The product of labour is labour which has been congealed in an object,

³³ Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 7-8.

which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labour. Labour's realization is its objectification."³⁴ In this formulation, labor becomes a *thing*, which is distinct from the laborer. The laborer is estranged or alienated from the products of his labor, and he does not control the means of his production or the sale of the goods he produces. In Marx's formulation, the laborer has no control over most parts of his working day but can go home. This home, however, is also under assault by the alienation process of capitalism. This discussion relies on the creation of physical objects as the result of the labor process. The manufactured goods, mass produced, and alienated from their makers are the goods department stores and other fashion retailers sold. The majority of fashion retailing workers did not work to create goods. Despite this, Marx's ideas of alienation are still relevant to this study. I accomplish this by incorporating Hochschild's work on emotional labor and the inner lives of flight attendants. As we saw in the previous paragraph, the product in service sectors is the experience, even as, or especially as, the idea of customer service and the service industry were starting. In "The Search for Authenticity" in *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild considers the costs of emotional labor, including the "false self."³⁵ The danger in doing emotional labor and prioritizing the feelings of others over oneself is the creation of a you that is not you. Without direct interviews with historical subjects, whether the alienation of the self through shop work was a reality can never be definitively stated. However, in the following discussion, it becomes a distinct possibility.

The second related framework has its origins in affect theory. Cultural theorist Lauren Berlant's conceptualization of cruel optimism helps explain elements of department store employees' and small business owners' understandings of their places in the social hierarchy.

³⁴ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 71.

³⁵ Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 185-198.

Cruel optimism, as defined by Berlant, “is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a significantly problematic object.”³⁶ Berlant’s primary focus is on the United States in the late twentieth century, but their tracking of “the affective attachment to what we call ‘the good life’” allows for the potential application in other periods by adapting this definition of “the good life.”³⁷ The possibility of the good middle-class life was one of the attractions of the department store: for shoppers, owners, and assistants. As we will see in the following chapters, the groups most able to make good on these possibilities were the owners of large stores. The ability of shoppers to achieve (buy) the middle-class good life is a topic for other studies.³⁸ For assistants, the relationship between the middle-class good life and its attendant benefits was one of cruel optimism. Distinctions between classes had material consequences for all people. Thus, effectively claiming belonging in a particular group had consequences for a person’s life path. Social definitions of work and class, and the visible markers of both, provided the opportunity for assistants to claim some middle-class status, as we will see in chapters one and four, but the material conditions of their work, where they lived and worked, and the financial consequences of both, the subjects of chapters two and three, prevented them from fully attaining middle-class status. Thus, they were perpetually in the lower middle class. The cruelty of the pursuit of bettering their social standing was in the divisions it placed between department store employees, and the nascent customer service industry, and the working classes and labor movements. The difficulty of organizing shop assistants was remarked upon by organizers at the time, but why it

³⁶ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Duke University Press, 2011), 24.

³⁷ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 27.

³⁸ Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton University Press, 1981), 165-189; Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (The Ohio State University Press, 2006), 29-30.

was difficult was less of a concern. These divisions have also resulted in a separation of department store work from the conceptualization of work.

There is no single conception of class or labor at work in this study. Rather, I utilize multiple theories concurrently—each used in part where it can be illuminating but released when the context changes. Marx’s writings on class, capitalism, and historical materialism structure many parts of my discussion, but they must be supported by Bourdieu’s ideas of habitus and social and cultural capital, as well as theories which allow for the intangible and personal. To see beyond the bright lights of department stores and fashion retailing at the turn of the twentieth century we need this type of bricolage or cobbling. The construction of the ideal and physical reality of the department store and shopping was a project that was in process at the end of the nineteenth century. Studying fashion retailing and the spaces in which it happened as industrialized workplaces were being created demands a multifaceted theoretical approach.

Historians of the nineteenth century often study the effects of industrialization on class and various social groups. Many of these studies discuss the changes in retailing and the effects on, primarily, the new middle classes.³⁹ However, studies of the working class are also important.⁴⁰ What becomes apparent when these two sets of literature are placed in conversation is the difference between types of capital. The difference between the incomes of upper reaches of the working class and lower middle class was not that great.⁴¹ However, the social and cultural

³⁹ Bill Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (Leicester University Press, 1995); Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*; Jan Whitaker, *Service and Style: How the American Department Store Fashioned the Middle Class* (St. Martin’s Press, 2006).

⁴⁰ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Vintage Books, 1966); Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850-1914* (Cornell University Press, 1996); Richard J. Evans, *The German Working Class, 1888-1933: The Politics of Everyday Life* (Croom Helm, 1982); Richard Biernacki, *The Fabrication of Labor: Germany and Britain, 1640-1914*, (University of California Press, 1995).

⁴¹ Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 2nd edition (Routledge, 2016), 128. Steinbach places the upper limit of working-class income at £100/year, although it could go up to £300/year, with middle-class incomes ranging from £100-1,000/year. Thus, upper-working class and lower-middle class could overlap a fair bit.

capital provided by respectable addresses, connections, presentation, and occupation was valuable. The growing fields of secretarial and office work alongside what has become the customer service sector employed people who believed themselves different from other industrialized fields. As historian Carole Elizabeth Adams discusses, sales assistants and office workers continued to call themselves clerks, *Handlungsgehilfen*, despite different trajectories.⁴² This call to a shared past established a link between the past and the present, where the past provided cultural capital in the prestige and respect given to shopkeepers. Further, the cultural perception of the department store as site of leisure and fantasy over and above that of an industrialized workplace provided a basis on which assistants could define their occupations as substantively different from that of other industrialized producers.

Utilizing the concept of breadwinner frailty to understand the significance of fashion work to the economic stability of the families on the margins of the middle class has other implications for women's participation in the marketplace. Breadwinner frailty and its related nuclear hardship are concepts introduced by historian Jane Humphries in *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*.⁴³ Breadwinner frailty and nuclear hardship describe the circumstances when members of families beyond adult men engage in paid labor. Humphries' study focuses on child labor in earlier phases of industrialization. Many of those circumstances do not apply to the people in this study. However, the need for increased incomes for people on the borderlands of the class, working to maintain their status in the lower middle class by engaging in respectable paid employment kept families afloat. Fashion work depended on skills some women already had—dressmaking, tailoring, millinery—and provided them marketable

⁴² Carole Elizabeth Adams, *Women Clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of Class and Gender* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 7.

⁴³ Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

skills where other jobs were not available. Teaching and typing required education that was not available to some of these women.⁴⁴ Some people participated in home production of piecework, much of which was decried at the time as sweated labor.⁴⁵ This labor provided income to some people, but, while on the fashion retailing spectrum, it was closer to factory production than the creation of bespoke garments in the historically skilled trades. Domestic service, the largest sector for women, would not have been thinkable for some workers—their family's class position made it the last possible resort. In times of need, fashion work provided a stopgap and, sometimes, a career. For some women, fashion work, like dressmaking or milliner, only stopped when they were too old to continue working.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a single adult man's income was insufficient to maintain middle-class standards of accommodation and dress, not to mention leisure, for most families. The people for whom this was possible in my study include the large store owners and their managers. As we will see below, most owners' wives stopped working in the business, if they ever had, once it was fully established and their daughters did not work for pay. For the rest, a second income, at least, was often required. In some families, this income was a daughter going to work in a department store, while the mother remained home (as was the case in Humphries' study). In other families, this meant the opening of a business in the front room, from which a woman could bring income without going out to work. In many of these families, the male breadwinner was not absent—it was not the person but the social conditions that undermined the breadwinner ideology. Part of these social conditions were the necessities of keeping up appearances compared to one's social peers and neighbors. For working-class families,

⁴⁴ Adams, *Women clerks*, 11-12.

⁴⁵ James A. Schmiechen, *Sweated industries and sweated labor: The London clothing trades, 1860-1914* (University of Illinois Press, 1984), <https://archive.org/details/sweatedindustrie0000schm/page/4/mode/2up>.

necessities made additional incomes necessary. In lower middle-class families, it could also be necessities that made additional incomes important, but what was considered necessary was different. For the working class, rent and provisions were the first priority, and often hard to come by.⁴⁶ Rent was also important to the lower middle classes, but their housing needed to be in an appropriate area, which often led to continual renting and frequent relocation.⁴⁷ As economic fortunes shifted, so too did addresses. Wardrobes needed to display middle-class standing including different components than those of the working classes and remaking could only work for so long.⁴⁸ Without her learning a trade, some families required daughters to work, and often the best option was in a shop.

In her work on German clerks, including saleswomen, Adams notes the conflicting class identities of clerks of all types. Caught between a solidly middle-class existence and a working-class future, both men and women existed on the margins of a classed society. Men were better positioned to resist the proletarianization of clerking, holding better positions (based in part on better educational opportunities) with a greater ability to climb the ladder. Women, however, were hired in ever-increasing numbers for the poorly paid, routinized clerking jobs, including retail sales. These jobs had little opportunity for advancement and did not need as much education or training. Being a clerk, until the end of the nineteenth century, was a white-collar job with a middle-class status.⁴⁹ By the early twentieth century, clerking was split in intersecting

⁴⁶ Thomas Mergel, *Köln im Kaiserreich, 1871-1918* (Greven, 2004), 251; Humphries, *Childhood*, 97, 120; Emma Griffin, *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (Yale University Press, 2020), 94; Barbara Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914* (Taylor & Francis, 1995), 24-5.

⁴⁷ Judith Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 10-11, 23-4; Pamela M. Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789-1914: France, Germany, Italy and Russia* (Lyceum Books, 1990), 15.

⁴⁸ Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 108, 118; Ariel Beaujot, *Victorian Fashion Accessories* (Berg, 2012), 5; Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 299.

⁴⁹ Adams, *Women Clerks*, 3, 9, 129-132.

ways. First, it was split between bureaucratic or administrative work and sales or retailing work. Second, it was split between skilled and, increasingly, deskilled work. Third, split between men and women. In each of these splits, the former were staffed by men and the latter by women. To be a clerk was still looked upon as “white-collar” and efforts to improve clerks’ lives were fought on the basis of their class. However, given the divides between types of divisions, it is clear that distinctions of “white” or “blue” (or any other color) collar work and that of class did not align, no matter how much individuals at the time might have wanted them to. Many of these designations come later, but tracing the origins of what constituted different types of labor provides information about how they came to be.⁵⁰ This serves to destabilize naturalized definitions and assumptions.

Historians Christopher Hosgood and Geoffrey Crossick make similar points about the divisions within the middle classes in Britain. To Hosgood, the lower middle class, particularly shop assistants, are depressed by both their economic and political positions.⁵¹ Hosgood focuses mainly on men, who were held in perpetual adolescence by the policies and restrictions of shop work while also having their masculinity threatened.⁵² However, when considering the political implications, women must have been worse off. In both Britain and Germany, the majority of women were disenfranchised and until 1908 in Germany could not even participate in formal

⁵⁰ Oxford English Dictionary, “white collar (*n.* and *a.*),” accessed March 23, 2025, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/white-collar_n?tab=meaning_and_use#14377473.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term “white collar” originated in the United States. One noun and the adjective definition date from 1910 and 1911 respectively, while the second definition of the noun dates from 1948. Origins do not necessarily equate to common usage and spread to other contexts, like Europe. American sociologist C. Wright Mills’ study *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* was originally published in 1951 traced the emergence of the new middle classes in the United States between 1870 and 1940, among other facets of the white-collar world (C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*, 50th Anniversary edition (Oxford University Press, 2002)).

⁵¹ Christopher P. Hosgood, “‘Mercantile Monasteries’: Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain,” *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (July 1999): 322-352; Crossick, *Lower Middle Class*.

⁵² Hosgood, “‘Mercantile Monasteries’,” 335.

politics. Although British suffragists and suffragettes were making some inroads with women in various parts of service, efforts to unionize shop workers and create some class consciousness were not easy or obvious.⁵³

What can be added to the above points are elements of Bourdieu's theories of different types of capital. Adams presents the situation of German clerks as that of deskilling and gender segregation, with the attendant effects on wages, and how those patterns impacted (or did not impact) the way clerks perceived their class. If we distinguish economic capital and ideas of social and cultural capitals, their reticence to identify as working class becomes clearer. The division becomes less one of finances and more one of an individual's perceived location in the social order. If one could present oneself as though they belonged to a certain group, what their account books looked like did not necessarily matter. Furthermore, as Bourdieu points out, "each member of the group is...a custodian of the limits of the group,"⁵⁴ which means that new members of the middle class, regardless of their place within it, had a vested interest in defining and policing the limits of inclusion. For department store owning families, this meant adopting the behaviors and traits of the other industrialist bourgeois families and the established middle class, as we will see across the following chapters. For sales assistants entering the lower middle class, this meant clearly and continuously defining themselves as different from the working class, particularly when it came to occupation and the nature of their work. One of the easiest ways to police boundaries was through the observation of behaviors and how one compared to others. In societies, like that of Britain and Germany at the turn of the twentieth century, these perceptions were prioritized.

⁵³ Rosalind Eyben, "'The Thin Edge of the Wedge'? Tea-Shop Waitresses, the British Press and the Women's Suffrage Movement," *Women's History Review* July 2023, 1-20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2023.2230407>, accessed July 24, 2023; Margaret Bondfield, *A life's work* (Hutchinson & Co., 1948), 49-59.

⁵⁴ Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital."

Part of maintaining middle-class standards were servants.⁵⁵ Servants formed the base on which the domestic spaces of home and business were built. Sheffield was no exception to the rising dependence on servants for the majority of Britons.⁵⁶ From the servants that kept the owners' homes running to the servants working back of house positions at the department stores (and even the waitresses in the stores' restaurants and tea rooms), servants form an oft-forgotten part of department store studies. In this discussion of class, servants add a wrinkle. For many working-class individuals at the time, servants were class traitors—holding more loyalty for the families they served than their economic peers.⁵⁷ Additionally, business servants were employed not by the angel of the home but by the paternal owner. Servant hierarchy in businesses resembled that of its hierarchy in domestic spaces: maids of all types reported to the housekeeper. Within the department store world, servants would interact with the other store employees, who would have expectations of the maintenance of class boundaries and proper behavior. Servants could be isolated in all places of employment, residential and business.

Discussions of class at the turn of the twentieth century must account for both material conditions and people's beliefs about how society was and should be organized and their place within that hierarchy. Individuals and families involved in fashion retailing on any scale existed within these societies and had their own beliefs about their places. In the next two sections different groups within the fashion shop landscape come into focus. We will see how almost all of them were able to claim some form of middle-class standing despite different material conditions. This shows the breadth of definitions of “middle class” and how it was operationalized.

⁵⁵ Lucy Lethbridge, *Servants: A Downstairs View of Twentieth-century Britain* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 15.

⁵⁶ Lethbridge, *Servants*, ix, 4. Additionally, newspapers held listings for domestic servant positions every day and census records for the residences and businesses discussed here almost always include servants.

⁵⁷ Lethbridge, *Servants*, x-xi.

Behind the Temple: Industrialized Labor in the New Department Stores

From Michael Miller's business history of the Boucicaut and the Bon Marché to Pam Inder's history of British dressmakers, many aspects of department stores and the changes in retailing of which they were a part have been the foci of a variety of historical and sociological studies.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, sociologists focused on the changes of retailing groups and the department store as an entity.⁵⁹ Another area of inquiry has been into consumption and shopping as leisure activities, particularly including questions of gender. Historiographies concerning department stores and consumption cover many aspects of life that this study also finds important. However, few of them consider department and fashioning stores as gendered sites of complex labor.

This approach provides important information about specific businesses and their structures. It is useful for illustrating popular practices in retailing and distribution. This studies, however, are only possible for businesses with fairly complete archives. Miller's *Bon Marché* is the most well-known example of this. There are also studies of individual German owners or the interconnected families, as is the case in Paul Lerner's and John F. Mueller's histories.

Sometimes the business histories stray into cultural studies. However, their focal point is primarily on owners and their lives. When these studies stray to employees, they do so from a business standpoint. Contrarily, this study investigates employees from a labor standpoint, to prioritize their relationships to their social worlds.

⁵⁸ Michael Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869 – 1920* (Princeton University Press, 1981); Pam Inder, *Busks, Basques and Brush-Braid: British dressmaking in the 18th and 19th centuries* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020); Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*; Erika Diane Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (University of Illinois Press, 1968).

⁵⁹ H. Pasdermadjian, *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution and Economics* (Newman Books, 1954); Frank M. Mayfield, *The Department Store Story* (Fairchild Publications, Inc., 1949); John Benson and Gareth Shaw, eds., *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c. 1800-1914* (Leicester University Press, 1992).

Paul Lerner's *The Consuming Temple* and John F. Muller's *The Kaiser, Hitler, and the Jewish Department Store* look particularly at the German department store.⁶⁰ Lerner frames his study with three intersecting themes: "the department store's uncanny qualities, its Jewishness, and its religious connotations."⁶¹ His work utilizes popular representations and understandings of department stores to create a general picture of the situation. The results of rapid industrialization and growth of consumerism marked a time of change and unease, all understood as modernity. Unlike the rest of Europe and North America, which also experienced these factors, the German case, to Lerner, was different for its "unparalleled intensity."⁶² This resulted in the faster expansion of department stores, which, paired with the significant presence of Jews as owners, presented a particular climate in which the consumer revolution occurred. Mueller shifts focus to specific stores in the local contexts.⁶³ He asks, "So why, if department stores were seen as the harbingers of all things that Germans hated (mass consumption, independent women as a new aesthetic, liberal morals, social upheaval, Jewishness, democratization and commercialization of society), did they expand, establish branches and serve millions of customers a day?"⁶⁴ To answer this question, Mueller situates German department stores and their owners within provincial contexts. In so doing, Mueller breaks the direct links between the Jewish origins of most department stores and their fates in the Nazi period.

Lerner's study and Mueller's study are significant to the present case for their focus on German department stores as a form. Lerner's work is on the construction of department stores as a cultural form. Social understandings of department stores, their owners, and the people who

⁶⁰ Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*; John F. Mueller, *The Kaiser, Hitler and the Jewish Department Store: The Reich's Retailer* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

⁶¹ Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 9.

⁶² Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 10.

⁶³ Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 4.

⁶⁴ Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 6.

worked in them were constructed and contested. Mueller's focus on contextually located stores directs our focus away from Berlin, or other capital cities. I adopt the provincial focus and add a comparative element which Mueller references.⁶⁵ Both studies, however, focus primarily on owners, shoppers, and social perceptions about employees. My study focuses on department and fashion stores as sites of labor, centering the employees, within an industrialized context. Studies of consumption do important work in establishing histories of women in the public sphere as wielding economic power, for example, Lise Shapiro Sanders' *Consuming Fantasies*, Erika Rappaport's *Shopping for Pleasure*, and Jan Whitaker's *Service and Style*.⁶⁶ These studies primarily focus on women as consumers, especially within department stores. Populating the show rooms of department stores and customers for many bespoke tailors provides evidence of their popularity. This view installs department stores as middle-class establishments, with the lower middle class as a fringe or intrusive element – buying what they can with more limited means or attempting to mimic their social superiors. It also limits the places where consumption happens to the department store, rather than also including the plethora of other fashioning businesses. Furthermore, by focusing on the shoppers, the employees fade to the background and their experiences become easy to overlook.

My study seeks to add to all of the above by looking primarily at the women who worked in various types of stores. Reorienting the scholarly view towards working- and lower-middle-class women provides me with a further path of analysis that Adams begins when identifying the ways in which women assistants were pigeonholed in retailing. Throughout this study, I include businesses ranging from small shops to large department stores because they represent a spectrum of employment possibilities. Further, comparing Britain and Germany situates this

⁶⁵ Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 9.

⁶⁶ Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*; Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*; Whitaker, *Service and Style*.

study within a longer trend of comparative research, but brings it to the areas of retailing. Finally, discussing these businesses as part of an industrialized system, as employers before anything else, broadens our understanding of fashion retailing beyond merely locations where consumption happens. Throughout, I argue that fashion retailing evolved during the nineteenth century to fit in an industrialized economy, including in the nature and pace of work, methods of discipline, and lives of workers, but that these changes were hidden, through overt actions and as the result of ideology, behind the façade of beautiful, leisured consumption. I resist the pull of traditional narratives of economies and labor to firmly situation fashion retailing to the industrial capitalist societies of Britain and Germany at the end of the nineteenth century.

The disappearance of the small master shops that resulted from industrialization is visible in some aspects of the development of department stores. In Sheffield, individual draper's establishments declined, as did some of the other trades into which department stores inserted themselves. The growing stores on High Street and its neighbors pushed some small stores out of business. For example, before building his new store, John Walsh expanded by subsuming adjacent shops.⁶⁷ In Cologne, and throughout Germany, burgeoning department stores increasingly inserted themselves into the manufacturing processes for their goods.⁶⁸ The owners and managers of these stores adopted the lifestyles of the established middle classes, and they joined the ranks of new money alongside the other industrialist bourgeoisie.

Contrarily, the success of department stores did not result in the wholesale collapse of small traders. Despite fears and claims that the department store would end the lifestyle of the

⁶⁷ "The Fiftieth Milestone - John Walsh Ltd., High Street, Sheffield", 1925, SY492/B22/3, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield City Archives (SA), Sheffield, UK.

⁶⁸ Nils Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz: Fuhrmannssohn und Warenhauskönig von der Warthe and den Rhein* (Hentrich & Hentrich, 2014), 46-53; Paul Göhre, *Das Warenhaus* (Rütten & Loening, 1907), 121-122.

small trader, some traditional trades continued to flourish—particularly tailors and dressmakers.⁶⁹ Other shops also dealt in goods that department stores incorporated. This included furniture, ironmongery, books, drugs, shoes, and grocers. For the working classes, co-operative stores in Britain and Germany fulfilled many of the same functions as department stores but offered dividends to members.⁷⁰ Department stores did not burst onto the retailing scene and quickly overshadow the rest of the distributive trades. Rather, their financial successes were moderate, and the real successes were in the areas of culture and urban experience. The continued existence and success of small stores' continued existence and successes does not translate into the kinds of financial success of the department stores. Although many of them had some financial stability, bad luck could easily sink the whole endeavor. It is this precarity that supports Marx's argument about their disappearance. Although still important to the overall economic system, small traders no longer held sway in markets as they had in the past.

Gender in Shop Work and Shop Girls in Culture

The industrialization of retailing included shifting perception of gender. Leisured shopping was becoming entrenched as a feminine pastime at the same time as the workforce feminized. Women's increased visibility in public, particularly alone, spending their own money in stores of all sizes contributed to anxieties about the destabilization of society. Popular understandings of shop work and workers often overlooked the intricacies of women's participation in fashion retailing, but they help us understand the world in which these women worked. In addition to making up the majority of department store employees, women also owned and operated scores of small businesses. Small businesses provided women with

⁶⁹ For a discussion of this in Germany, see: Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*.

⁷⁰ Martin Purvis, "Co-operative retailing in Britain," in *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c.1800-1914*, eds. John Benson and Gareth Shaw (Leicester University Press, 1992), 107-134; Theodor Otto Cassau, *The Consumers' Co-operative Movement in Germany*, trans. J.F. Mills (Macmillan Company, 1925).

necessary income to support their families, whether their households included male breadwinners. Gender analysis is also significant to this study because it further undercuts the narrative of the genius, entrepreneurial man as the engine of retailing evolution.

Women's influx into fashion retailing also shows some of the intersections of class, gender, and power. Retailing involved women and men from various class standings in fluid social situations. In any given circumstance, who had power and agency relative to the other participants depended on the interpretation of that interaction and could be contested by the others. In earlier times, decisions about governance — traditional politics — were confined to the landed or aristocratic elite. Even after this arrangement was challenged, first by wealthy bourgeois families and then by working men, women were banned from joining or participating in political parties and official organizations. Women fought for and won more political power in the context of rapidly changing public spaces. Claims for women's political participation varied between Britain and Germany. The British suffrage and suffragette movements made particular claims for political power that did not necessarily reflect the class status of the women involved. For example, whether working-class women ought to be enfranchised was debated. A similar movement did not exist to the same extent in Germany.⁷¹ Therefore, the relationships shop girls had with electoral politics and class-based politics could vary and conflict across time and space. Some shop workers might have been highly involved with political causes related to socialism or suffragism, but they just as likely might have eschewed politics altogether. The motivations for choosing either path, or an option between the two, can help us understand the relationship between women, politics, and power.

⁷¹ I.C. Fletcher, Laura Mayhall, and Philippa Levine, eds. *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation and Race* (Routledge, 2000); Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800-1914* (Rutgers University Press, 1991).

Shop work provided women with social clout and financial compensation on which they could build middle-class identities. The vast majority of women involved in shop work could stake claim only to lower-middle-class belonging, but this was sufficient because it was *not* working class. Not being considered working class had material results for women amongst their peers and implications for their futures. While the rags-to-riches shop girl fiction, of which there is an example below, was not the reality for any woman in this study, some obtained security and social advancement for themselves or their children. Shop work, as I contend, was industrial, but it was perceived to be fundamentally different from the other industrialized fields, like textile production. This perception led to actions and behaviors which distinguished people employed in fashion retailing from their economic peers. Gender analysis subverts some of the distinctions between sectors of labor and production. It also serves to show the limits of the fictional “shop girl” in discussions of material realities.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, shopkeeping became a standard component of fiction across Europe. Virtually everyone had experience with shopkeepers and their employees, who were increasingly women. By the early twentieth century, the “shop girl” as a form had entered the social imaginary, not only in works of fiction but also as part of the discourse on modernity. Within literature, perhaps the most well-known is Émile Zola’s *Au Bonheur des Dames*, or *The Ladies’ Paradise*, set in a fictional department store modeled on the Bon Marché in Paris.⁷² Shops and their people featured in a variety of novels and stage productions from the middle of the century. Fashion retailing, especially department stores, figured heavily in discourses on modern society. Within these discussions, the material realities of shop people were occasionally the focus. More frequently, however, imagined possibilities and the unknown

⁷² Émile Zola, *The Ladies’ Paradise*, trans. Ernest Alfred Vizetelly (Hutchinson & Co., 1895).

eclipsed these realities. I introduce just two fictional accounts of shops and their people and some of the discourse of morality here to show some of the larger cultural environment that surrounded fashion retailing at the turn of the twentieth century.

In 1911, Margarete Böhme published *W.A.G.M.U.S. (Warenhaus Aktien-Gesellschaft Müllenmeister und Sohne)*, which was translated the following year into English (titled *The Department Store: A Novel of To-Day*).⁷³ The narrative follows the people associated with the fictional Müllenmeister department store and is set in Berlin. There are many characters, ranging from the department store owner to shop girls to an architect to a socialist. Interestingly, when the English translation was reviewed in *The Bookman* in June 1912, the reviewer was unimpressed: “Readers in search of a story will be well advised to pass over ‘The Department Store,’ which is a very long and deadly serious piece of work, of considerable value in some respects, but with no spark of amusement for the frivolous reader.”⁷⁴ The reviewer further pans the number of characters and their complicated plotlines. Though the realistic nature of the book was successful, to the reviewer, they lacked an appreciation of its larger value. Rather than “inchoate and disconnected,” the plot of the book and the characters are intricately connected and have much to do with each other. In my study, this novel presents a fictional representation of life within department stores which cannot be reconstructed through quantitative means alone.

Many of the contemporary narratives of department stores are included in *W.A.G.M.U.S.* The owner, Joshua Müllenmeister, inherited the business from his father, and on the occasion of his first marriage changed his name from Manassa and converted to Christianity. This is not enough, however, to prevent some of his critics, including an old friend, from utilizing

⁷³ Margarete Böhme, *The Department Store: A Novel of To-Day* [*W.A.G.M.U.S.*], trans. Ethel Colburn Mayne (D. Appleton and Company, 1912).

⁷⁴ “The Department Store,” in *The Bookman* June (1912): 140.

antisemitic rhetoric to criticize the business and its expansion. Agnes Matrei, one of the other central characters, works in the store as a sales assistant. She comes to the reader's notice through Friedrich Müllenmeister who observes her beauty and quickly becomes infatuated, including influencing her position in the store. We learn that she seeks enjoyment outside of work and her home and that she does not like associating with her siblings as she sees them as unfashionable. Agnes and Friedrich become engaged, but he is sent to America for training. During their separation, Agnes is involved with the Müllenmeister family, but also starts an affair with Elias Bielefeldt, employed in Müllenmeister's tailoring department. Eventually Friedrich becomes aware of the affair and ends the engagement. In the end, Agnes marries Elias, who left Müllenmeister to start his own business, but her health suffers from that point. In Agnes' story, we see the shop girl romance of marrying up, although it does not end well because of Agnes' own actions, which we are given to assume are influenced by her modern-ness and her participation in modern culture. Elements of the novel appear throughout this study, and a more complete synopsis and character list are provided in Appendix A.

In the British case, fictional narratives of department stores exist in realist novels.⁷⁵ However, they do not get the extended treatment as in Zola and Böhme. Contrarily, one of the most successful fictional representations of the department store was the 1894 theatrical show *The Shop Girl* by Henry J.W. Dam.⁷⁶ Following in the path of *A Gaiety Girl*, *The Shop Girl* is a musical comedy. Developed by George Edwardes at the Gaiety theater, the show was billed as a

⁷⁵ George Gissing is most often referenced, particularly *The Odd Women*, *In the Year of Jubilee*, and *New Grub Street*. For an example, see: Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 98-110.

Department stores occur as minor players in more works, like those of Gissing, Dickens, and Shaw. They are not subject to the same extended study, and possibly critique, as in Zola and Böhme.

⁷⁶ H. J. W. Dam, Ivan Caryll, Adrian Ross, and Lionel Monckton, *The Shop Girl: Musical Farce* (Hopwood & Crew, 1895), <https://archive.org/details/shopgirlmusicalf00cary/page/n5/mode/2up>.

“musical farce.”⁷⁷ The show features a mystery heiress, who is one of the shop girls at the Royal Stores, the fictional department store, and a case of mistaken identity. Rather than the serious depiction of conditions of life in and around department stores, here the store is a site of comedy and, indeed, farce. The options for the heiress include an unattractive shopgirl and a genuine foundling. The manager promotes the former, as part of a plot to marry her (she is, however, engaged to the floor walker). The foundling woman, who is characterized as “poor” and “honest,” is in love with a medical student. The heiress is eventually found to be the foundling and is able to marry her upper-class doctor.⁷⁸ Many of characters are caricatures and the audience ends up with less of a realist image of the store than in the German novel but is well entertained and romanticized views of department stores and shop girls are placed at the center of the narrative.

At the end of the nineteenth century middle-class society in Germany and Britain saw society changed as industrialization and urbanization progressed. These changes caused anxieties about social destabilization, cosmopolitanism, and independent women to become part of discussions about society and the problems of the world. Real, material changes contributed to this, and moral panics were often fueled by a focus on easily identified groups. Traditional holders of power, especially well-to-do men, were disconcerted by increased participation in the public sphere by minorities, like working class men, women, and Jews. These men couched their fears over losing power in moral terms to reframe social changes in a negative light. For example, many of the perceived problems of society were traced to the rising participation of women in public life, both political and economic, and the way this participation was interpreted

⁷⁷ John A Degen, “The Evolution of ‘The Shop Girl’ and the Birth of ‘Musical Comedy’,” *Theatre History Studies* 7 (1987): 44.

⁷⁸ Degen, “The Evolution of ‘The Shop Girl’,” 44-5.

as a threat to sexual hierarchies and stability.⁷⁹ Department stores factored into these discussions for multiple reasons. Not only were they places where women were able to be out in public by themselves, sometimes for a whole day, thanks to public toilets and tea rooms, but they also promoted mass consumption of non-necessary items. Women, who controlled family budgets, could be lured into stores through advertising and displays. Once in the stores, these women, who were usually sensible, could not resist buying unnecessary, mass-produced trinkets and spending hard-earned income frivolously. Furthermore, they employed primarily women, who then lived away from home. The potential for sexual impropriety as well as hysteria and shoplifting were the most commented upon behaviors. In Böhme's *W.A.G.M.U.S.*, a single woman customer headed an organization that infiltrated every department in the main department store, as well as others in Berlin. When it was discovered, one of the young men involved committed suicide. His involvement in the ring began when he was trying to impress a wealthy socialite.⁸⁰ Discussions around shoplifting included real-world examples, and kleptomania featured heavily in the literature at the time.⁸¹ Many of the elements of the moral panics were concerned with challenges to middle-class respectability, including and especially those concerned with the appropriate gender norms.

The potential for sexual impropriety in and around the department store enticed people of diverse opinions. No proponents of department stores advocated for young women, and men, to engage in intimate relationships. However, they did not share the same vocal concern that critics held. Women employed in stores could participate in various forms of sex work, particularly to

⁷⁹ Mullin, *Working Girls*, 111.

⁸⁰ Böhme, *The Department Store*, 353-360.

⁸¹ Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*, 98-104; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 184-87; Uwu Spiekermann, "Theft and thieves in German department stores, 1895-1930: a Discourse on Morality, Crime and Gender," in *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Ashgate, 1999), 135-159.

supplements their incomes or to enjoy their time off.⁸² The records of women's behaviors are incomplete, and I have no evidence here to support these claims in Sheffield and Cologne, nor is it the focus of this study. Separate from the material realities of making-ends-meet were the fictional and cultural imaginings of shop girl promiscuity. Some of this relates to the nature of seeing within a department store, where shoppers could gaze upon beautiful goods and beautiful girls, both of which, it was presumed, could be bought.⁸³ The shop girl, as a good, existed in imaginings and media across the spectrum. Since I focus on fashion retailing as labor, some of the discussions of moral panic, intimate relationships, and cultural representations fall from focus despite the significance of these to the experience of retailing people.

The shop girl, as she was recognized through fiction and social debates, resembled the women employed in department store. Women in fashion retailing, however, were much more complex than these representations allowed for. The shop girl was primarily young, with some form of education, who worked in sales. She represented the ills of modernity, either as the vehicle for them or as the victim of them. Women were employed in every aspect of fashion retailing, although the extent to which they were included in the highest levels of management depended on the size of the store, and there was no single path to shop work nor motivating factor. Throughout this study I refer to shop girls only when I refer to the imagined or fictional character. Women employed in businesses were sales assistants, even if they were colloquially called shop girls. Furthermore, I use the women's role as sales assistants to establish and defend their place in the labor market beyond merely decorations to consumption.

⁸² Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 37-39; Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge University Press, 1980); Kathy Peiss, "Charity Girls and City Pleasures," *OAH Magazine of History* July (2004): 14-16; Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (University of Illinois Press, 1986), 135.

⁸³ Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*, 134-5; Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 121.

Chapter Outlines

To set up the following chapters, chapter one introduces the owners and employees at department and fashioning stores. I argue that they claimed middle-class identity through actions based on their beliefs about class. Although the definition of middle class included a range of experiences and income levels, shop people policed their place within the social order and worked hard to maintain their positions within that social order. Small shopkeepers and workers were often placed within the lower middle class based on their position within the industrialized production economy and their claims to social and cultural capital. Therefore, they worked to differentiate themselves from the working classes and to prevent slipping down the social ladder. Their ability to claim middle-class status was based on their access to respectability through their work, place of employment, behavior, and presentation. For some, particularly owners of large stores, claims to middle-class status included financial capital. Owners most frequently had the means to access the social and cultural capital of the traditional or upper middle class. For others, shop girls and owners of small businesses, the economic outlook was not as stable or profitable, but it provided enough income to support existence and claims to middle-class status. This tension between economic realities and beliefs (and the claims made based on them) of the *petit bourgeoisie* (and new lower middle class) helps us see the way class was an ongoing, contested project.

Chapter two focuses on the spatial aspects of department and fashion stores and the people who worked in them. This chapter argues that the physical spaces of department stores and small fashion shops had material consequences for the people who worked and lived in them. Underlying this is the idea that the organization and utilization of physical space impacts experience. Furthermore, trying to understand the physical worlds of historical actors situates

them in particular contexts; for these workers, this is in both their larger society and within the shops themselves. Department stores used the configuration of space to designate spaces where people, shoppers and employees, could acceptably be. Store divisions, implemented by owners and upheld by managers, were based on location of work, gender, and class. Front-of-house departments were only the most obvious divisions, but every area had social meaning. Ideas of respectability determined both where individual departments were situated and who the primary audiences were and what types of leisure spaces were included for the employees who lived-in. For example, perfume could be on the ground floor, near the doors, because both men and women were acceptable purchasers. As part of this chapter, I include an in-depth look at two sets of architectural plans for department stores, Leonhard Tietz in Cologne and John Walsh in Sheffield. Additionally, my discussion of John Walsh is supplemented with a 3D model, to illustrate parts of the discussion.⁸⁴ The dispersal of department stores, small businesses (often run from residences), and the homes of owners and managers expands the social universe beyond the walls of large, individual stores, which cements fashion retailing within local societies. Where people lived and worked relied on a variety of factors, including social expectations and norms, including those about which parts of town were respectable. Focusing on multiple businesses prevents their employees from existing in isolation. Instead, they exist as groups within existing communities. Businesses run from domestic front-rooms moved with families as their fortunes changed, providing flexible employment. Owners, board members, and managers congregating in specific fashionable neighborhoods provided material for claims to social standing. Thus, chapter two serves not only as an argument for the importance of material realities to definitions of work and class but also as the foundation for chapters three and for. The types of work

⁸⁴ Appendix C contains more images and information about the 3D model and how I built it.

described in chapter three took place in the environments described here. Chapter four outlines the stores and their locations as the stage and setting on and in which proper presentation and behavior were judged. The combination of this stage and how people worked and acted within it and determined their relative positions were fundamental to the place of department and fashion store people within the class order and the creation of a lower middle-class identity.

Chapter three discusses the types of work done in department and fashion stores. I argue that shop work on all levels was physical and skilled. From the servants maintaining the beauty of the stores to the fabrication hands producing finished goods to sales assistants ensuring a pleasurable experience, all employees were required to complete tasks that needed to be seen as effortless or invisible. Fashion retailing existed within industrialized and industrial economies: not only did they sell mass produced goods, but also the largest were run on capitalist models, which prioritized the creation of surplus value over and above all other considerations. The workers were subject to regulatory regimes enforced through fines, similar to systems implemented in textile factories. The small stores could not escape the totalizing effects of industrial capitalism. They had to adapt to new realities of scale and pace, even as earlier components of retailing persisted. Department stores are industrialized places; mass consumption relies on mass production – of goods and experiences – to profit. Large stores also employed a range of people to complete differentiated tasks. Frequently sales assistants were confined to a single department, where they needed specialist knowledge to help customers, rather than be deployed across departments. Small fashion stores also operated in industrialized society: their goods were often mass produced, and their work compared to that done in department stores or factories.

Aesthetics and comportment were important social determinants in Britain and Germany at the turn of the century and, as such, were critical for workers in department and fashion stores. Department stores featured heavily in the literature and social discussions of the day, especially regarding women in public – as both shoppers and workers. For employees, then, looking and acting the part (whichever was appropriate to her social position) was a vital component of their working lives. Through their behaviors, some women were able to leverage their work in shops to higher social standing. This path was also open to men, particularly owners from humble origins. In chapter four, I argue that behavior and aesthetics were critical elements of employment in fashioning businesses. Meeting these requirements took time and effort and were not negotiable. Part of the effort required was emotional labor to keep the shopping experience pleasant for shoppers. Emotional labor demands the minimization of an individual's own emotions and ideas. An effect of this is the dual alienation of a worker from herself and the products of her labor. Unlike other parts of the job, which could be disciplined in ways similar to work in factories, presentation was both part of official disciplinary regimes and unofficial, social expectations. Thus, requirements were not merely imposed from above: shop workers adopted and enforced norms to maintain the respectability of shop work which allowed them to claim difference from the working classes. Aesthetic and behavioral choices not only helped women keep their jobs but also to make social claims, which frequently depended on the income provided by shop work.

Across this study, department stores and fashion shops are centered as industrialized places where people worked and lived. Fashion retailing incorporated businesses in a range of sizes, but they all operated within industrialized societies within a capitalist ideology. Their business was part of an economic system thus tied to the changes in production and

manufacturing. At the center, regardless of immediate topic, are women as workers. Women's labor was central to the successes of fashion retailing businesses. This focus presents questions on the nature of class, its experience, and the material circumstances at stake in defining who belongs where. For these women, determinations of class and social belonging were malleable and a woman could make and defend a claim to higher standing based on her work in fashion retailing. Looking beyond the flash and shine of department stores, we can see the masses of work and workers needed to make them palaces.

Making the Lower Middle Class a Reality

Introduction

After six years of experience in a dressmaking workroom, 20-year-old Ethel Johnson was left “slightly crippled.” She had worked for Cole Brothers in Sheffield for all six of those years and had a further two months of employment at an unnamed smaller establishment. Her condition, however, made work difficult and she needed to seek assistance in August 1912 following a dispute with her sister. It is in this position that she came to the notice of the House of Help for Friendless Girls and Young Women.¹ Despite previously consistent employment, Ethel, as a young woman, had few options. Although I do not know the rest of her story—she did not request further help beyond a night’s lodging before departing for her brother’s residence—her social position is familiar. Despite the promises of financial stability and social improvement offered by department stores, the capricious winds of capitalism, be they an injury, slow sales, or a difficult customer, could catch a young woman at almost any time. For those with little ballast, these winds could be catastrophic; for those with a lot of ballast, success and stability were easier to achieve.

In this chapter, I look at class and the economics of shop work for the people involved in it. In the following chapters, we will see how the physical environments of department stores and people’s residences impacted the meanings of their lives and work and what department and fashioning store work encompassed in both tangible and intangible ways. In the final chapter especially, the affective elements of department store work will come to the fore, and result in an understanding of the ways in which imaginings about stores and employees shaped behaviors and realities. From department store owners and their families to business maids and long-

¹ House of Help for Friendless Girls and Young Women, “Case Books,” 1900, X158/5/1/5 case C185, X158 – Oakdale House, House of Help for Friendless Women and Girls, Sheffield, Sheffield Archives (SA).

standing, generational family businesses to short-lived parlor dressmakers, the current chapter discusses the different economic aspects of fashion store work. Most significantly, in this chapter, I argue that the middle-class identity of department and fashioning store owners and employees was an ongoing society-wide project of construction between beliefs and actions. Furthermore, definitions of who could be included in the middle class were capacious, contested, and defended by those claiming middle-class status. For example, for the female sales assistants, lower-middle-class status was made a reality through their belief in their difference and the difference of their work from that of working-class women and their occupations and in the ways this belief made sales assistants dress and act in the larger world. These claims could only be successful when they were intelligible to the rest of society, which they were since shop assistants were seen as substantively different from other industrialized, feminized, productive jobs.

To see people's efforts at establishing a middle-class identity, this chapter divides fashion retailing people into three groups: department store employees, department store owners and their families, and small business owners and operators. Within department stores, the differences between employees and owners become starker when we compare the circumstances of their lives and where they lived them. The possibilities for social climbing looked much different for young women living-in at British stores than for owners of expanding companies. Further, the life paths of the owners and their families in both Sheffield and Cologne resembled the lifestyles of other members of the industrial bourgeoisie. For small business owners, social position and class standing was more ambiguous as was people's participation in paid labor. Flexibility of who worked when and where and then how they were identified shows us the borderlands of the middle class. The familial nature of these small businesses placed them at an

intersection of tradition and modernity at the turn of the twentieth century, which simultaneously increased their ability to claim middle-class status and their social and financial precarity in the fast-paced modern world of retailing.

What distinguished the groups, beyond simple occupation designation, was the ability to possess and wield social, cultural, and symbolic capital. These Bordieuan forms of capital required individuals to amass and correctly wield them, which was not always possible. Correctly wielding social and cultural capital relied on the understanding and interpretation of the aspects of style, which were not simply aesthetic factors, but also included political and social elements of power.² Department stores offered possibilities to owners, workers, and shoppers, but whether these were obtainable or merely mirages depended on one's social position. Ultimately, what emerges is class as a financial position, a socio-cultural position, and a state of mind, which was also dependent on gender, employment, and social position. The different mechanisms for social advancement were open for some, namely the owners and ambitious young men. For most other employees, especially women, the idea of working in a department store and marrying a rich customer was a pretty fiction. For many, the perceived promises of shop work represent a relationship of cruel optimism – where the continued belief in a better future hampered actions based on an individual's present circumstances. Not every shop employee experienced shop work as cruel optimism, but it was a definite possibility. Whether individual women shop workers wanted to rise in society is a different question—often it was simply enough to distinguish oneself from those perceived beneath themselves. Ultimately, shop workers and small shop owners possessed agency in determining their positions in their societies

² Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (University of California Press, 1996), 1-27.

and how they moved within them just as large store magnates did. Just because the options and opportunities were different across groups does not mean that people lacked agency.

Department Stores

Department store owners worked to make the sales floors encompass reproductions of the social worlds in which they operated. They were unable to confine these representations to sales floors, so entire social ecosystems were reproduced within department store buildings. From owners to servants, only the aristocracy, landed gentry, and impoverished were missing from the social scale. In this section, I look at the different groups within department stores and show how individual or family social class depended on their position within the greater social universe; their address, their occupation, and their behavior all influenced their social position. First, I look at shop employees, both men and women, to show how class and the achievement of different levels varied based in time, on place, and on position. Included here are discussions about the effects of living-in by British workers and on the different class outcomes for employees at various levels. Second, I discuss owners and their families to show the ways in which they achieved the ideal middle-class life and how they belonged to the larger community of bourgeois industrialists. What fashioning shops of any size meant to a person depended on that person's relationship to the business, including its physical manifestation. For observers and shoppers, stores could be wonderlands for diversion, the place to outfit oneself, family, and home under a single roof, or a fantasy realm for the stage or the well-to-do. For department stores owners, businesses offered the chance for financial and social success. As "shop girls" became ubiquitous, so too did the draw of gaining employment as a sales assistant. For these, primarily young women, shop work was often seen as the path toward stabilizing or increasing social

standing. This outcome, when it was achieved, was gained through labor and intelligence rather than simply a paycheck.

Shop Employees & Their Class Prospects

Shop employees were vital to the running of department stores. Not only did they do the physical labor of retailing, but they also presented the department store as a place to spend leisure time being served. This centrality, plus the hold the position had on the social imagination, makes them primary to the discussion.³ In earlier periods, draper's assistants rose through the ranks to gain status in the trade, from apprentice to master. Through the end of the nineteenth century, there were still aspects of this in practice. In some Sheffield records, we can see young men listed as apprentices.⁴ Women working sales in Sheffield were always assistants but without the options of advancement that "apprentice" offered. This is similar to the divisions Adams observed in the use of terminology of clerks in Germany. As department stores employed an increasing number of women and these women became culturally recognized as "shop girls," the profession gained appeal to new employees. Not all women, however, could make it in shop work. The most significant factor was her ability to look and act as if she belonged. This limited the origins of shop workers to the upper working and lower middle classes.⁵ For these women, it was important to, at least, retain the class standing with which they entered employment.

Although many women hoped to increase their class standing through work in a department

³ More research could be done on employees of all types, but especially on fabrication hands and servants.

⁴ For example, Algernon Megnell Appelton, Arthur Samuel Webb, and Joseph Johnston, who I discuss at length in chapter 4 of this dissertation: Creating the Ideal Shop Girl through Newspaper Job Listings, Men's Positions. 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3818 ED 12 page 6, accessed via Ancestry.com.

⁵ Adams, *Women clerks*, 11-12; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 141; Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (The Ohio State University Press, 2006), 21; Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain, "The World of the Department Store: Distribution, Culture and Social Change," in *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Ashgate, 1999), 17.

store, their ability to do so depended on a variety of factors and conditions, not all of which were in their control.

Living-in & Effects on Class

The majority of people employed by department stores, especially by the start of the First World War, were unrelated to the owners. This section looks at who lived-in and some of the possibilities and restrictions of the practice. “Living-in” refers to the system where employees lived at or near the store in accommodations provided by the employer. This practice dates from earlier times, when master craftsmen would house apprentices and trainees with their own families in domestic spaces joined to their workshops. By the late nineteenth century, most trades had industrialized to an extent that made living-in a relic of a time gone by. Also by this time, living-in had fallen out of practice in most of western Europe and North America; England was the primary location where it continued.⁶ In some stores and at different times, living-in was a requirement of the job, but there is no evidence of that happening in Sheffield.⁷ Census records provide different information of the employees living-in; from those records, we can think about their economic and social positions, the ways in which living-in was both positive and negative, and how both of those depended on one’s position before entering store employment and within store hierarchy. Beyond the relationship between living-in and class, the implications of the practice on the space of department stores and on the physical and mental labor of working where one lived will be taken up in the following chapters.

One major difference between Sheffield and Cologne is that there is no evidence that stores in Cologne included living-in as a practice. In Lancaster’s history of British department

⁶ Bill Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (Leicester University Press, 1995), 129

⁷ Hosgood, ““Mercantile Monasteries’,” 326.

stores, England was unique for the widespread continuation of this practice.⁸ In Miller's history of the Bon Marché, living-in features as one of the paternalist practices of France's department stores and continued through the nineteenth century, but he does not remark upon its discontinuation.⁹ Alongside retention of fines and the shopwalker, as floor manager rather than in theft prevention, living-in was part of "the Dickensian world of British department stores' industrial relations" into which Selfridge introduced revolutionary methods in the 1900s.¹⁰ Selfridge's American techniques influenced many aspects of British retailing, but some were slow to be adopted, including the ending of living-in. Furthermore, Leonhard Tietz would often conduct informal meetings by the employees' entrance to observe latecomers. In neither this anecdote nor the rest of Busch-Petersen's biography is any aspect of housing employees mentioned.¹¹ Nor are employee bedrooms included in the 1911 plans for the new Hohe Straße store in Cologne.¹² In Böhme's *The Department Store of To-day*, employees living away from the store was not remarked upon and the influence and superiority of American business was significant.¹³ For German sales assistants, then, there was potentially less at stake with shop

⁸ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 129.

⁹ Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton University Press, 1981), 105, 221, 223.

¹⁰ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 74.

¹¹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 43.

¹² These plans are more stylized than those for John Walsh's new store, both included at length in chapter two, but, unless there were major differences between the stylized plans and the physical building, living-in remains very unlikely.

Herman Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss EG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201263>, mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität München (mediaTUM); Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 1. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201266>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 2. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201267>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 3. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201268>, mediaTUM.

¹² Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Keller*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201265>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Souterrain*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201264>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 4. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201269>, mediaTUM.

¹³ Margarete Böhme, *The Department Store: A Novel of To-Day* [W.A.G.M.U.S.], transl. Ethel Colburn Mayne (D. Appleton and Company, 1912).

employment. Men were not prevented from establishing their own households, if they had the finances to do so, even as the field was feminizing. Women were able to have time away from work and the watchful eyes of the managers in which to conduct their own business as they saw fit.

Across Sheffield's department stores, living-in reached its highest point around 1901, but it continued past 1911. Across the twenty-four years of this study, employees from various walks of life lived-in. This broad range allows us to see the various possibilities and restrictions presented by living at a store. One trend was the range of occupations and departments represented by employees living-in. Thus, accommodation with work was not limited to sales assistants or the young. Employees from fabrication and service also lived-in. This included everyone from teenaged maids to housekeepers, managers, and superintendents in their thirties, forties, and fifties. A second trend is the ways in which gender influenced the experience of living-in. Across most of the nineteenth century, men and women had lived-in, but by the end of the century, most people living-in were women. At Robert Proctor's establishment on Fargate, the difference in conditions between 1871 and 1911 make this clear. In 1871, Robert lived at the business with his wife, two young children, servant, three male assistants, and one apprentice. By 1891, the family had moved from the store, but the building housed twenty-nine employees (eighteen women, ten men). In 1911, the business housed twenty-eight people, twenty women and eight men.¹⁴ We see the owner moving away from the business, and we see the increase in women living-in. Furthermore, living-in prevented men from establishing their own households

¹⁴ The 1891 store census records include two visitors, six assistants, six apprentices, eight shopwomen, four general servants, two dressmakers, one housekeeper, and one milliner. In 1911, there were seventeen shop assistants (all of the men and nine of the women), a dress maker, a milliner, a housekeeper, and assistant housekeeper, and six domestic servants.

1871 Census of England and Wales, RG10/4678, Sheffield, ED19, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG12/3815 #3, ED 19, 5-6, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, registration district 510, sub-district 1, ED 9, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

or marrying. When living-in was mandated by employers, this presented a significant threat to their masculinity. For women, the situation was more ambiguous – it could be simultaneously beneficial and detrimental. Third, from some of the records, we can see how living-in replicated social hierarchies which could limit employees' ability to capitalize on the benefits offered by department store work.

Across the three relevant censuses consulted in this study, most of the departments in the stores were represented by employees living-in. From this information we can also see the expansion of the businesses and the specialization of departments. Earlier on there were fewer departments and staff was largely split between servants and drapers assistants. The massing of employees as either of the two categories elides the differences in departments but democratizes the category of assistant. Although there were no men servants, all women and men who worked on the sales floor were listed as an assistant. In official government documentation, there was no space for the idealized “shop girl.” Usually, the most detail was given with the servants—the difference between a cook or a general servant, as was the case in the 1891 census for John Walsh's.¹⁵ At Cockayne's in 1891, a dressmaker and mantle cutter also lived-in.¹⁶ These back-of-house positions show the expanding nature of department stores. No longer were stores concerned with the sale of only raw materials or finished goods; they now sold ranges of products in various states of completion.

The 1901 census adds layers to the shop hierarchies for those living-in. The divisions between servants and assistants remained, but workroom employees joined the numbers and other positions were occasionally represented. For example, at Walsh's, the shopwalker, Robert

¹⁵ 1891 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. “High Street”, RG12/3815 page 1-2, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

¹⁶ 1891 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. “High Street”, RG12/3815 page 1-2, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

Taylor, 31, was listed.¹⁷ Shopwalkers, or floorwalkers, functioned as theft prevention and conductors (escorting shoppers to different departments) which placed them higher on the ladder than most other employees. Generally, the men who lived-in were sales assistants, but when they were not, they were most often porters. This was the case at Cockayne's in 1901 where twenty-four-year-old William Oldman was listed as the house porter.¹⁸ At the big stores, buyers rarely lived-in. Of the three stores used here, just one buyer lived-in across the three censuses—Albert Godfrey, 29, at John Walsh's in 1901.¹⁹ At the smaller stores where owners lived off-site, buyers would have lived-in as a type of on-site, perpetual management. For example, John Lancaster and his family, with nine draper's assistants lived at the Crossley Spital Hill store.²⁰ This made Lancaster similar to the master drapers of old, but without owning the business. He essentially would have had the same control over the employees in their off hours that the master did in earlier periods.

By 1911 virtually every shop department was represented by employees living-in. From ironmongery to umbrellas, needlework to cabinets, employees in every part of sales could and did live on-site. What had changed from the earlier periods, however, was the scale of the gender divide. At every store except Cole's, more women than men lived-in. By 1911, this divide was significant. The preponderance of women living-in could have been a result of a number of factors including the industry simply employing more women or the other accommodation options available. For some women, living-in could have been a requirement of employment.²¹

¹⁷ 1901 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. "High Street", RG1313/4369 page 3-6, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

¹⁸ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4363 #3 ED 15, microfiche, SA.

¹⁹ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4362 #3 ED 15, microfiche, SA.

²⁰ 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3823 #2 ED 5, microfiche, SA.

²¹ Hallsworth and Davies, *The Working Life*, 126.

For others, it might have provided respectable enough housing when it was needed, as we will see in Dorothy Tindall.

In the 1911 census, in addition to “drapery,” there is further information provided by the census taker. Other than the standard “assistant drapery”, there were “cashier drapery,” dressmaker, milliner, assistant plate and China buyer, assistant glass and China, shop walker and house steward, assistant furnishing and house porter. Some of these details are notable. The rise in specific cashiers shows how jobs in the stores was becoming more specialized. One of the most interesting is John Gibson, 35, the store shopwalker and house steward. As the steward, he was listed as the “Chief Resident Officer or Person in Charge” in the census enumeration book.²² The specification of department highlights the continued divisions between departments and the improbability of an assistant serving throughout the store, as would have been required in earlier times and smaller establishments. Employees specifying where they worked in the store also shows that the differentiation of department and job was important, at least for the employees living-in. What we do not know is how the employees who lived off-site referred to themselves in the census.

The implications of living-in were gendered. As the workforce feminized, the shop work generally, and living-in particularly, represented a threat to male employees’ masculinity. Perhaps the most significant impact living-in had on men was the lack of an established, independent household. Hosgood cites the 1893-4 Royal Commission on Labor’s example of a London store which illustrates this point. The store employed 156 male assistants, 131 of whom lived-in; of

²² 1911 Census of England and Wales, s.v. “Dorothy Tindall”, District Sheffield No 510, sub-district South Sheffield no 1 ED 22, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA. In the 1911 census, large institutions were recorded in special books, labeled “Enumeration Book for an Institution of Large Establishment”, rather than with the general street addresses as they had been in the past. Department stores joined hospitals, children’s homes, and schools as large institutions.

the twenty-five not accommodated with the business, twenty-four were managers of some type.²³ On the path of boyhood to manhood, where occupation and status at work marked progress, true manhood was only possible for managers. Furthermore, men's suffrage was at risk without an independent household.²⁴ As living-in decreased in popularity and fewer men were employed on shop floors, this was less of a problem. However, the exact relationship between men moving away from sales, decreases in living-in, and the ability to establish an independent household is complicated. Contrarily, women's femininity was less threatened. Young women who worked in department stores were not presumed to be following career paths toward upper management, and those who did were a minority. "Shop girls" were perceived to be part of a fluid, temporary workforce.²⁵ For some women, living on-site provided cheap accommodation among other options. For others, it was part of the job. For still others, it was less of a choice and more of a necessity. There were risks to escaping store accommodation, but many women deemed them worth taking. Many parts of life were ambiguous for women in shop work: where employment was a necessity, work in any part of a department store could provide a number of advantages, but these were always balanced by other concerns, including personal safety and future possibilities.

In Sheffield, the major department stores all housed some portion of their employees, ranging from servants to superintendents, until the end of the First World War. The vast majority of employees who lived-in were female assistants, but these women held positions in almost all departments. For women who lived-in, the practice held more potential. When conditions were poor and discipline high, female assistants could have a poor quality of life, even with the

²³ Hosgood, "Mercantile Monasteries," 332.

²⁴ Hallsworth and Davies, *The Working Life*, 125; Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries'," 339-340.

²⁵ Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 30-1; Barbara Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914* (Taylor & Francis, 1996), 23.

respectability and prestige of shop work. If conditions were good and discipline was less draconian, shop accommodation could allow women to lead their own lives for their personal benefit. Additionally, living-in could provide a respectable address for women without the option of familial accommodations or lodgings in unvetted locations. Owners claimed that living-in provided patriarchal protections, which allowed for claims of respectability. Thus, while living-in was highly contested, it was not easily eliminated nor was it entirely restrictive.

Class Outcomes for Women

The major draw of shop work for women of various origins was the perceived higher pay and respectability of the work. Full accountings of life outcomes for women employed in department stores at the turn of the twentieth century are hard to come by, but some examples show the range of outcomes. Just as in other places, success according to contemporary social standards was a combination of effort and luck. There are likely many stories of women who, through luck and intelligence, hoisted themselves up the class ladder. Simultaneously, there are stories of women who slid down the ladder, through, perhaps, no fault of their own. And then there were those who simply maintained their position, weathering the storms of the period. Further, the men employed in shop work who had aspirations of their own and lived in a society where ambitious men were lauded, the rags-to-riches stories were fully attainable. Far more people lived precariously, and the best many could hope for was the ability to claim and project a respectable, if not elevated, class standing in the murky zone between the working class and the lower middle class.

One of the shop assistants listed above in T. B. & W. Cockayne's 1911 census information was Dorothy Tindall. Dorothy's story provides an example of the ways in which shop work and living-in could provide stability and a positive outcome. In the 1901 Census, the

Tindall family was listed at 157 Rock Street, where James, Dorothy's father, was an electroplate manager.²⁶ Sometime after this, Dorothy's mother died, her sister had already married, and her father decided to close the house and leave Sheffield, leaving Dorothy behind. With her father's decision, Dorothy had to find work and accommodation and ended up living-in at T.B. & W. Cockayne's Angel Street store. It is unclear how long she worked and lived at Cockayne's, but in 1912, she married a dentist, James Drabble.²⁷ It is unlikely they had met at Cockayne's but possible that they had met at a church function. Through her family's prior position in the community, Dorothy had access to a social network and the sensibilities of the people within it. Working in a department store did not detract from her position in a significant way nor was she required to establish a new community, where her character would need to be proven. For Dorothy, shop work provided a respectable stopgap.²⁸ For many women needing employment, shop work provided a similar stopgap: respectability in both established and new communities.

The conditions and pay of shop work were known to be similar to that of domestic service or factory work. For women working in department stores, any social benefit was short lived.²⁹ The case books of Sheffield's House of Help for Friendless Women and Girls present glimpses of girls who chose to leave or were required to leave shop work, many of whom went

²⁶ Electroplating is a method for coating metal, often for decorative purposes. James Tindall was a manager of an electroplating shop.

²⁷ Alison Darby, conversation with author, SA, September 10, 2022.

²⁸ I know more about Dorothy's life story because she was an ancestor of one of the employees at the Sheffield City Archives, Alison Darby. In August 2022, Alison asked me what I was working on. After hearing my topic, she provided me a couple of sources to look into and mentioned a relation who had lived at T.B. & W. Cockayne's for a few years before her marriage. A few weeks later, after a day spent looking up census records for many of the individuals I had encountered, Alison asked me again what I was working on (it had been a slow Saturday). This time, however, she told me more of Dorothy's story.

²⁹ Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades'*, 111-2.

Harrison, citing Booth's observations in his study of London, says "shop assistants 'preferred' this [low pay and poor conditions] hardship, 'rather than lose caste' ... revealing once again the salience of class distinctions in employment." Booth's observations and Harrison's inclusion of it are similar to my conclusions here. However, their connotations regarding the assistants' priorities appear to disregard the value of social capital and the weight of ideology.

into domestic service. The organization was primarily concerned with employing women in domestic service but would not deny aid in most cases. It is unclear from the records whether the number of young women opting to enter service reflected their own wishes or the need to recite a script to receive assistance.³⁰ The motivations of the girls who chose service cannot be gained from the case books: whether this was a preference (based on a variety of variables) or self-selection because the organization was geared toward helping girls and young women gain employment in service. One record, that of Mary Ann Grayson, provides a counter point to that of Dorothy Tindall. Mary Ann Grayson was 19 years old when she first appears in the organization's records. On January 24, 1900, the woman conducting her intake notes that Mary Ann had been living with a sister who "could not afford to keep her any longer".³¹ Prior to this, Mary Ann "had been living at Coles Fargate as [a] servant but had to leave on account of having a bad knee".³² A physical injury, like that to a knee, would have prevented Mary Ann from completing the work of a servant in an efficient manner. The inability of the married sister to continue supporting Mary Ann is also not surprising; the sister likely had similar limited means and a household to care for.³³ Three days after this initial encounter, Mary Ann was sent, on January 27, to the Royal Hospital from where she returned on February 4. By May 1900, she had returned to Cole's after working there by day for a few weeks.³⁴ Between this and the next entry in the House of Help records for Mary Ann, the 1901 Census was conducted. The record for 2-8 Fargate, Cole Brothers, includes Mary Ann Grayson, 20, housemaid.³⁵ No longer plagued by an

³⁰ Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 132.

³¹ House of Help for Friendless Girls and Young Women, "Case Books," 1900, X158/5/1/4 case 83, X158 – Oakdale House, House of Help for Friendless Women and Girls, Sheffield, SA.

³² House of Help, "Case Books," X158/5/1/4 case 83.

³³ According to census records, Mary Ann's father was a laborer, her mother dead by 1891, and had four older sisters. 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG12/3851, Rotherham, Kimberworth, ED16, 12, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

³⁴ House of Help, "Case Books," X158/5/1/4 case 83, SA.

³⁵ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4362 page 3, SA.

injury, she was able to regain work and accommodation. Unfortunately, this was not a permanent situation. In September 1901, Mary Ann returned to the House of Help “to be trained as a kitchen matron” but left eight months later as she “could not manage the work.”³⁶ In just over two years, Mary Ann Grayson had a job and housing, lost both, sought support from her sister, needed charitable assistance, held day work, regained her original job and housing, requested assistance with retraining, and left that training for the unknown.³⁷ This path underlies the transitory nature of working in a department or fashion store.

For Mary Ann Grayson, neither behaving respectably nor performing her job with skill prevented her unemployment. Unlike Susan Leonard, whose interactions with the House of Help were marked by intoxication,³⁸ Mary Ann’s trouble was caused by an injury which likely left her with long-term problems, if not a more troubling disability, as we saw at the start of this chapter with Ethel Johnson. Mary Ann’s ability to regain her position, even though it ended up being temporary, shows some recognition of her acceptability. This could have been either her work and work ethic or how she presented herself, although, the two were not unrelated. Despite this, Mary Ann was unable to retain long-term employment or further training, and her story becomes hard to trace in Sheffield. As for many other domestic servants, an injury could be catastrophic.

Ethel Johnson, who had to leave her job in the workrooms because of a debilitating injury to her hand, experienced similar uncertainty to Mary Ann Grayson. Luckily, Ethel was able to rely on the support of at least one family member. However, the constraints of this support and

³⁶ House of Help, “Case Books,” X158/5/1/4 case 83, SA.

³⁷ In the 1911 census, I believe, but cannot conclusively confirm, she is listed as a domestic parlor maid in a household in Sedbergh, West Yorkshire (a town on the far western edge of what is now the Yorkshire Dales National Park).

1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 481, subdistrict 1, ED 3.

³⁸ House of Help, “Case Books,” X158/5/1/3 case 125, SA. Susan first appears in the case books in November 1900. There was an attempt to place her in a position near Hereford and Bradford, but by May 1901, she had returned to Sheffield. Both times Susan interacted with the House of Help she was “quite intoxicated,” and the entry ends with Susan entering “the Workhouse Hospital as she said all through, she was ill & could not work.”

whether she would be able to support herself or live independently are unclear and questionable. Ethel would have been just as precariously placed in a department store as in a small business because her injury was work-related. Worker protections in department stores were hardly robust and, although much of the work was less physically dangerous in department stores, the consequences of injury were just as real as were the consequences of injury for women working in factories.

In just these three stories we see the possibilities offered by shop work, for both good and ill. Dorothy Tindall was able to stay in the city, which allowed her to maintain contact with her social circle. It is likely through this circle that she met her husband, and retained, if not improved, her social standing. Although shop work was not a long-held position for Dorothy, it provided support and freedom. Part of Dorothy's success was the result of living-in, which, although of general questionable quality, was a respectable address. To live-in, a person was definitely employed, and at a respectable enough address. While department stores were not in the most fashionable residential neighborhoods, they were not in disreputable ones, nor did boarders need to question the social standing of their landlords. Dorothy also had the freedom to generally continue her life as she had led it prior to her employment. The upheaval in her material circumstances did not prevent work nor did her employment narrow her general chances of a successful Victorian life. On the other side of the spectrum, Mary Ann Grayson did not have the same support and freedom. Over the course of a few years, she was in and out of work and a place to live. Additionally, as a servant she was already lower on the class ladder and would have had fewer opportunities across the board. The unfortunate sales assistant could take factory work or look beyond fashion retailing and the successful one could look for secretarial or managerial

positions. There were similar differences in positions in sales assistants' and servants' personal lives. Mary Ann, as a servant, could not achieve Dorothy's success.

Shop work of any kind had the potential to secure stability or, as a small business, provide necessary income for women. However, as could any industrialized workplace, it could lead to injury or disability. There was also flexibility in department store work. Many women used employment in a town store to gain necessary experience to get a job in a city.³⁹ There were hazards in this transition, too; some contracts included non-compete clauses which limited where and for whom an assistant could become employed.⁴⁰ Additionally, there was the danger of moving to a new city, potentially without contacts. In Britain, housing offered by a department store employment could be a mixed blessing. For the lucky women or those particularly suited to the intangible elements of the work, department store employment was a boon. While it did not frequently lead to the rags-to-riches ending of some fictional accounts, stable, respectable employment was enough of a success. From this stability, the ambitious sales assistant could launch an effort to cement lower-middle-class status.

Owners and Their Families

Department store owners were those best poised to establish long-lasting, profitable businesses which they could translate into increased social standing. Individual business histories, or those focused on national contexts, often focus on an individual and his ambitions or innovations. Men who developed department stores from small shops did, indeed, possess ambitions or resources which provided the ability and support for expansion. They also depended on the work and support of their families. Most were not, in any demonstrable way, cleverer than

³⁹ Margaret Bondfield is, perhaps, the most famous real example of this. Chapter two of *A Life's Work* begins with her move from Brighton to London.

Bondfield, *Life's Work*, 27 Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 29-30.

⁴⁰ Hallsworth and Davies, *The Working Life*, 117.

either each other or their peers in small businesses. Some, like Aristide Boucicaut and Harry Gordon Selfridge, were outstanding through the introduction of new practices and their use of spectacle.⁴¹ In general, department store owners were much more similar to each other, even across national contexts, than they were different. Sheffield had more department stores than Cologne, so it offers a larger pool of families from which to gather data. However, there has been much scholarship on Cologne's Leonhard Tietz, his family, and its connections to the other department store families of Germany. P. W. Ossendorff shows the other end of the spectrum of German stores: long-standing local businesses with little written about their history. Despite contextual differences, each family fit within the respectable middle-class in their city, showing the similarities across national contexts.

The three most significant department stores in Sheffield were T.B. & W. Cockayne, Cole Brothers, and John Walsh. These families owned the largest stores and fit in with the development of department stores across the country. Each store grew from a small business, involved generations of the same family, and was profitable for decades. These three stores were within blocks of each other in the city's center and had similar departments. Of the three, John Walsh undertook the most ambitious building project, which is discussed in the next chapter.

The Cockayne family had a presence in Sheffield from the 1820s. William Cockayne, father of the founders, had his own business down the road from what would be the drapery. T. B. & W. Cockayne, founded by Thomas Bagshaw and William (the original William's sons), opened on May 12, 1829, at number 1 Angel Street which would grow to 1-13 Angel Street by the 1890s. T.B. & W. Cockayne was first listed as "Linen and Woollen [*sic*] Drapers, Silk Mercers and Hosiers." In time, they were succeeded by their sons, both of the same names, and

⁴¹ Lancaster, *Department Store*, 58-81; Miller, *Bon Marché*. Boucicaut founded the Bon Marché in Paris and Selfridge founded Selfridge's in London, after being trained at Marshall Fields in Chicago.

later joined by Edward Shepherd Cockayne, son of the founding William, not the flax dresser. In 1889, William, Junior, was joined by his son, Henry John Marsh Cockayne when Thomas Bagshaw, Junior, and Edward Shephard died.⁴² That year, Henry John Marsh turned the enterprise into a limited liability company according to the rules Companies Act of 1862-1898.⁴³

The Cockayne family had more members than were involved with the business. From the earliest census records, the Cockayne's lived west of the city center. William Cockayne and his family lived in the Norton Lees suburb south of the city for the entire second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ Edward Shepherd Cockayne and his family lived in the Tapton House suburb northwest of the city for almost as long.⁴⁵ Even the younger generation lived outside of the city center. Farthest from their Angel Street shop was Henry J. M. and family, who in 1901, lived at Kingstead 74 Dore Road, listed in the census as in Derbyshire but now within Sheffield

⁴² T. B. & W. Cockayne Ltd., "Cockaynes: An Independent Store," 1955, PAMP 575, SLSL.

⁴³ T. B. & W. Cockayne, "Incorporation," 1957, SY492/B1/1a page iii, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T. B. and W. Cockayne), SA. According to this document, the primary business of the company was "to carry on in any part of the world the businesses of Drapers, Cabinet Makers, General House Furnishers, Makers of and Dealers in Furniture, Carpets and Bedding; Furniture Removers, Coffin Makers, Funeral Undertakers, House Decorators, Manufacturers of and Dealers in Millinery, Silks, Stuffs, Mantles, Crapes, Mourning, Manchester Goods, Costumes, Baby Linen, Gloves, Hats, Ties, Haberdashery, Berlin Goods, Laces, Ribbons, Trimmings, and Drapery of every description; Boots and Shoes and Leather Goods; Purveyors of and Contractors for Refreshments; Fishmongers, Dealers in Game, and Poulterers; Dealers in and Hirers of Glass, China and Earthenware Goods; Contractors for the Supply and Fixing of and Dealers in Gas Fittings, Electric Light Fittings, Electric Bells, Electric Cells, Engines, and complete Electrical Installations and Telephones; Toy Dealers, Fancy Warehousemen, Stationers, Booksellers, Registry Office Keepers, Box Office Keepers, Railway and Steamship Agents, Tourist Agents, House and Estate Agents, Forwarding Agents and General Providers, and any other businesses which are capable of being carried on to advantage in connection with any of the said businesses, or which are calculated directly or indirectly to turn profitable account any rights or property of the Company." (pages iii-iv). This type of exhaustive list, like that of Walsh's directory listing gives new meaning to the idea of "cradle to grave" and covered aspects of life (and death) which not even Amazon does today.

⁴⁴ 1851 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," HO 107/2336 ED2a page 388; 1861 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," RG 9/3467 ED 1 page 29, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1871 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," RG 10/4667 ED 51 page 17, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1881 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," RG 11/4629 ED5 page 35, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA. Norton Lees was part of Ecclesall Bierlow.

⁴⁵ *Kelly's Directory*, 1883, 191; 1881 Census of England, s.v. "Edward Shepherd Cockayne," RG 11/4634 district 507, sub-district 4, ED 25, page 30-31, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

city limits.⁴⁶ These households often included live-in servants, which, in addition to the locations of the residences, marked the families as middle class.

The founding members of Cole Brothers also had a long history in Sheffield and included brothers, cousins, and sons in the first two generations of ownership. Brothers John, Skelton, and Thomas Cole established Cole Brothers in 1847, with its first city directory appearance in 1856.⁴⁷ The 1851 census records John, a draper, and two partners employing sixteen people.⁴⁸ The shop was located at the intersection of Fargate, Church Street, and High Street on the east side of the city center. The location at 2, 4, 6, and 8 Fargate became known as Cole's Corner.⁴⁹ The store had a second premises on Church Street.⁵⁰ Cole Brothers' early focus was on fabrics as silk mercers and hosiers. As with many of the stores, after they had acquired multiple store fronts, the brothers eventually rebuilt. The rebuilt of the Fargate store was completed in 1892 and was six stories.⁵¹ Much like the Walsh and Cockayne families, the Cole family continued to run the business throughout the period on which I am focusing. Much like the Cockayne family, the Cole family can be traced in the Sheffield area back to the 1851 census. Here, too, the family links quickly become complicated. The three founding brothers, John, Skelton, and Thomas, lived in the near suburbs of the city, largely the Broomhall neighborhood. John had the smallest household, but early on housed the occasional assistant. The rest of the Cole family involved in the business never housed assistants, but always had domestic servants, including maids, cooks, and nurses.

⁴⁶ 1901 England and Wales census, s.v. "Henry J.M. Cockayne," RG 13/4346 ED 2 page 11, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

⁴⁷ Sangeeta Champaneri, "Cole Brothers 1847-1997," 1997, 6080M, local studies miscellaneous papers, SLSL; David Perry, *Victorian Sheffield in Advertisements*, (Moss Valley Heritage, 1984), 26.

⁴⁸ 1851 Census of England, s.v. "John Miles," HO 107/2336 ED 10 page 215, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

⁴⁹ Perry, *Victorian Sheffield*, 26.

⁵⁰ Champaneri, "Cole Brothers."

⁵¹ Champaneri, "Cole Brothers."

John Walsh worked at Cockayne's before opening his own Baby Linen & Women's Underclothing store in 1875.⁵² According to the 50th Anniversary booklet for John Walsh, Ltd., between 1875 and 1895, Walsh's wife worked at the firm, but her exact involvement is unclear. Walsh's first storefront occupied the ground floor and cellar of 39 High Street and had four employees: Mr. & Mrs. Walsh and two assistants.⁵³ By the end of the 1880s, Walsh held property on both sides of High Street and had added departments in millinery, mantles, ladies' outfitting, mourning goods, and had plans to acquire space for with ready-to-wear clothing, travelling requisites, and gentlemen's hats. Most of the space Walsh acquired had housed decades-old businesses which formed the bases for the new departments.

The Walsh family saw rising prospects across the second half of the nineteenth century. They had lived in Sheffield at least since the 1871 census when John Walsh, born in Ireland, was listed as a drapers' assistant with his wife, two young daughters, and a general servant. At the time, the family lived in the industrial Brightside Bierlow.⁵⁴ By 1881 the family had moved to 3 Hanover Square in the nicer Broomhall neighborhood. This period includes the founding of the initial baby linen & women's underclothing store in High Street and the move shows us some of the Walsh family's increasing economic means. Additionally, from the census, we learn that Walsh employed four men, one boy, and nineteen women and was noted as a "master draper".⁵⁵ The household, those listed at a single address, contained two of these saleswomen, two domestic servants, Harriet, three daughters and two sons. In 1891, the family no longer housed shop employees; the household consisted only of John, Harriet, their four children (including

⁵² Pat Dallman, *The story of Sheffield High Street from 16th century to Modern Times*, (ALD Design & Print, 2003), 84.

⁵³ "The Fiftieth Milestone", SY492/B22/3, SA.

⁵⁴ Stephens & Mackintosh, "Business Street Map of Sheffield," c. 1900, S41L, Map cabinet, Sheffield Local Studies Library (SLSL), Sheffield, UK. A "Bierlow" is an administrative district and there are two in Sheffield: Brightside and Eccesall.

⁵⁵ 1881 England Census, RG 11/4623 page 13 ED14, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

Walter John as a draper's assistant), and two servants.⁵⁶ In 1901, we can also find the family of the younger Mr. Walsh—Walter John—who became managing director after his father retired in 1900.⁵⁷ In 1901, Walter's household included his wife, their two children, his brother-in-law, and four servants.⁵⁸ The family still lived in the Broomhall area but further from the city center. By 1911, the household had expanded to include Walter and Edith, his wife, six children, a governess, two nurses, four maids, and a cook. At this point the family lived in the Ranmoor area, roughly halfway between the city center and the Peak District.

On the continent, the families that owned or would own department stores in Germany were similarly establishing and expanding their dominance of the department store market. Most of these families came from Birnbaum an der Warthe (today, Międzychód, Poland) from the eastern part of the German empire, thus was part of Germany. These owners maintained connections throughout their lives and across generations.⁵⁹ Leonhard Tietz started as an apprentice in Prenzlau and then as a clerk at "Gebrüder Tietz" in Birnbaum, where he worked until the mid-1870s when he left to take over "Winkelmann Nachfolger" in Frankfurt an der Oder with a friend.⁶⁰ This store was a *Kurz-, Weiß- und Wollwarengeschäft* (haberdashery, white, and woolen goods store) and was quite successful. When Tietz became engaged to Flora Baumann, he left Winkelmann Nachfolger and the couple moved to Straslund.⁶¹ There, they opened a *Garn-, Knopf-, Posamentier- und Wollwarengeschäft* (yarn, buttons, trimmings, and woolen goods store) of store. This store was successful early and within three years, Tietz had opened what would, in 1893, become the company headquarters in Cologne. The new flagship

⁵⁶ 1891 England Census, RG 12/3799 page 2 ED37, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

⁵⁷ "50th Milestone," SY492/B22/3, SA.

⁵⁸ 1901 England Census, RG 13/4351 page 9 ED27, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

⁵⁹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 9.

⁶⁰ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 13, 15-17.

⁶¹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 17-18.

store on Hohe Straße opened on April 7, 1891, but almost immediately had to close to restock.⁶² In 1901, Tietz opened a new build on Hohe Straße, creating a *Jugendstil* palace, complete with a passage that resembled an arcade.⁶³ By the turn of the century, Leonhard Tietz had stores in at least seven cities across the Rhineland, with four stores in Cologne itself. In the first years of the new century, the company would open stores in Belgium.⁶⁴

One of Tietz's best business moves was harnessing his wife, Flora's, personal connections. The Tietz family utilized connections from the start in Birnbaum, but as Leonhard Tietz grew his business, these connections continued and expanded. Part of the focus on Flora's relations was the potential for competition among Leonhard's family members; branches of his family already owned similar stores, including his brother Oscar's Hermann Tietz. In the early years, two of Flora's brothers joined the business. Max Baumann operated the store in Elberfeld and Sally Baumann ran the original Cologne store.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Max would, from 1895, run the team that travelled to new stores to establish company policies.⁶⁶ Willy Pintus, a cousin, joined the firm to run the Mainz store in 1892.⁶⁷ Another cousin, Louis Schloß, ran the Koblenz store when it opened in 1890.⁶⁸ With Leonhard Tietz, Max, Sally, Willy, and Louis formed the initial board of directors in 1905 when the business became Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft.⁶⁹ Although Leonhard had many of the skills necessary to turn a small shop into a business empire,

⁶² Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 26.

⁶³ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 31-33.

⁶⁴ By 1908, the locations included Cologne (Breite Straße/ Ehrenstraße, Weyerstraße, Eigelstein, and Hohe Straße), Remscheid, Aachen, Mainz, Düren, Eschweiler, Bonn, Krefeld, Mayen, Antwerp, Mecheln, Sint-Niklaas, Bruges, Brussels, Lüttich, Düsseldorf, Elberfeld.

Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft, *50 Jahre Leonhard Tietz 1879-1929* (Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft, 1929), 12-14; Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 27.

⁶⁵ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 25-26.

⁶⁶ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 34.

⁶⁷ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 27.

⁶⁸ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 26.

⁶⁹ *50 Jahre Leonhard Tietz*, 12. An *Aktiengesellschaft* is a stock corporation.

without Flora's familial connections which provided virtually all of the leadership, these skills might have foundered.

A quarter mile from the new glittering 1901 Hohe Straße Leonhard Tietz store, was the business of P. W. Ossendorff, who had been trading for forty years. In 1861, Peter Wilhelm Ossendorff opened his *Druck-, Färberei und Weberei nebst Leinen- und Manufakturwaarenhandlung* (printing, dyeing, and weaving workshops next to linen and manufactured goods store).⁷⁰ The store operated by wholesale and retail fronts on Waidmarkt. Sometime in 1876-77, Peter Wilhelm's two sons, Adam and Otto, joined the business. Listed in the directory as *Kaufmann*, both sons lived at the same house number as the retail storefront.⁷¹ Adam Ossendorff continued to live at the business, but Otto moved many times within the city. In 1882, the business split between the printing and dyeing concerns and the *Leinen-, Manufaktur- und Wäschegeschäft* (linen, manufactured goods, and underclothing store). Adam lived at the former and Otto at the latter.⁷² Sometime in 1884, Peter Wilhelm died, which aligns with several further changes in the business. In the 1885 directory, neither brother was listed with P. W. Ossendorff. However, Adam was still living on part of the premises. Otto, on the other hand, had left the family business and established his own. Otto Ossendorff's *Manufakturwaaren-, Leinen-, Wäsche- und Ausstattungsgeschäft* (manufactured goods, linens, underclothing, and furnishings store) opened on Hohe Straße and would continue as a separate business, at various

⁷⁰ E. Kluge, *Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz und Mülheim am Rhein sowie der Geschäftsfirmen der Umgebung Köln's* (Verlag von Wilh. Greven, 1861), I Theil 126.

In 1868 Ossendorff became Ossendorff, the family and business name would retain this spelling though the period covered here.

⁷¹ W. Greven's Söhne, *Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz und Mülheim a. Rh. Sowie die Umgebung Köln's* (Greven & Bechtold, 1877), I Theil 127.

⁷² A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz u. Mülheim sowie die Umgebung Köln's nebst Stadt-Plan* (Greven & Bechtold, 1882), I Theil 140.

addresses, for the next two decades. 1885 saw one further change: the opening of a warehouse at Blaubach 1. Otto Oster, *Notar* (notary), also lived at Blaubach 1.⁷³

By focusing on the changes in 1885 the most interesting figure in the Ossendorff story becomes visible. Agnes Oster, *geb. (geboren, born)* Ossendorff, wife of Otto Oster, sister to Adam and Otto Ossendorff, daughter of Peter Wilhelm Ossendorff, was vital to the family business, as other owners' wives were. However, given the records available, Agnes' impact is harder to pin down than is the impact of her brothers. From 1886 on, she was listed in the directories with the business and on her own, but, without careful attention, she easily vanishes. In 1886, the business listing includes the partners, Adam Ossendorff and *Frau Otto Oster*, and the listing for Otto Oster includes “(*Frau Theilh. Der Firma P. W. Ossendorff*)” living at Blaubach 1.⁷⁴ In fact, Agnes is not even referred to with her given name until 1898, five years after Adam disappears from the listings, seven years after her husband dies, and two after her sons join the business.⁷⁵ During this time, Agnes was frequently listed as a partner in the business, but not as Agnes Oster, rather as “*Wwe. Notar Oster*” (the widow of Notar Oster).⁷⁶ The contributions of Agnes Oster, *geb. Ossendorff*, to the family business were subsumed by her status as a widow of her husband and her husband's occupation. The appellation *Notar* was a

⁷³ A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, Nippes sowie die Umgehung Köln's nebst einem Plane für die Städte Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, nippes und Umgebung, sowie des Kölner Stadttheaters* (Greven & Bechtolk, 1885), I Theil, 147.

⁷⁴ A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, Nippes sowie die umgehung Köln's nebst einem Plane für die Städte Köln, Detuz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, Nippes und Umgebung* (Greven & Bechtold, 1886), I Theil, 153-4.

⁷⁵ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1893, II Theil, 243; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1891), II Theil, 227; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1896), II Theil, 287.

⁷⁶ For one example, see Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Detuz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1892), II Theil, 236.

particularly sticky designation to unpack; Agnes was rarely listed without it through 1914.

However, from 1893 until 1914, Agnes was listed as a partner in the Ossendorff business along with her sons Carl, Otto, and Willy.⁷⁷

Agnes Oster's day-to-day contributions to the running of P. W. Ossendorff cannot be determined with today's evidence, but her consistently being included among the business' partners for almost thirty years speaks to her centrality to the business as a whole. Further, her work with the business predated her listing as a partner if we connect Otto Oster's move to Blaubach 1 with his marriage to Agnes. Rather than establish their own household, Otto joined the Ossendorffs and the Oster family (or at least Agnes and one son) continued to live there through the period. Agnes' establishment as a partner also occurred after her father died and one of her brothers left the business. She was seen as a valid replacement—one that would out last even Adam. Finally, Agnes' three sons joined as partners, likely after working as assistants, buyers, or managers as sons often did (and their uncles had). This included Willy, who held the title "Dr. jur." (denoting a graduate degree in law) even when he was also listed as *Kaufmann*, merchant.⁷⁸

Agnes Oster, and Flora Tietz, had far greater impact on their family's department stores than their counterparts in Sheffield. This presents one notable difference between the two cities: the presence of women in the founding and continuation of the businesses. Agnes Oster's involvement included more than simply care of her sons until they could join her brother in the family business, although the exact details of her involvement remain unclear. Flora Tietz's early involvement, especially before the move to Cologne, enabled Leonhard to focus on expanding

⁷⁷ Greven's *Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgegend, insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1914), II Teil, 408.

⁷⁸ For an example, see Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1897, II Theil, 297.

the business and the wholesale concerns.⁷⁹ Contrarily, with the exception of Harriet Walsh, none of the sisters or wives of the Sheffield owners played a role outside the domestic sphere. Not only does this stand in stark contrast to Oster and Tietz, but also in contrast to the involvement of women in small businesses. The women most involved in business were those employed in or owners of front-room businesses without men's involvement, whether they were married. Those whose husbands owned businesses could be just as involved depending on the situation. For department store owner's wives and daughters, then, the differentials in engagement both over time and across national contexts was due to other factors. One significant factor in the waning involvement or absence of owners' wives was the families' rising class positions as stores expanded and fortunes rose.

Rising Middle Class

As stores expanded and profits rose, department store owners and their families were able to rise through the ranks of the middle class. Simultaneously able to pull on the traditional class position of the middle-class shopkeeper and the image of modern, innovative businessman, department store owners were the most successful group in this study at turning aspirations into realities. Although fashion retailers of all sizes remained similar in some ways, department store owning families grew to also resemble other industrialist bourgeois families. Familial connections boosted business prospects and worked to keep financial success in trusted hands; for example, Leonhard Tietz was supported near and far by family which strengthened his business. The most significant trends which show familial connection include the life paths of owners' daughters, migration to the city of success, and the families' roles in local society, including where and how wives spent their time. Similarities between experience and

⁷⁹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 20.

expectation link the owners' families across distance but provide the starkest differences to their employees.

Owners had to consider how the business would extend past their working lives, and many depended on their own sons or nephews, while others looked to promising managers. Some owners cultivated the second generation of leadership from within the business but without marriage connections. The easiest, most direct path was for sons to be trained up to management and for other internally trained men to gain rank. At John Walsh in Sheffield and Leonhard Tietz in Cologne, the line of succession was straightforward: each man had only one son who became the director. At Leonhard Tietz, this was bolstered by the familial connections of the board more generally. At P. W. Ossendorff the situation was more complicated, but Agnes' listed involvement in the business after the death of her father and the departure of one brother prevented the business from leaving the family. For stores with larger family involvement, like T.B. & W. Cockayne and Cole Brothers, not every son of a founder joined the business. T.B. & W. Cockayne was started by brothers Thomas Bagshaw and William,⁸⁰ who had ten sons between them. Only four of those sons were clearly listed as involved with the business: Thomas Bagshaw, John William, William junior, and Edward Shepherd. Two of William junior's sons, Henry John Marsh and Francis Ernest, further inherited the business.⁸¹ At Cockayne's, as the

⁸⁰ Thomas Bagshaw and William's father was also William. This original William was a flax dresser. See Appendix B for the family tree.

⁸¹ 1841 Census of England, HO 107/1336/7, 20, 5, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1851 Census of England, HO 107/2337, ED 1e, 37, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1861 Census of England, RG 9/3468, ED 6, 31, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1871 Census of England, RG 10/4674, ED 47, 10, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1851 Census of England, HO 107/2336, ED 2a, 26, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1861 Census of England, RG 9/3467, ED 1, 29, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1871 Census of England, RG 10/4667, ED 3, 17, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1881 Census of England, RG 11/4629, ED 5, 34, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1861 Census of England, RG 9/3469, ED11, 45, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1871 Census of England, RG 10/4667, ED 3, 13, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1881 Census of England, RG 11/4629, ED 4, 11, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1881 Census of England, RG 11/4634, ED 25, 30, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3812, ED 65, 30, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4346, ED 2, 11, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1911 Census of England and Wales, District 509, sub-district Ecclesall South, ED 9, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1921 Census of England and Wales,

second generation of the family rose to the board, other employees became directors. John Spurr rose from buyer to manager to director between 1891 and 1907.⁸² William Joseph Hunter was trained at Marshall & Snelgrove in London and was employed as a manager at Cockayne's by 1903.⁸³ He continued up the ranks until he was a director, his occupation as listed in the 1911 and 1921 censuses. At least one son worked at Cockayne's in the 1920s and '30s.⁸⁴ Most department stores promoted from within, especially within the family, as much as possible. This allowed them to maintain and cultivate loyalty and to ensure the continuity of knowledge and practices.

One of the biggest differences between department store owners' families and the families of their employees is the life paths of daughters. Unlike the daughters of the small business owners or the daughters who worked in the stores, owner's daughters did not work outside the home. Sometimes, owner's daughters married the rising stars of the department store. This was the case with John Walsh's two daughters, Clara and Harriet, who married Patrick

District 509, sub-district 4, ED 3, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4359, ED 79, 8, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1921 Census of England and Wales, District 509, sub-district 4, ED 8, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; *Kelly's Directory*, 1893, 211-12; *White's Directory*, 1884, 386; *White's Directory*, 1895, 437; *White's Directory*, 1898, 366; *White's Directory*, 1900, 418; *White's Directory*, 1901, 451; *White's Directory*, 1902, 464; *White's Directory*, 1903, 488; *White's Directory*, 1905, 459; *White's Directory*, 1906, 472-3; *White's Directory*, 1907, 429; *White's Directory*, 1911, 465; *White's Directory*, 1912, 447; *White's Directory*, 1913, 487.

⁸² 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3821 page 1 ED 30, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; *White's Directory*, 1907, 625.

⁸³ "Marshall and Snelgrove – Graces Guide," accessed March 25, 2025, https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Marshall_and_Snelgrove; *The Post Office London Directory for 1890. Comprising, amongst other information official, street, commercial, trades, law, court, parliamentary, postal, city & clerical conveyance & banking directories*, 91st edition (Kelly & Company, 1890), 538, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/61265/records/11225358?tid=&pid=&queryId=d841cd7d-8b88-4ad8-99db-d85fbc4be199&phsrc=Vix12&phstart=successSource>, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1891 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Willam J Hunter," RG 12/92, ED 4b, page 7, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/6598/records/8668486>, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; *White's Directory*, 1903, 571; *White's General*, 1903, 571; *White's*, 1905, 538; *White's Directory*, 1913, 580; 1901 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "William J Hunter," RG 13/4359, ED 79, page 4, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

⁸⁴ 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, sub-district 5, ED 20, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1921 Census of England, Registration district 509, sub-district 4, ED 8, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1939 England and Wales Register, Sheffield, schedule 114, sub-schedule 1, line 13, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

Joseph Benson and John Barker Norton, respectively. Both men were listed in various leadership roles in the local directories and the families lived near the John Walsh and Walter Walsh families.⁸⁵ This pattern of marriage, between daughters and promising managers, also happened in heavy industry.⁸⁶ For example, the major steel company Vickers, had its origins in Edward Vickers' 1820s marriage to Anne Naylor, whose father was a steel manufacturer.⁸⁷ From the 1830s, the Vickers' steel production concerns evolved with the changing times, but the initial move of connections through marriage provided a solid footing. These marriages allowed the business to stay in the family, provided the daughters with appropriate partners, and provided the rising men with further opportunities. For the managers who were not destined for greatness and the rest of the shop assistants, this outcome was unlikely. As outlined above, Hosgood argued the limited ability of male shop assistants to achieve the markers of both class and masculinity.⁸⁸ The managers who married into the family were able to leverage elements of social capital to gain both cultural and economic capital. The rest of the stores' employees, however, could only work to maintain and fortify their position in the lower middle class.

Advantageous marriages and the connections they brought were not only important to the second generation of business, but to succeeding generations as well. Flora Tietz's brothers and cousins became essential to Leonhard's business until after the First World War and after Leonhard's death. However, because most stores had branches across a single region and the

⁸⁵ *White's Directory*, 1913, 642; *White's Directory*, 1906, 438, 608; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4582 page 13, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4350 page 12, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, sub-district 7, ED 12 and registration district 95, sub-district 2, ED 10.

John B. Norton was listed in 1901 as living with Harriet F. Walsh (wife of John Walsh), with an occupation of sanitary engineer. By 1906, he was a director at John Walsh Limited. How this transition came about is unclear and a place for further study.

⁸⁶ A fictional example of this is in J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*.

⁸⁷ "Vickers," Grace's Guide to British Industrial History, last modified 22 September 2024, <https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Vickers>.

⁸⁸ Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries,'" 337.

families were more connected to begin with, marriages of this generation were less among rising stars but rather horizontally between owning families. One result was a more centralized landscape; agreement and cohesion in policies and practices was not guaranteed, but relationships were built on more than social interactions. The emigrant families from Birnbaum, Germany, excelled at these connections.

When Cologne's Leonhard Tietz was looking to expand in the late 1880s, he wanted to open a store in Bavaria, but Oscar's Hermann Tietz was already established there.⁸⁹ Furthermore, when the *Verband Deutsche Waren- und Kaufhäuser* (Association of German Department stores) was founded in 1903 by Oscar Tietz, the families involved included eight of those who had founded the most successful department store chains. All eight came from Birnbaum and were Jewish.⁹⁰ Jacob Tietz, Leonhard and Oscar's father, was also related to the founders of the Knopf and Wronker stores.⁹¹ Also significant in the training of the young men of the extended Tietz family was Chaskel Tietz, who was Jacob's brother and who had experience in the United States and Berlin.⁹² Social and religious ties, as well as shared histories, connected these families and provided the knowledge and various types of capital to start successful businesses. While opponents of department stores were able to use antisemitic rhetoric to influence public opinion, this did not prevent Jewish department store owners from achieving business and social success.⁹³ In many ways, the religious and familial connections of the department store owners

⁸⁹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 24.

⁹⁰ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 60-61.

⁹¹ Mueller, *The Kaiser, Hitler and The Jewish Department Store: The Reich's Retailer* (Bloomsbury, 2022), 23. Mueller adds that the Joske and Ury families were also potentially related. The Ury brothers were part of the Schocken concern (Mueller, 38). Julius Joske, born in Birnbaum, emigrated from Berlin to the United States and opened a store in San Antonio, Texas (Diana J. Kleiner, "Joske, Julius," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, accessed January 07, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/joske-julius>).

⁹² Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 24-5.

⁹³ Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 24-5, 46-55. In *The Kaiser, Hitler and the Jewish Department Store*, Mueller critiques elements of Lerner's approach and complicates the relationship between department stores, small shopkeepers, and religion.

of Germany, unlike their British peers, resulted in a more closely aligned and coordinated network. This lent increased cohesion and consistency of practices and ideas across the industry.

Department store innovators and owners, in addition to becoming part of the industrialist bourgeoisie, were often migrants. Most notably in each case were John Walsh and Leonhard Tietz. Each migrated from elsewhere in the empire. We have already seen much evidence of this for the Tietz family. However, John Walsh was born in Ireland and settled in Sheffield by 1871.⁹⁴ Leonhard Tietz settled and gained prominence more quickly in his new home than did Walsh in his, but both men were transplants into the cities that saw their greatest successes. For Tietz, this was tempered by the family's Jewishness and their recent arrival to the city and financial success.⁹⁵ Outsider status could be beneficial but could also harm people's integration into society. Difficulty integrating could hamper people's ability to gain and use social and cultural capital, which was a necessity for establishing middle-class status.

A final point of similarity between the two sets of families is their presence in local society. This presence was supported by the owners' wives and daughters' separation from daily business, especially in Sheffield. We can see evidence of this through work or contributions to benevolent societies. In Sheffield, the wives and daughters of the department store owners (and often the owners or stores) donated funds in the annual appeal for the House of Help for Friendless Girls and Young Women. This organization worked to find long-term employment, especially in domestic service, for young women experiencing difficulties. They could be in immediate need, requiring accommodation for a night or fare for transportation to their families or to a position, or they could require longer term medical care, training, or residence.⁹⁶ Cole

⁹⁴ 1871 Census of England and Wales, RG 10/4670, ED 20, p. 40, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

⁹⁵ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 64.

⁹⁶ House of Help for Friendless Girls and Young Women, "Annual Reports," 1892-1917, X158/2/1-2 (2006/27), X158 – Oakdale House, House of Help for Friendless Women and Girls, Sheffield, SA.

Brothers donated £1.1.0 in 1891, 1897, 1900, 1902, 1905, 1906, 1909, and 1914, and Walsh Limited donated the same amount in 1908 and 1909. Mrs. Skelton Cole, at Broomhill House, donated at least £1 a year until 1905 when she died, but her daughters donated the same amount for a few more years.⁹⁷ The misses Cole referenced in these donations were likely Emily and Edith, but could have also included Alice, who had married in 1896 and moved away from the area.⁹⁸ Mrs. Skelton Cole and her daughters were never involved in the business. Only Alice married. That Cole Brothers was the only named department store, and the most frequent store contributor is, at least, interesting and could use further investigation. A likely influence was the family's participation in the local Methodist culture.⁹⁹

Leonhard Tietz was also notable for his care of his employees and the less fortunate. After the family established itself in Cologne, Leonhard joined the board of his synagogue. He contributed to the Jewish orphanage and apprentices' home in the city. A life-long lover of art, he was a patron and collector of local artists.¹⁰⁰ On the business side, the company offered health insurance for employees from 1899 and provided leisure and sport organizations. Furthermore, Leonhard established a committee for employees to negotiate grievances and benefits.¹⁰¹ The

⁹⁷ House of Help for Friendless Girls and Young Women Case Books," 1891-1914, X158/2/1-2, X158 – Oakdale House, House of Help for Friendless Women and Girls, Sheffield, SA.

⁹⁸ 1911 Census of England and Wales, registration district 501, sub-district Ecclesall West Central, ED 30, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/2352/records/31101286>; "1896 Jul-Aug-Sep," Civil Registration Marriage Index, England & Wales, 1837-1915, Sheffield, volume 9c, 881, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/8913/records/20462175>.

Alice Maud's husband was Richard Moulton, son of a Wesleyan minister with a Cambridge education. The couple lived in Chicago for both the 1900 and 1910 U.S. censuses. Richard was almost twenty years Alice's senior. In the 1939 Civil Register, she is once again living with her siblings, Ernest and Edith (1939 England and Wales Register, Schedule 86, sub-schedule 2, ED Dpx, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/61596/records/16735856>).

⁹⁹ In addition to this and involvement in their parish, various members of the Cole family were involved in other reforming groups, for example Thomas' work on temperance and Skelton's on school attendance. Caroline Oldcorn Reid, "Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield" (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1976), 132, 285, 299, 414.

¹⁰⁰ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 62-3.

¹⁰¹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 63-64.

image of Leonhard is one of a benevolent patriarch. The specific facets of this cultivated image are more complex. However, what we see in both Cologne and Sheffield are department store owning families integrating into their cities, often through charitable work.

Paternalist policies differed generally between the two countries. Regulations for industrialist workers were influenced by social beliefs about workers, regulation, and the government's role in citizens' lives. In Britain, many policies were piecemeal and often failed to include shop workers. One of the main examples of this is the years-long effort to establish not only fixed opening hours, but also a standardized early closing day nationwide. However, by the time G.H. Crossley fell in line with early closing in July 1895, "the Drapery trade [was] practically unanimous" in support of it without, apparently, too much pressure from local organizations or the government.¹⁰² To many department store owners in England, providing accommodation and meals for their employees counted as a paternalistic policy. By 1912, the Sheffield Shop Assistants Association had formed a Sick and Dividing Society which provided assistance to members in need.¹⁰³ Industrial employers in the United Kingdom were only required to provide health insurance in 1911 with the passage of the National Insurance Act.¹⁰⁴ Contrarily, social welfare policies in Germany were established earlier, with Bismarck instituting health insurance and related programs in the 1880s.¹⁰⁵ Thus, although regulations on department stores as businesses were difficult to enforce, employee protections as such were an established social idea. Therefore, Tietz's provisions were generally in-line with social expectations. None of

¹⁰² *Early Closing Record*, July 1895 (volume 1, number 2, page 3), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL

¹⁰³ "Rules of the Sheffield Shop Assistants Approved Society for Men and Women (Approved certificate): being a separate section of the Sheffield Shop Assistants Association Sick and Dividing Society, held at the Wentworth Café, Pinstone Street, Sheffield," 1912, 331.25 SST, Reserve Collection, SLSL.

¹⁰⁴ Steinbach, *Understanding*, 302; "national Insurance," *Chelmsford Chronicle* (Chelmsford, England), 29 December 1911, 4, GPSBLN.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Stolleis, *Origins of the German welfare state: social policy in Germany to 1945*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Springer, 2013), 55.

the owners featured in this study were better or worse than each other or their peers in industry in protecting their workers. In some ways, the British lagged behind the Germans, but all of them participated in and supported the idea of a paternalist employer.

The owners of department stores greatly benefited from their ability to implement new retailing tactics and expand into new areas. In addition to the financial means to start and expand stores, these men had access to connections which provided them with initial training and, later, with trusted employees. They were able to translate their economic success to social success. This success can be seen in the life paths of their daughters, their moves away from old city centers, and in their and their wives' participation in local charitable organizations. Although the narrative of the self-made man is an attractive one, it does not account for their successes.

Fashion Stores

Even as department stores expanded, small establishments of dressmakers, milliners, and haberdashers continued to thrive. A significant element of this was that despite the growth of department stores, they did not fill all fashion needs of all people. In Sheffield and Cologne, small businesses encompassed various elements of clothing and accessory production and retailing. Some of them operated in business premises, while others operated in residential front rooms. They were located in all areas of the cities, and some businesses moved multiple times, while others stayed in the same place for decades. These stores retained some of the work structures of the early nineteenth century but also adopted retailing innovations. They necessarily were involved in an industrialized market of production and consumption, which shaped the pace of work regardless of scale. For the owners, interpersonal relationships with both employees and customers were vital and hands-on. For women owners, these businesses provided vital incomes to families, particularly widows and households without another adult wage earner, and, for

some, they represented an identity beyond their relationship to men. In this chapter, it is the circumstances under which they opened, traded, and closed and their effects on their operators that is important. Specific information on the economics of these businesses is virtually impossible to find. They did, however, exist in significant numbers, some of them for generations, and the censuses are a key resource in this process of discovery. City directories also show the numbers of different types of stores open in different years and demonstrate the rate of change over a small set of years. As did many other small businesses, these stores provided necessary financial support for many people, but they were often transient. Ultimately, the view that emerges is one of elasticity. The long-term feasibility of a small business was, indeed, decreasing at the end of the nineteenth century. However, that was not solely caused by the rise of department stores. Many small businesses foundered when the owner died, and his wife or sons did not take up the reins. In these cases, the sons could have been trained for other occupations which offered higher incomes, security, or position than that of the small shopkeeper. Regardless, the short-term feasibility of these businesses continued, and the income and standing that working in a trade provided could mark the difference between making ends meet and surviving another year versus abject poverty for some families.

Family Affairs

One of the continuations of early styles of retailing in small fashioning businesses was the centrality of family to their operation. Although some small businesses were composed of unrelated people, the majority were staffed by family members. For women running dressmaking businesses out of their front-rooms, the inclusion of familial workers is less clear than for family businesses where census records list wives and children as “assisting in the business.” Some, or most, work would have been unpaid, and many daughters assumed household responsibilities

while their mothers were in the shop. Businesses with retail spaces separate from domestic spaces were not as transient as front-room businesses. In this section, we consider the different ways in which small businesses were family affairs that provided necessary incomes to households. For men, the operation of a shop provided the possibility of a historically grounded class position.¹⁰⁶ For women, especially married women, small business operations provided income within or close to the home, so they could continue their domestic responsibilities.¹⁰⁷ Maintaining a family's appearance was a significant part of maintaining social position.¹⁰⁸ Family support was vital to many small businesses and the impacts and benefits of a support system were varied.

In Sheffield, some of these family businesses lasted for generations. They provided stability within a rapidly changing environment. For some, success included increased opportunities for their children or grandchildren (frequently the boys). However, long-term success did not necessarily equate to survival. Businesses that had existed for generations were still subject to catastrophe or tragedy. Often, in the wake of an owner's death, businesses would collapse. Often when the owner died, often his wife or sons would take over the business, but this did not always result in continued long-term success. Overall, these stores were owned and operated by a variety of individuals and groups. Some were strictly family affairs and others were run by non-family (whether they were friends or strictly business partners is unclear). The businesses were run by women and men, and sometimes both. In family businesses, wives, sons, and daughters frequently joined in the work. As remains the case, small operations drafted in

¹⁰⁶ Christophers P. Hosgood, "The 'Pigmies of Commerce' and the Working-Class Community: Small Shopkeepers in England, 1870-1914," *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 3 (1989): 439-440; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Hutchinson, 1987), 240-244, 279-289.

¹⁰⁷ Carole Elizabeth Adams, *Women Clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of Class and Gender* (Cambridge University Press), 14; Inder, *Busks, Basques and Brush-braid*, 220-223.

¹⁰⁸ Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain," 29-31.

labor when it was required without the same processes of documentation found in large businesses.

One store, Mansfield and Best, highlights how small fashion stores could keep an entire family going for decades. Through the 1880s and '90s, this business provided income at various times to three generations and with this income, the original owner's grandchildren gained education and employment in new or rising fields of the late Victorian period. The Mansfield family business encompassed three generations, Mary and her daughters Harriet and Marion.¹⁰⁹ In 1861, the Mansfield family lived near the Sheffield rail station.¹¹⁰ The head of the household, Richard, 35, was a joiners' tool maker, Mary, his wife, also 35, was listed as a milliner, and they had three children: Clement, 9, Marion, 6, and Harriet, 0. By 1871, Richard was a mechanic, Mary was still a milliner, Clement, now 19, a greengrocer, Marion and Harriett had no listed occupations. By 1881, the family had moved to 45 Wicker, north of both the city center and the River Sheaf, where the business was until 1913.¹¹¹ In 1881, although listed as married, Mary

¹⁰⁹ Marion Best, née Mansfield, is spelled both "Marion" and "Marian" in the records. She is, however, the same person.

¹¹⁰ 49 South Street Park was, and remains, just east of Midland Station, the main rail station in Sheffield. South Street Park is not to be confused with South Street Moor.

¹¹¹ *Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood*, (Kelly's Directories, Ltd., 1883), 523; William White, *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the parishes, townships, villages, and hamlets within a circuit of seven miles' radius from each of the above centres, including Ecclesfield, Bradfield, Eckington, Dronfield, Rawmarsh, Nether Hoyland, Handsworth, Swinton, Mexborough, Greasborough, Norton, Coinsborough, Wath, &c.*, 15th edition (William White, 1884), 687; *Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood. 1893. With Plans of Sheffield and Rotherham* (Kelly & Co., Limited, 1893), 505; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield, for 1895-1896*, 19th edition (William White, Limited, 1895), 744; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a Radius of seven miles from Sheffield, for 1898*, 21st edition (Kelly's Directories, Limited, 1898), 825; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and the parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield, for 1900*, 22nd edition (Kelly's Directories Limited, 1900), 890; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and the parishes, townships, villages, and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield, for 1901*, 23rd edition (Kelly's Directories Limited, 1901), 962; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and the parishes, townships, villages, and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield, for 1902*, 24th edition (Kelly's Directories Limited, 1902), 985; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 25th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1903), 640, 1026; *White's Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages*

Mansfield is listed as the head of the household where she and Harriett work as milliners. Marion had married John Best between 1871 and 1877, and they lived in the family's old neighborhood. John Best was a file grinder, an occupation with a high mortality rate. John and Marion had three children: Sydney, Jessie, and John. By 1891, Mary, Harriett, and Marion all lived at 45 Wicker, with Marion's husband and children. Mary was still a milliner. John was now a trade secretary, Sydney was an office boy, Marion had no listed occupation, and Harriet was a domestic servant. In 1901, the family lived in Nether Edge, a suburb of the city and their nicest address. Marion, now both a widow and the head of house, was a milliner, and lived with son Sidney (a tea merchant's clerk), daughter Jessie (now a milliner), son Frank (a clerk to the corporation works – the city), and sister Harriet (no occupation listed). Mary Mansfield likely died in 1901, before the census but after the directory was printed. By 1910, the sisters had moved north of the city center and to a more modest address. Marion was listed as the head, a widow, and employed in millinery; Harriet was listed as her sister, a spinster, and also employed in millinery. The children had moved out. From the trade directories, first Mary Mansfield and then Harriet operated a milliner's out of 45 Wicker from at least 1883 until 1901. In 1902, the business was no longer listed under either the single name of Mrs. Mary Mansfield or Miss Harriet Mansfield, but rather as Mansfield & Best.

and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield, 27th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1905), 958; *White's Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield*, 28th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1906), 1000; *White's Directory of Sheffield Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield*, 29th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1907), 970; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 33rd edition (Sheffield: Kelly's Directories Limited, 1911), 1034; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield with plans of Sheffield and Rotherham 1912*, 34th edition (Sheffield: Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1912), 1052; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 35th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1913), 1077.

This small, family-run business provided income for decades to multiple generations and allowed for the overall social position of the family to rise during that time. Although the younger generations' employment placed the family in the lower-middle class bracket, where precarity continued to loom large, Marion's son's employment as a clerk was fundamentally different from her husband's employment as a file grinder. Therefore, while the financial standing of the family remained questionable, other elements of their lives improved. Thus, the millinery business provided vital income to multiple generations of the family. Mary and Marion's husbands had trade jobs, although low-paying ones, which necessitated a second income. The family store also provided work and income for Harriet, who never married. She would have been required to find work whether she stayed at home or struck out on her own, but joining her mother and sister's business eliminated many of the unknowns of the latter. The stability of the family business also provided a place to live when the Best family needed it and continued to support them when John died. Also, the occupations of Marion's children in 1901 show us how porous class distinctions were. Based on the information available for the family before 1900, they seem to be firmly part of the working class, although their exact position would depend on the economic specifics of the time. The Best children, however, had different (or at least new) prospects which, like department store work for others, provided them access to different forms of capital. Both sons were clerks, one for the city, which would have required more education than earlier generations of children in the Mansfield family had received. Furthermore, employment as a city clerk was less dependent on the vicissitudes of the international market, as any position affiliated with the steel industry was by the end of the century. Clerking was also less dangerous than employment in steel, particularly in their father's trade of file grinding. Clerking, in England as in Germany, was seen as part of the rising middle

class and gave men opportunities to rise further in their organizations. Therefore, the women-run family business provided enough stability for the family to avoid falling down the social ladder with a male breadwinner's death and provided the respectability necessary to families on the borderlands between the working and lower middle classes to rise in class status.

Although many stores were owned and operated by related women, some stores were run by women with no familial connections. As with the family businesses, these businesses were also homes for the owners and employees, which blurred the lines between public and private and connected the businesses to earlier forms of retailing. Unlike the strictly family businesses, these businesses could not rely on flexible or unpaid labor. For women, they also offered some of the comforts of social status and paid employment away from their families of birth or a place to go when there was no family. Some of these businesses had a similar amount of success as family businesses. They offered gainful employment, housing, and the connections to lower-middle-class identity that department store offered.

Small Businesses in City Directories

When German small businesses did exist on a more solid footing, they were listed in the annual directories. Much like their British counterparts, small businesses were run by women and men, related and unrelated (or more tangentially related). These businesses were most frequently owned and operated by women. How these women were listed varied over time and circumstance and the variations provide an opportunity to see women as skilled trades- and businesspeople in their own rights and to see them situated in communities with variable identities, where women could prioritize one part of their lives situationally.¹¹² Some women were listed separately from their husbands. For example, Anna Maria and Wilhelm Berkmeier

¹¹² A separate project, utilizing a dataset created from the directories and network analysis, could look at patterns within and across years for a better understanding of the practices and their significance.

were listed separately in 1894. Anna Maria's listing included *frau*, but this is given equal significance to her *Manufaktur-, Wäsche- und Weißwaarenhandlung* (manufactured goods, underclothing, and white goods store). The connection between Anna Maria and Wilhelm is their address: Schildergasse 72.¹¹³ Other women's listings include *frau*, but no man is listed that can be connected. Women listed as *Frau* but without a specific connection to a man or the same address as one, were unlikely to be widows since widows were listed as such. Additionally, women were not *fräulein*, which is a direct contrast to unmarried women in Sheffield who were all listed as Miss.¹¹⁴ Juliana Balzer, *Damenschneiderin*, was listed as *frau* but her husband was not listed independently. Juliana and her business merited inclusion but her husband and his did not. Her contributions to the family economy as a ladies' tailor, thus, was valued by both the family and broader society.

In other cases, women were listed with their husbands, which explicitly tied them together. When listed with husbands, women held varying degrees of identity discrete from their relationship to men. This is important because women's class position was often dictated by their fathers' or husbands' position, rather than their own.¹¹⁵ In some places, women were only "*Frau*" followed by occupation. This was the case with *Frau* Peter Hild in 1890. She was listed with

¹¹³ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1894, II Theil, 22.

While it is possible that Anna Maria and Wilhelm were not married, it would be highly coincidental that they lived at the same address.

¹¹⁴ We can see the difference in the two city directories from 1895. Under *Damenschneiderinnen*, of the 396 listed names, zero had an indicator of *fräulein* (there were 57 *Frau*, 54 *Witwe*, 25 men, 39 indeterminate, and 221 general women). Under dressmaker, in Sheffield and Rotherham, there were 408 women listed as Miss, 260 women listed as Mrs., 5 men, and 8 businesses.

Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk*. (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1895), IV Theil, 41-43; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield, for 1895-1896*, 19th edition (William White, Limited, 1895), 687-690.

¹¹⁵ Emma Griffin, *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (Yale University Press, 2020), 79.

Peter, but other than her occupation as *Kleidermacherin*, we know little about her.¹¹⁶ By 1893 the family had moved across the Rhein to Deutz and by 1894, Peter Hild was listed alone.¹¹⁷ The two most likely explanations for this change are that the income from the dressmaking was no longer needed (or not needed in such a quantity that merited a directory listing) or that *Frau* Hild died. In other directory entries, given names were included. Helene Lammertz, *Damenschneiderin*, was listed in 1894 with her husband, Johann, at Große Sandkaul 17—. ¹¹⁸ Much like *Frau* Peter Hild, Helene Lammertz disappears from the *Directory* after a few years; sometime between 1896 and 1897 her circumstances changed.¹¹⁹ Women listed with both their husbands and their occupations provide a more complete record of their existence and the importance of their paid work to their household. Although many women slip easily from view when they were recorded this way, as a practice, the inclusion of women's occupations as distinct from their husband's differentiates between the two.

Finally, some women were listed with their husbands, or husbands' names in the case of widows, but the entry also included their given name and their surname at birth. The provision of more complete biographical information in a city directory further situates these women within their larger communities. Especially when Cologne, like other cities, was experiencing fast growth, social networks were easy to lose. One woman who was, eventually, listed with her

¹¹⁶ A.C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven & Bechtold, 1890), II Theil, 123.

¹¹⁷ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1893), II Theil 136; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1894, II Theil, 141.

¹¹⁸ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1894, II Theil 198.

¹¹⁹ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1896, II Theil, 223; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1897), II Theil, 232.

surname at birth was Agnes Oster, *geb.* Ossdendorff, co-owner of P. W. Ossendorff. However, this also occurred with women operating smaller businesses. For example, Malwine Cohen, *Damenschneiderin*, was listed with her husband, Sali, *Buchhandler*. Unlike the examples above, Malwine's surname at birth, Horn.¹²⁰ Malwine was listed in this way from 1898 and 1905, which was a significant amount of time compared to other listings. The inclusions of women's names before marriage expands their identities beyond their husbands. The inclusion of their prior surnames situated them in extended networks and provided people a way to connect with them.

Some businesses were run by sisters or friends, who could be listed together or separately. Since individuals were listed separately, and the smallest businesses did not have a separate business name, these businesses are often the hardest to find but tell us the most about their importance to the retailing environment and household incomes. It is possible that not every woman listed with an occupation in the clothing or fashioning business had her own business, or a shared one, but it is not impossible. As with other women's listings, sisters and friends could be listed in multiple ways. Sisters Angelia and Maria Bender were listed separately but both resided at Ursulargartenstraße 16.¹²¹ Originally, both were listed as *Näherin* (seamstress), but at the address, Maria was listed as a *Büglerin* (ironer) instead. The sisters included the service of pressing the garments they made. Separate listings and descriptions could have allowed them to maintain discrete identities as individuals or increase business. Sisters Mathilde and Rosa Bernardi, however, listed themselves together. They operated a *Kurz-, Weiß- und Wollwaarenhandlung* (haberdashery, white goods, and woolen goods store) at Ehrenstraße 4.¹²² From their first listing in 1895 until at least 1914, the sisters ran this business out of their

¹²⁰ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1901, II Theil, 82. Between 1895 and 1897, there was a Sali Cohen listed as *Schneider*, who is potentially the same as listed with Malwine.

¹²¹ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1901, II Theil 30-31, III Theil, 409.

¹²² Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1901, II Theil, 11.

home.¹²³ Although there were fewer options for how to list oneself for unmarried women, the presence of options speaks to the presence of choice and the importance of business strategy for all women involved in the fashioning industry of Cologne at the turn of the twentieth century.

Much of the small fashioning business landscape in Sheffield and Cologne was similar. The wares they sold were relatively easy to obtain, and running a business out of the home had both historical precedence and practical benefits. Although the above examples in Sheffield included fewer women owners than those in Cologne, the conclusion to arrive at is not that there were fewer women owners in Sheffield. As a brief illustration, the 1900 city directories list no fewer than 381 *Damenschneiderinnen* in Cologne and 443 dressmakers in Sheffield.¹²⁴ Rather, the conclusion to arrive at from this set of examples demonstrates the flexibility of the small business to be many things to many people. Further research on small businesses specifically and on gender as a factor in their operations could illuminate more of their social significance. Some of the naming conventions from the Cologne directories are also in the Sheffield directories. For example, women's entries always include their marital status, denoted by Mrs. or Miss, as with Miss Ruth Coleman and Mrs. Florence Collins, both dressmakers.¹²⁵ Few women were listed without their own first names and few if any were listed as widows. Therefore, without further records of these women and investigation into their lives, we do not know whether they were widowed, we do not know their husbands' occupations, nor do we know their surnames at birth.

¹²³ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1895, II Theil, 23; *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1914, II Teil, 37.

¹²⁴ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1900), IV Theil, 47-49; *White's Directory*, 1900, 829-831.

These numbers were arrived at by counting the number of clearly listed women under the two titles in the trades/occupation sections in the two directories for 1900. Not included were entries where the gender could not be definitively determined (in Cologne) or where the location was farther than 6km/3.5mi from the city center (Sheffield). Additionally, other categories, such as *Kleiderhandlerin* or tailor were not included, but would need to be in a more systematic study of the gender composition of small store owners.

¹²⁵ *White's Directory*, 1913, 1008; *White's Directory*, 1912, 981; *White's Directory*, 1911, 965; *White's Directory*, 1907, 900.

Some of these differences between Sheffield and Cologne's directories are likely a result of the subjective nature of city directories during this period.¹²⁶ Without further investigation to the specifics of each city's directories in a thorough, sustained fashion, the significance of the difference is hard to fully determine. However, the differences aside, the directory listings support the claim that small businesses, as discrete businesses and as a discrete concept, were deeply embedded in local societies.

Small businesses provided necessary income for a significant number of households. Their flexibility offered benefits through the ease with which they could be established, continued, or closed. Depending on an individual's or family's needs, this was incredibly valuable. However, for those seeking long-term stability, or for one comparing them to the expanding department stores, they were precarious. Small businesses were at risk of economic downturns or personal tragedy in ways that department stores were not. Even compared to the lives of shop employees, small business owners could have faced more instability. They were not under the extreme pressures as touted by their opponents, since the market supported a significant, fairly stable number of small shops. This stability of small retail operations, however, does not equate to individual stability and longevity; some endeavors were successful, but many were not.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we looked at some of the elements of shop work, economics, and class. We saw the flexibility offered by shop work on all levels for a variety of individuals and families. This chapter has argued that people involved in fashion retailing occupied and claimed

¹²⁶ Gareth Shaw, "The Content and Reliability of Nineteenth-Century Trade Directories," *Local Historian* (London) 13, no. 4 (1978): 205-209. For more on the Cologne directories specifically, see: Klara van Eyll, "Stadtadressbücher als Quelle für die Wirtschafts- und Sozialhistorische Forschung – Das Beispiel Köln," *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte/ Journal of Business History* 24, no. 3 (1979): 12-26.

various class positions. This was achieved through the definition of themselves as distinct from the working class and moving through the world as if their middle-class position was an accomplished fact. The definitions and beliefs about class worked in a feedback loop with material conditions and practices in a constant process of redefinition and policing. By looking at the different material experiences of the different groups involved in shop work, we saw how class and its lived realities depended on more than financial circumstances. For small business owners and their families, the end of the nineteenth century was a time of transition. As we will see in the following chapters, new trading practices comingled with traditional ones in small shops, which allowed many to remain in business despite the emergence of department stores. These families were also able to draw on the historical standing of shopkeeping for cultural capital.

The prevalence of small fashion stores and fashion work among non-department store workers further elaborates Humphries' ideas of breadwinner frailty beyond her original study. Among the small businesses there are many examples of necessary employment by family members. In these businesses, census records provide some evidence of family being called upon to work. There were often times when it was impossible for a single owner to run the business. There were also businesses that continued on after the death of the male owner, as we saw above with both the Hawksley and Ossendorff families. Finally, there were businesses that ran without any, or very little, participation from a man. Each of these supports Humphries' claims about breadwinner frailty. We will see examples of the first and third cases below.

Instances where wives were listed as employed in the business are inconsistent; in some years, wives are not listed as employed but in other years they are. It is unclear the cause of the inconsistency. They could have not been working in the shop in a formal sense, or the census

taker could have simply not asked. One example of this is the Shephard family at 249 Fulwood Road, Sheffield, England. In the 1891 census, John Shephard, the head of household, was listed as draper and his wife Fanny was listed without occupation. The household included their four young children, John's 19-year-old brother as a draper's assistant, and a general servant. With young children, it is unlikely Fanny assisted in general shop business. Ten years later, in 1901, both John and Fanny were listed as "shopkeeper draper," and their son Charles P., 19, was listed as a draper's assistant. The household also included two daughters, aged 17 and 12, both listed as "draper's daughter," a younger son, and a nurse.¹²⁷

In addition to wives providing supplemental labor in businesses, daughters also went to work. Daughters were less likely than wives or sons to assist in a family business. Rather, daughters went to work in businesses outside the family. In 1901, the Thompson family lived in the Nether Hallam district, west of Sheffield's city center. The Thompson household consisted of five people: George, his wife, and three daughters. Catherine and Mary, ages 22 and 24, respectively, both of whom worked as drapers assistants. At the time George, their father, was listed as "general clerk unemployed." How long this condition lasted and how much it affected the family is uncertain. When Catherine and Mary became drapers assistants and where they worked does not show in this record.¹²⁸ This story is replicated in variations across Sheffield.

¹²⁷ 1891 Census of England and Wales, Yorkshire, Ecclesall Bierlow, Sheffield, enumeration district 25, page 15, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, Yorkshire, Ecclesall Bierlow, Sheffield, enumeration district 23, page 5, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

¹²⁸ 1901 Census of England and Wales, "Mary A Thompson," RG 13/4345 ED 50 pages 18-19, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

Further information shows that Catherine died in 1908. Mary married William Leighton in 1902. William was a farmer, but, by the 1911 census, he was working at a grocery and drapery in Lincolnshire. Mary died just before the 1921 census, but William was now the store manager at a cooperative society in Louth, Lincolnshire. St. Mary's Walkley, "Register of Burials," 1908, RP89/22, Parish Registers, Sheffield, SA; St. Mary's Walkley, "Register of Marriages," 1902, RP89/2/4, Parish Registers, Sheffield, SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 421, sub-district 1, ED 3, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; Principal Probate Registry; London, England; *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England*, 1921 L.-P., 54, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1921 Census of England, Registration district 421, subdistrict 1, ED 11, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

Both of these examples rely on census information. The situation in Cologne was likely similar – with wives and daughters being drafted to work when it was necessary – but I currently do not have the records to support specific claims. It is also possible that more women were listed in directories as business owners in their own rights. As we saw in the directory listings examples, women in Cologne had more options for how they were included in directories and what information was included with those listings. This is a place for further study.¹²⁹

Further, small stores offered services that department stores did not. The persistence of credit was vital to many working-class shoppers and their connections to the owners of small stores provided them more flexible financial dealings than did large stores.¹³⁰ And, although department stores in Britain increasingly tailored their ready-made offerings, bespoke clothing and alterations remained in high demand in both countries. The continued presence and success of small businesses in the face of ever-expanding department stores shows some of the limits of capitalism. Department store owners participated in the constant revolutionizing of capitalism, as Marx outlined in the *Communist Manifesto*.¹³¹ However, these innovations did not prevent other methods of retailing from continuing nor did they mandate participation by everyone. Department stores allowed shopkeeper-owners to sell more goods under a single roof, decreasing operating expenses by using economies of scale and the mass production of goods, and offering customers the convenience of a one-stop shopping experience, but not all shoppers had the finances to participate in the cash economy nor the time to travel to the city center. Therefore, although department stores were part of an ever-expanding system, there were areas that could not or would not be revolutionized. Where they were useful or conformed to social beliefs, older

¹²⁹ In the British case, Emma Griffin's *Bread Winner*, which I have cited, investigates family economies. There does not seem to currently be an English-language study for the German case.

¹³⁰ For more on this topic, see Hosgood, "The 'Pigmies of Commerce' and the Working-class Community".

¹³¹ Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," 476.

models of business were kept by owners, for example living-in, and many small businesses continued older practices effectively. This allowed for places in which owners and workers could survive, if not thrive.

The accessibility of fashion and department store work is not just evidenced in the significant numbers of people who entered into the trade, but also in the range of backgrounds these people came from. Although many had some connection to draperies or tailors, many did not. In Cologne, women who operated fashion businesses were married to men employed in a range of occupations. From just the examples in this chapter: *Buchhändler*, *Notar*, *Büro-assistant*, and *Kaufmann* (bookseller, notary, office assistant, and businessman). Further, there was no single way in which married women who were business operators were listed in the directories, and the possibilities appear to change over time. These varying possibilities for identifying oneself show how different identities, or parts of an identity, could co-exist and priorities were malleable and contested. Women who ran businesses could influence how they were listed and what information was included. The most interesting entries are for women listed as “*frau*” but without an easily associated man. For these women, noting their marital status was important, but their husbands did not merit their own entry or a simultaneous listing. Marriage did not occlude economic activity, and, frequently, demanded it.

Department stores present a more complex picture of owner and employee class position and prospects. The owners and their families were able to leverage the financial success of their businesses to adopt the practices of the established middle class into which they were rising, including those of the industrial bourgeoisie. Families in both Sheffield and Cologne moved to respectable residences, participated in local charitable organizations, and removed their wives and daughters from paid employment. Men employed in department stores, especially ambitious

managers, could, and sometimes did, translate ambition and skill into upper-level jobs and marriages with owners' daughters. Women employed in department stores included a wider range of origins and positions. Both influenced the effect shop work had on their lives. Business servants were subject to many of the same conditions as their domestic peers. Fabrication hands could find more stability in a department store rather than in their own business, and the work could be less subject to slow seasons. However, the work itself could lead to long-term injuries in department stores just as easily as in small shops or in sweated work. For women sales assistants, employment was no guarantee of increased class position; it was not a golden ticket to a middle-class life. For many women, department store employment allowed claims to the respectability and outward appearance of lower-middle-class standing regardless of financial reality.

Although men greatly outnumbered women in the highest echelon of department and fashion store leadership, we have seen just how integral women were on every level. Widows were some of the most important women within this universe. Although widows were not usually hired as sales assistants, they were often owners of small stores or continued stores of every size when their husbands died. Whether this was Hawksley Hatters in Sheffield for a few years or P. W. Ossendorff in Cologne for many years, success was dependent on these women taking on more or different work. What is significant is that, for some women, their husband's death was not an economic catastrophe. Rather, becoming a widow was just another part of life to be accounted for. Immediate crises could often be avoided, although long-term stability was not guaranteed, and other coping strategies would have been mandatory for most widows.

Department stores and small fashion stores provided work to scores of women and men. This work became industrialized in similar ways to other sectors. The perpetual revolutionizing

of capitalism changed consumption and distribution just as it changed production. Mass consumption mirrored mass production, but both relied on the continuation of older methods of producing and consuming to fill the gaps. Although some of the conditions were better in shops and employees had a higher starting class, being a sales assistant at a department store required a significant amount of work that had to be done correctly, to exacting standards and for low pay, although that pay was higher than in other sectors and varied across place. Base salaries were often low, especially in towns and for women without experience. Many stores also used a commission system to boost pay. However, in cities and high-end stores, pay plus commissions could equal relatively high pay. In Britain, take-home pay also depended on subtractions for meals and housing, when an employee lived-in.

In addition to selling actual goods and services, sales employees also sold an idea.¹³² Department stores provided the trappings of a middle-class life in a single building. Displays, particularly in windows, offered an image of refinement and respectability which shoppers could purchase. The changes in architecture and design of these large stores created beautiful spaces in which people, especially women, could spend their leisure hours, showing off their ability to remove themselves from paid labor. As the goods that represented middle-class life became cheaper, more people could access them, which strengthened the relationship between physical objects and environments to class standing.¹³³ The proper display and use of these object, including clothing and accessories, was cultural capital that, theoretically, could be accessed by anyone. The priority given to visual aspects of life promoted a sense of one's class subjectively.

¹³² For more on this see: Michael Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869 – 1920* (Princeton University Press, 1981).

¹³³ Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), x.

There was no specific rubric against which to measure one's position, so one could only measure against how they compared to their neighbors and society.

Department stores perpetuated many class divides. In the following chapters, I will discuss the continuing divides based on space (who lived where) and the nature of work (ideas of respectability and service). The divisions between owners' and employees' physical environments and worlds contributed to separate existences, and the impacts on economic and social class furthered these separate existences. Living-in not only separated employees from the owners, but it also contributed to financial circumstances that limited the possibilities for workers to establish and maintain separate households, some of the markers of the middle class.¹³⁴ Living at one's store or place of employment did not provide the social capital it had in earlier times. Although living-in at a department store provided one with a generally respectable address, the owner or master did not also reside there. As owners departed for separate residences, their employees were no longer part of the family unit and could not access the benefits thereof.

Department and fashion stores provided vital incomes for a broad range of people and families. For some, these businesses provided long-term economic stability which they could translate into other social capital. For others, department and fashion store work was temporary, either by choice or circumstance, and stability was not guaranteed nor were any associated social gains. Of course, no job guaranteed stability, but being a "shop girl" was connected to cultural references that resulted in the belief that it did.¹³⁵ Fashion retailing at the turn of the twentieth century resembled many other industries: fundamentally changed by the constant revolutionizing

¹³⁴ See Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Hutchinson, 1987).

¹³⁵ Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 3, 27, 29-21; Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades'*, 112.

of capitalism but still dependent on some of the old ways, staffed by a workforce that was increasingly female, and making profits for the owners. The moral panics surrounding department stores, particularly about hysterical women, served to heighten public attention to department stores, which inflated some aspects of their reality. The economic possibilities for workers or small entrepreneurs were more limited, but perhaps more important. For the big owners, economic and social successes mirror the successes of factory magnates and other industrialists. For the small owners, success meant survival. For employees, department store work could help maintain status, keep food on the table for a family, or lead to upward mobility. It could provide lodging where other possibilities were nonexistent. On these margins, easier work, closer to home, with some (potential) social benefits were enough to recruit masses of people hoping to climb the class ladder.

Across the nineteenth century, changes in production, distribution, and consumption created an environment in which fashion retailing evolved into the early form of what we recognize a century later. Department stores worked to organize and reorganize space and people. Owners, managers, and employees created fantasy lands in which women could spend leisure time. These stores were part of a new wave of places to see, be seen, and gain social capital. Employees had to not only complete the physical tasks of their jobs but also look and behave in ways that conformed to the expectations of owners, managers, and shoppers. Therefore, despite the industrialized aspects of department stores as workplaces, they were interpreted differently by society at large. This interpretation allowed employees the ability to claim middle-class status – to them, a vital commodity.

The perception of shopkeeping and department stores as middle-class at the turn of the twentieth century was important to everyone involved with fashion retailing. For small shop

owners, the ties of shopkeeping to earlier perceptions of the middling sorts provided a history of respectful employment that could be used in the face of declining long-term economic prospects. Further, because the production of women's clothing had become, across the previous two centuries, women's work,¹³⁶ this was also an area of opportunity for women to maintain respectability and earn an income. Men who would become department store owners took the social cachet of shopkeeping and ambition to join the ranks of the industrial bourgeoisie. This raised them and their families through the ranks of the middle class. For the employees of department stores, and the would-be employees, the perception of department stores as middle-class, respectable venues for work provided paid labor. This labor came with the proximity to forms of social and cultural capital which could be used to secure or better their social positions. Despite all of this, shop work at the turn of the twentieth century did not guarantee prosperity or security. The potential for failure or social backsliding made it even more important for these people to hold onto whatever elements of middle-class standing they could create.

¹³⁶ Much of this is covered in Inder, *Busks, Basques and Brush-braid*.

Organizing and Orientating: A Spatial Understanding of the Class and Gender of Department and Fashioning Stores

Introduction

In the Cologne newspaper, *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, on October 22, 1895, Leonhard Tietz advertised his Hohe Straße store as a tourist attraction in the city and provided readers with locations of different departments. Notes in the ad mentioned the in-house upholstery work, the free customer elevator, and their electrical works, featuring sixty-five arc lamps and 200 lightbulbs to light the show windows at night.¹ Two days later, the same newspaper announced in an article the opening of the new building. Calling it magnificent and a rival to those in Berlin, Brussels, and Paris, the writer drew attention to the same features as the advertisement: the electric lights, the show windows, and the elevator. The newspaper pointed out in a business news article that the store also featured a central heating system and other modern facilities and conveniences and that that this rebuild now housed the corporate headquarters and was one of three (soon to be four) locations of the store in the city.² From this point, the Cologne Hohe Straße store would be the Leonhard Tietz company's flagship store.

Just seven years later, on Monday December 1, 1902, Leonhard Tietz advertised in the *Kölner Local-Anzeiger* a 10% discount on all items before their new building opened later in the week. This ad took up almost the entirety of the front page, complete with ornamental borders.³ Five days later, on December 5, Tietz ran an even larger ad for the opening of the new building and arcade. This ad included information on the opening, Saturday at 1 p.m., the store logo with two female heads flanking it, and the addresses of all four local locations.⁴ The ad assumed the

¹ *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 22 October 1895, page 6, accessed via ZeitpunktNRW (ZPNRW).

² "Aus dem Geschäftsverkehr," *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 24 October 1895, page 3, ZPNRW.

³ *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 1 December 1902, page 1, ZPNRW.

⁴ *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 5 December 1902, page 1, ZPNRW.

reader knew the location of the new store, presuming most people knew about the major construction project in the middle of town. The Hohe Straße store now took up the entire block, instead of just Hohe Straße 45. It was Hohe Straße 43-49.

The business news article on the 1901 opening was three times larger than the 1895 article and waxed poetic about the new additions. The new arcade, complete with glass barrel roof, connected Hohe Straße and An St. Agatha, providing the city's shoppers a new path between Heumarkt and Neumarkt, a path that took them past the new store's display windows. The new façade, despite being half-finished, made an "extremely pleasant impression."⁵ The interior of the new store was lit by a combination of two arched glass atriums and electric lights. The arcade further featured a 12-meter rotunda, and the main atrium featured a dome with a large chandelier. Three customer elevators served shoppers needs and three goods elevators brought goods to the floors; all elevators were powered by an internal generator system which provided electricity and heating throughout the building.⁶ The new building's aesthetic and technological components followed trends across Europe: electricity powering lights and lifts, significant use of plate-glass, and large, open show rooms, all combining to provide visitors, shoppers and browsers alike, with beautiful spaces in which to spend time. Stores like Leonhard Tietz's Hohe Straße store stood in bustling city centers where they could not be avoided.

Behind their splendor, these stores were also large-scale employers. Before moving to a discussion of the specific aspects of labor within these stores, it is important to understand the physical worlds in which people worked. Department stores did not exist in isolation; they were

⁵ In German, "äußerst gefälligen Eindruck", my own translation above. "Aus dem Geschäftsverkehr," *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 7 December 1901, page 7, ZPNRW.

⁶ *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 7 December 1901, page 7, ZPNRW.

not designed for beauty alone. Rather they existed within retailing landscapes and were part of people's lived realities.

In this chapter, I look at the department and fashion stores of Sheffield and Cologne and their different conceptions and realities of space and spatial arrangements. I place the department stores within larger constellations and networks of societies, cities, and their denizens. This chapter constructs both the physical environments of department stores and populates them. I start with a discussion of two stores that were built between 1899 and 1914. After providing an outline of the buildings and the different spaces within them, I move to a broader look at the ways in which space was organized within them. The main divisions in space were between sales spaces and staff spaces, but all spaces had further gendered divisions within them and across them. Additionally, it is in the design and layout of front-of-house spaces versus back-of-house spaces that we see one of the most significant differences between Sheffield and Cologne. In Sheffield, the continued practice of housing employees on-site, known as living-in, mandated the provision of space for these people. In Cologne, living-in was not a feature of shop work, which allowed space to be used for other purposes.

The second section moves to department stores in both cities. These are stores which were important within each city's retailing world at the time and which are significant in the following chapters. Through this discussion, two other major differences between the cities are apparent. First, in Sheffield, the owners of department stores were virtually all trained as drapers, but in Cologne, the owners have differing backgrounds and origins. Second, in Cologne, and Germany as a whole, businesses with multiple locations within a city and chains across regions were established in the late nineteenth century. In Britain, this did not happen until after the First World War.

The final section of this chapter shifts focus to the people who lived and worked in the department and fashion store universe. Where people lived is just as important as where they worked since these places overlapped for some people and not for others. Where and for whom the overlap happened influenced and was influenced by the work they did and their social standing. First, I discuss living-in as a practice within Sheffield and some of the effects of this on the workers. Second, I look at the migration patterns of owners and upper management. Owners and managers moved toward respectable neighborhoods as part of their efforts to join the middle classes and their industrialist bourgeois peers. Third, I turn to the small businesses run out of the front rooms of people's homes. These types of business offered people flexibility but also blurred the lines between business and residence.

This chapter argues that department stores, although meeting places between classes and genders, also instilled divides between groups of people as the use of space, especially back-of-house and supporting spaces, perpetuated divisions between classes and genders. Divisions in space perpetuated different social divisions. In addition to the divisions between class and gender, there were separations between adults and children, live-in and live-out employees, employees' class origins, window shoppers and buyers, and whether one could be seen or not seen to be doing work. Of all of these, the most obvious and salient is class, but the other divisions, and the ways in which they were upheld, contributed and reinforced each other. Therefore, as with many novelties of modernity, department stores were ambiguous, capable of being many things to many people simultaneously.⁷ Beliefs in how space should be divided and the enactment of those beliefs organized department stores. By focusing on fashion retailing as

⁷ For other considerations of this theme, see Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880-1940* (Cornell University Press, 2015).

employment and these stores as places of labor, we see beyond the allure of leisure and shopping to the material realities of people working to facilitate other people's leisure.

Understanding the physical spaces in which people lived and shopped anchors this study in material lives. The organization of space, how it is divided, and how people navigate it impacts experience. Space also mediates ideology and norms. These spatial concerns have largely been discussed by scholars in other contexts, particularly the works of David Harvey and others within geography and urban studies.⁸ Gender historians have considered the importance of space and its meanings and uses with regards to questions of sex and gender, particularly in terms of the domestic worker or women in public.⁹ Other historical studies that consider space primarily concern themselves with the mid- to late-twentieth century.¹⁰ Some studies of department stores consider space, for example Moulds' work on the sensory and emotional experience of living-in.¹¹ Within my study, located at the turn of the twentieth century, I focus on the overlapping and intersecting spatial worlds of fashion retailing. These stores and the people concerned with them lived and worked in urban, rural, business, and domestic spaces, often

⁸ David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1973); Noel Castree and Derek Gregory, eds., *David Harvey: A Critical Reader* (Blackwell Publishing, 2006); David Harvey, "Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80, no. 3 (1990): 418-434.

⁹ Judith Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2003); Judith R. Walkowitz, "Going Public: Shopping, Street Harassment, and Streetwalking in Late Victorian London," in *Representations* Spring 1998, no. 62 (1998): 1-30; Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge University Press, 1980). Some question of women occupying space is part of the discussion of the *flâneur*. For a contemporary discussion of the *flâneuse*, see Lauren Elkin, *Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016).

¹⁰ Jeanne Catherine Lawrence, "Geographical Space, Social Space, and the Realm of the Department Store," *Urban History* 19, no. 1 (1992): 64-83; Eli Rubin, *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space, and Memory in East Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹¹ Alison Moulds, "'Behind the Scenes of a Retail Shop': Sensory Experiences of Living-in, c. 1880s-1920s", in *Shopping and the Senses, 1800-1970: A Sensory History of Retail and Consumption*, ed. Serena Dyer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); Alison Moulds, "Shop assistants, 'living-in' and emotional health, 1880s-1930s," in *Feelings and Work in Modern History: Emotional Labour and Emotions about Labour*, eds. Agnes Arnold-Forster and Alison Moulds (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022);

concurrently. Their occupations and their use of space and material environments cannot be treated as separate experiences.

Space can reinform ideologies, particularly those about class, gender, and labor. Space influences divisions within stores, dispersal of stores throughout cities, and living patterns of those working in the fashioning business. Space structures people's lives. Space "is one the most powerful modes for inquiring into and understanding structures of power, domination, and the transmission of ideology in precisely the kinds of mechanisms that are so important because they are so diffuse and quotidian."¹² Where one lived as a way to distinguish social position created and reinforced classed divisions. The arrangement of departments within stores, and the maintenance of staff divisions between those departments, maintained gendered divisions of space. The people who populate this study existed in spaces which they shaped and which shaped them.

Department stores and the people who owned and worked in them lived within societies that placed great importance on the maintenance of proper divisions. This was particularly a concern of those in the rising middle classes. The division of space between private and public, adult and children, family and servant, and male and female all worked to support beliefs in the proper ordering of society. These divisions were not limited to homes but reached into businesses and government. The built environments imposed these ideologies and restrictions. The imposition of ideology through the use of space was not only a factor in the gendered division of shoppers and departments. It was also a factor for employees. As space was increasingly laden with meaning, tasks and positions gained meaning as well.¹³ Much work has been done on the

¹² Rubin, *Amnesiopolis*, 5.

¹³ David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1973), 12-13.

feminization of retailing, particularly of shop assistants,¹⁴ but less focus has been paid to the relationship between the increasingly powerful narrative of department stores as ladies' paradises, staffed by women, and how space dedicated to women reinforced this or created a feedback loop where shopping and department stores were reinscribed as women only spaces. The division of physical space and the ways in which norms were imposed and upheld imbued both with power over lives.

The next section introduces two department store buildings and the ways in which space was literally and metaphorically constructed. Descriptions of the buildings and their internal organization lay the stage for goods and people to be placed and moved, like pieces on a game board, within and between them. One of the most important elements of this discussion is the ways in which continuing to provide accommodations for employees impacted use of space in the rest of the store and people's relationship to where they worked. This focus on space lays the groundwork for the following discussions of work, comportment, and class.

¹⁴ See Carole Elizabeth Adams, *Women Clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of Class and Gender* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Susan Porter Benson, "The Cinderella of Occupations: Managing the Work of Department Store Saleswomen, 1900-1940," *The Business History Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1981): 1-25; Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain, "The World of the Department Store: Distribution, Culture and Social Change" in *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850-1939*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Ashgate, 1999); Christopher P. Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries': Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (July 1999): 322-352; Kelley Graham, "Gone to the Shops": *Shopping in Victorian England* (Praeger, 2008); Bill Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (Leicester University Press, 1995); Theresa M. McBride, "A Woman's World: Department Stores and the Evolution of Women's Employment, 1870-1920," *French Historical Studies* 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1978): 664-683; John F. Mueller, *The Kaiser, Hitler and the Jewish Department Store* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022); Erika D. Rappaport, "'The Halls of Temptation: Gender, Politics, and the Construction of the Department Store in Late Victorian London,'" *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 1 (January 1996): 58-83; Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (The Ohio State University Press, 2006); Wilfred B. Whitaker, *Victorian and Edwardian Shopworkers: The Struggle to Obtain Better Conditions and a Half-Holiday* (David & Charles, 1971).

New Buildings: John Walsh, Leonhard Tietz, and the Construction of Space

After initial financial success, businesses that would become department stores expanded in the types and numbers of goods they offered and the spaces they offered them in. After the initial expansions to adjacent properties, businesses built or rebuilt premises to align with current design priorities. Through these building projects, businesses were able to construct space along ideological lines. Early stores had also been organized according to social beliefs. For businesses to continue their financial success within capitalism, they were required to continue to adopt new practices, some of which included the use of space. The first part of this section focuses on the physical 1899 John Walsh building and design plans for a 1911 version of Leonhard Tietz's Hohe Straße store. By utilizing architectural plans and creating a 3D model of the Walsh store, I give these two stores materiality. It is important to start with a description of this sort because the physical buildings were inescapable for workers and shoppers. Following the descriptions, I discuss the implications of the divisions of space and the continual process of meaning-making within them. Ultimately, this section, and this chapter more generally, provide the structure for the rest of the study. The organization of space conformed to beliefs about the organization of society. For example, comparing the spaces for employees and shoppers adds weight to later claims in this study about the nature of department store work. Additionally, the juxtaposition of workers' dwellings in the same building that provided the public with grand leisure spaces heightens the distinctions between levels of middle class during this time.

John Walsh's 1899 Building

John Walsh, Ltd., opened a new store on Sheffield's High Street in 1899. This new build replaced the warren-like conglomeration of the old store. The new store fit the architectural styles of the time: seven stories, large plate glass windows, and skylights, among other features.

This section looks at this building to show the multiple functions of interior spaces. Some parts of the building fostered the democratization of space that this period was acclaimed to have.¹⁵ Other parts reinscribed the social divisions from earlier in the century and supported divisions that would largely continue into the next century. The plans are now housed at the City Archives in Sheffield and on the Picture Sheffield website, as well as at the University of Glasgow's House of Fraser archives. It is impossible to determine how closely they were followed in construction since the building has since been destroyed. My discussion focuses, thus, on the resemblance of the plans to exterior images still available in the archives.

The building on High Street would have been obvious to anyone in the area throughout 1899 and mentions of it occasionally popped up in the newspapers. However, except for notices that the restaurant and tea room opened in October, there was no large advertisement of the new premises.¹⁶ The store-published booklet for the fiftieth anniversary did say that the opening “created a wonderful stir in the district.”¹⁷ Early in 1899, the Sheffield newspaper included stories about a construction accident, the lift electricity application, and a court case involving a plasterer.¹⁸ In addition to these and the usual job listings, 1899 also saw listings for carpenters, laborers, waitresses, and assistants for the new departments.¹⁹ By Christmas, the new departments were up and running, including the Christmas Bazaar in the basement.²⁰ During the season, the *Independent* remarked that they were “not quite sure that one could purchase the

¹⁵ Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 66; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 16-41.

¹⁶ *Sheffield Independent* October 5, 1899, 1, GPSBLN.

¹⁷ “The Fiftieth Milestone - John Walsh Ltd., High Street, Sheffield”, 1925, SY492/B22/3, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield City Archives (SA), Sheffield, UK.

¹⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, February 21, 1899, 6, GPSBLN; *Sheffield Independent*, February 22, 1899, 7, GPSBLN; *Sheffield Independent*, July 1, 1899, 9, GPSBLN.

¹⁹ *Sheffield Independent*, January 31, 1899, 2, GPSBLN; *Sheffield Independent*, February 22, 1899, 2, GPSBLN; *Sheffield Independent*, August 2, 1899, 2, GPSBLN; *Sheffield Independent*, August 11, 1899, 2, GPSBLN.

²⁰ *Sheffield Independent*, November 25, 1899, 7, GPSBLN.

Christmas turkey and plum pudding [at Walsh's], but I think everything else we shall be requiring for the festive season is 'kept in stock.'"²¹ The new store included both new product ranges and new spaces in which to display them.

The new building featured seven functional floors, and the architectural plans give us an idea of the basic store layout. Images of the exterior provide a glimpse of the display windows and the scale of the building to its surroundings. As we can see in Figure 1, the ground floor features an open showroom, with support pillars throughout. The front on High Street and side on Mulberry Street were both full plate glass windows, with an arcade on the Mulberry side. The front featured space for window displays between the glass and the counters, with mosaics in the doorways, as mentioned in Graham.²² Each of the five entrances included a handful of stairs down to the sales floor. Directly inside, between two of the doors, was staircase and elevator. However, the ground floor was not only for showing goods but also for supplying those goods, for in a narrower part of the building, at the back, were the "dispatch" room, goods hoist, and men's assistant cloak room.²³ The basement housed the receiving room, boilers, safe, and charwoman's area.²⁴ The ground floor showroom would have featured hats, gloves, haberdashery, and, later, perfumes, patent medicines, books, and stationary. Finally, the ground floor included a separate entrance for female assistants and a direct staircase to the accommodation floors. The basement showroom was about half the total floor space and featured two small staircases and elevator access.²⁵

²¹ *Sheffield Independent*, December 12, 1899, 8, GPSBLN.

²² Graham, "*Gone to the Shops*", 124.

²³ Flockton, Gibbs & Flockton, "High Street, Sheffield – J Walsh – Plans", 1896, CA206/2649a2, CA 206 Sheffield City Council, Planning Department, SA.

²⁴ Flockton, "High Street", CA206/2649a1.

²⁵ Flockton, Gibbs & Flockton, "High Street, Sheffield – J Walsh – Plans", 1896, CA206/2649a1, CA 206 Sheffield City Council, Planning Department, SA.

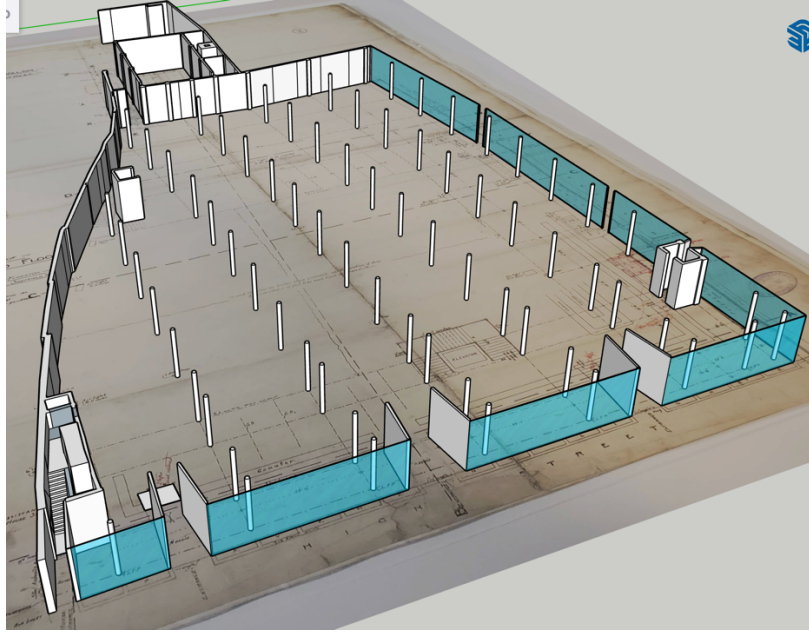


Figure 1: Model of Walsh Ground Floor. This version of the floor model is missing some of the internal structures, but we can still see the large windows and open internal spaces. More images and information about the project are in Appendix C.

The first floor (above ground level, or the second floor in American understanding) was also largely devoted to showrooms, but with lights wells to the ground floor that allowed light to filter below but that also further divided the space. Moving between sections would have been more difficult and display space was often maximized by hanging products over balustrades.²⁶ First floor departments frequently included women's clothing (ready-made and cloth), baby linen and underclothing, and mantels. The back of house areas on this floor included the counting house, multiple goods hoists, and a trolley system to move items between the showrooms and the yard below. The first floor also housed the first female assistant's lavatory/cloak rooms. Based on the architectural plans, there was possibly a set of rooms for women workers in the front corner of the building, near the staff staircase. This included a service room, cloak room, and ladies' writing room. However, much of this information was erased from the available plans or written

²⁶ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 51.

over, though the ladies' lavatory in the area appears to have been built. As many scholars have noted, the presence of lavatories in department stores was a significant factor in their appeal to women shoppers. What these accommodations meant for the workers, is unclear, but, given other rules, it is unlikely employees could use these facilities.²⁷

The remaining four floors feature no showrooms and fewer, more cramped spaces.²⁸ The back half of the building was largely cut off from the front so large skylights could let daylight onto the sales floors. At the back of the building were the workrooms. The plans give no indication of how the space was divided, but other than the two skylights, the floorplan was as open as the sales floors below. The internal skylight continued up to the fifth floor at the back of the store, but windows were much smaller. Despite the open space and number of windows, this space would have had a vastly different atmosphere than the showrooms. The third-floor workrooms, as seen in Figure 2, would have been largely the same, except they were only accessible via the second-floor workrooms. Despite the redesign, most of the internal spaces away from the sales floors remained crowded and dim. Even for those in the workrooms with skylights, the atmosphere does not much resemble the airy showrooms of the ground floor. Further, the filtered sunlight of both workroom and sales floor would have been even weaker during the short days of the northern winter.

²⁷ Flockton, Gibbs & Flockton, "High Street, Sheffield – J Walsh – Plans", 1896, CA206/2649b1, CA 206 Sheffield City Council, Planning Department, SA.

²⁸ Flockton, Gibbs & Flockton, "High Street, Sheffield – J Walsh – Plans", 1896, CA206/2649b2-c2, CA 206 Sheffield City Council, Planning Department, SA.

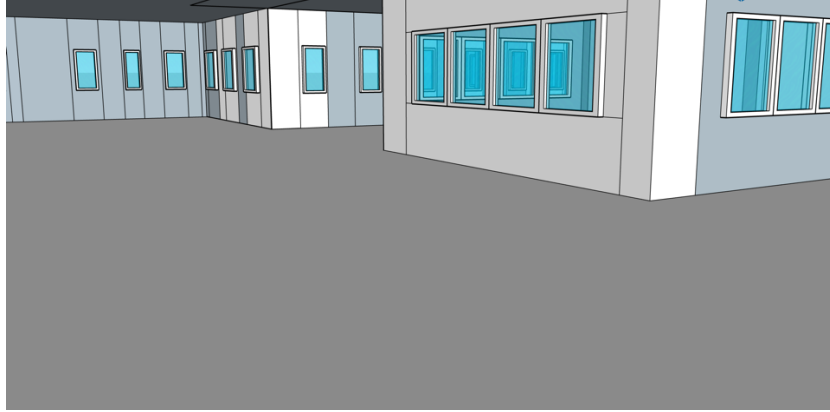


Figure 2: Interior of the 3rd floor workroom in the model of John Walsh's 1899 store.

At the front of the building on the upper floors were the staff accommodation areas. The second floor, as shown in Figure 2, had all types of rooms except bedrooms. This included the matron's room, still room, larder, kitchen and scullery, and pastry cook's rooms which were all important for the feeding of the store's employees. The kitchen wall included hatches to the dining room, in which staff who lived-in would have eaten all their meals. Both the manager and manageress had offices on the second floor. The rest of the space included cloak rooms, lavatories (for men and women, on different sides of the building), a female assistants' reading room and parlor and a male assistants' reading room and smoking room (noted with "Billiards" underlined). Finally, there was a hallway behind the matron's store and larder, with a "girls closet" and coal storage room included.²⁹ Much like the workrooms, these spaces were smaller and more closed off than the showrooms below and were likely crowded and loud. Based on the plans, one could guess that the male and female assistants could spend some amount of time in the same spaces. However, this was unlikely to happen—staggered mealtimes and reading rooms on opposite sides of the building were just a few of many divides. It was only possible to move between the men's and women's areas via the dining room (where men and women had separate

²⁹ Flockton, "High Street," CA206/2649b2.

entrances, the women's being added to the plans after they were initially drawn) or from the lower floors via the stairs. The results of which include the manageress being as far away from the other women as possible and almost inaccessible. This means that it was not just men and women divided, but different ranks of women as well.

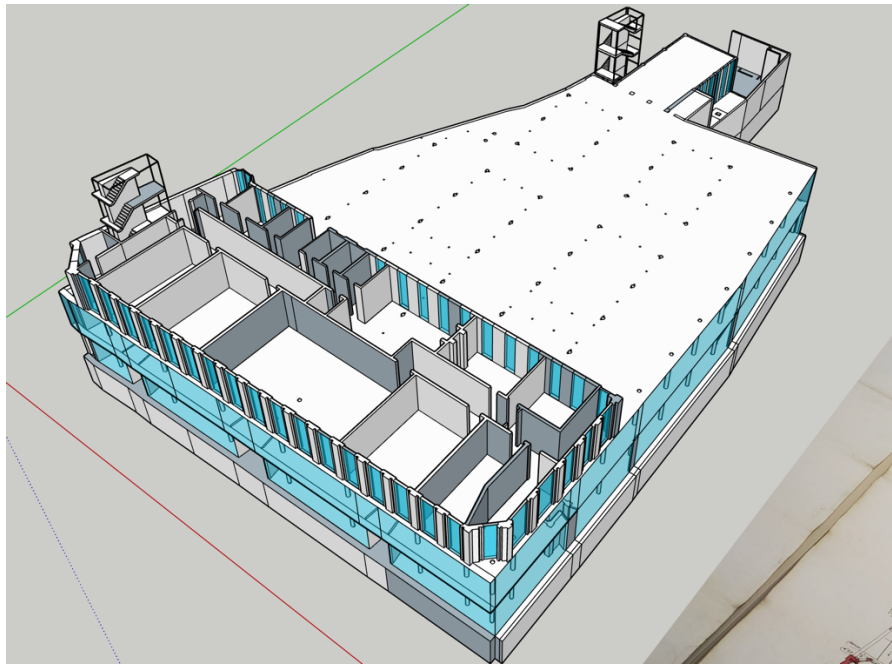


Figure 3: Front half of Walsh's second floor. The large room at the center front was the staff dining room.

The third and fourth floors were female assistants' bedrooms.³⁰ The floor plans, modeled in Figure 3, show a series of almost identical rooms, with one of the few exceptions being the labeling of the manager's room on the third floor versus a simple number on the fourth. Each floor had thirty-four bedrooms, about half of which are half the size of the others. The larger rooms would have been for either higher ranked staff or for multiple women. There was a skylight in the middle of the building to allow some light to filter into the interior set of rooms (which carried down to the next two floors as well). However, even with this nod to natural

³⁰ Flockton, "High Street," CA206/2649b3 & c1.

lighting, these rooms would have been poorly lit given the relative size of the windows compared to the size of the rooms. They would have especially been poorly lit compared to the sales floors which had large windows, skylights, and electric lights. Figure 5 shows the limited light options and space in one of the fifth floor hallways. Women would not have spent much waking time in these rooms. According to one study by Maragaret Bondfield, in London, employees worked an average of 68.5 hours a week and stores mandated when employees could be in bedrooms.³¹ This bedroom floor was reached by a staircase at either side of the building, including the employees-only staircase. In addition to the bedrooms, the third floor also had a boot room, a house maid's space, two water closets, and two baths. On the fourth floor, the boot room was replaced by a linen closet. In total, there were sixty-six bedrooms for women in the new store. Based on census data from 1901, only fifty-four women lived-in, which left twelve rooms empty. Records for non-census years have not survived, so it is possible that the accommodations were more crowded. Assuming double occupancy in the larger rooms, roughly one hundred women could have lived on the two floors. However, when the census was taken in March 1901, the overcrowding mentioned in many accounts of living-in would not have been the case at Walsh's.³² There is no indication based solely on the plans whether servants and workroom hands would have been separated from the sales assistants, but these two floors were likely the most significant space of social mixing in the building.

³¹ Bondfield, "Conditions," 279-285. The average of the numbers Bondfield provides was taken to reach 68.5. Subtracting 8 hours per day for sleep, this leaves just 43.5 hours a week for eating, dressing, and rest or leisure. According to rules for T.B. & W. Cockayne, the first group of employees had to be on the floor by 7:45 a.m. (T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Rules to be observed in the establishment of Messrs. T.B. & W. Cockayne," 1872, SY492/B18/1, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), SA).

³² Hallsworth and Davies, *Working Life*, 88; Whitaker, *Victorian Shop Assistants*, 12-13.

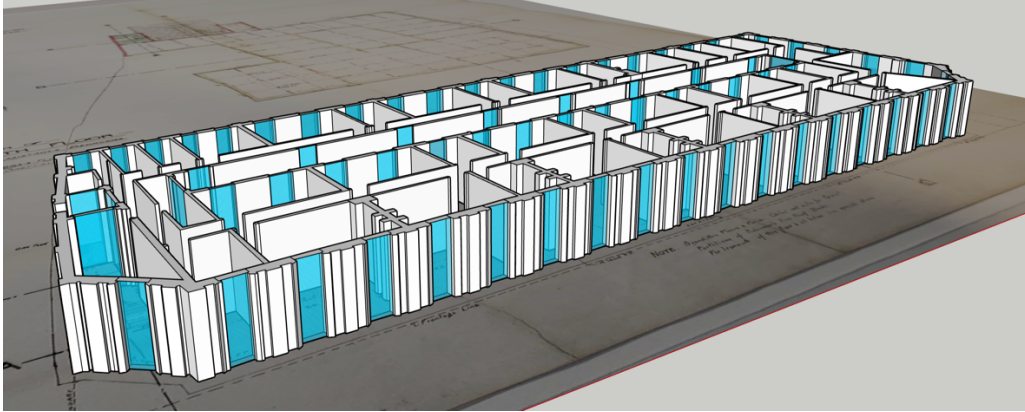


Figure 4: Basic model of the front half of Walsh's fourth floor. This part of the third, fourth, and fifth floors were almost identical and were staff bedrooms.

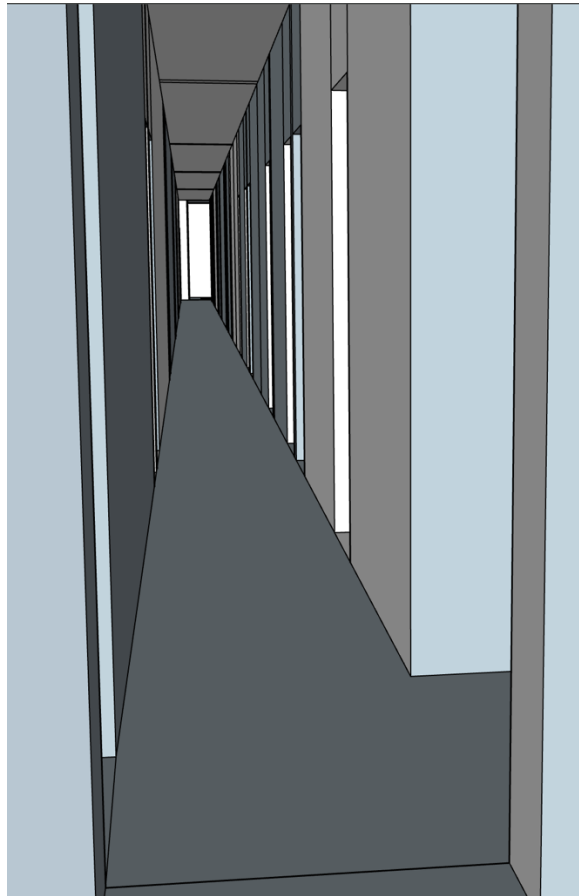


Figure 5: 5th floor hallway in the John Walsh 1899 building model.

The final functional floor of Walsh's new building was the men's bedrooms on the fifth floor.³³ Although similar in some ways to the women's floor—two baths, a closet for boots, and a

³³ Flockton, "High Street," CA206/2649c2.

space for the house maid's tools—there were interesting differences. Although small, some of these differences amount to perceptions of men's and women's necessities and lived experiences. The most significant difference was the number of bedrooms. On just the one floor, there were thirty-nine bedrooms, but just seven of these appear large enough to have housed multiple people. Further, there was no designated manager's room which can be explained by the presence of higher ranked men living-out (which we find in the city directories). In 1901, just twenty-two men lived-in.³⁴ This would have left almost half the bedrooms empty. Again, there is no information for non-census years, so it is possible that all the rooms could have been filled at some point. Regardless, Walsh and others tasked with space allocation in the new building believed it necessary to provide the space for male staff. Even without specific statistics, this belief tells us that living-in remained popular at least until the early 1900s in Sheffield.

This new Walsh building followed many of the trends in department store construction from the late nineteenth century. Large, open showrooms, lit through skylights and electricity, dominated the field. So, too, did displays in plate glass windows running the length of storefronts. The physical presentation of the plethora of goods available was just as important as the goods themselves. Walsh's, and other English stores, differed from their international peers in the amount of space dedicated to staff areas. Most stores, as we will see with Leonhard Tietz in Cologne, included staff canteens and cloakrooms. English stores continued the practice of living-in well into the twentieth century. Some of the effects of this in relation to Sheffield will be discussed throughout this study.

³⁴ 1901 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. "High Street", RG13/4369 page 3-6, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

Leonhard Tietz's 1911 Architectural Plans

In 1911 Leonhard Tietz held a competition for the design of the renovation of the Hohe Straße store. The competition took place during the summer of 1911, with the winners announced in September. The winner was Wilhelm Kries.³⁵ Construction of the new store proceeded from 1911 until early 1914. The process included a halt caused by the construction workers during 1912. There was a disagreement on compensation for the plasterers.³⁶ On April 8, 1914, the new building opened, accompanied by multiple full-page ads in the *Kölnische Zeitung*.³⁷ The ad on April 4 included an image of the exterior of the building with the text, “in the evening is the sight of the new building overwhelming through the use of numerous lamps, which illuminate rooms bright as day.”³⁸ The new building continued to occupy the space on Schildergasse, Hohe Straße, and St Agatha as the business had for two decades. This section is not a discussion of Kries' plans or, necessarily, the actual interior. The Tietz plans, by Hermann Billing, are held by the Architekturmuseum der TU München, and feature no similar city surveyors' markings that the Walsh plans have. Rather, this section looks at plans held by the Technische Universität München within the Hermann Billing collection.³⁹ These plans share a number of similarities to images of the building. The store in the plans had five stories above

³⁵ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 26 September 1911 Abend Ausgabe, 4, ZPNRW; and Hendel, “Warenhaus Tietz, Köln,” <https://deu.archinform.net/projekte/34.htm>, accessed 26 January 2025.

³⁶ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 25 September 1913 Abend Ausgabe, 2, ZPNRW.

³⁷ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 7 April 1914 Erste Morgen Ausgabe, 4, ZPNRW; *Kölnische Zeitung*, 8 April 1914 Mittages Ausgabe, 4, ZPNRW; *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 April 1914 Erste Morgen Ausgabe, 4, ZPNRW.

³⁸ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 April 1913 Erste Morgen Ausgabe, 4, ZPNRW. The original text reads, “Am Abend ist der Anblick des Neubaues ueberwaeltigend durch die ungezaehlten Lampen, die seine Raeume taghell erleuchten.” The ad is remarkable in its similarity to Selfridge's 1909 advertisement, which includes the text, “By Night as well as Day Selfridge's will be a centre of attraction. Contrary to the usual custom after closing time, our windows will not be obscured by blinds, but brilliantly lit up every Evening until Midnight.” Both images feature a large storefront at night, with the main façade retreating to the left with the ground floor windows light and people lining them down the street. The Selfridge's ad appears in Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 165 (original publication *Daily Chronicle*, March 20, 1909, 10).

³⁹ Herman Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss EG. Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <https://mediatum.ub.tum.de/932717>, accessed 26 January 2025.

ground with a cellar and basement below ground.⁴⁰ Of these, four floors were devoted to sales space.

The selling space of the Tietz plans conformed to many of the architectural trends for department stores in the early twentieth century. The arrangement of space followed beliefs about the environment for shopping, even if the plans were not going to be translated into reality. The ground floor had four sets of doors entering to an open sales floor. Opposite the main entry on Schildergasse was an art exhibition space behind the main staircase. None of the spaces on the ground floor were labeled in the plans. Lack of specific naming does not necessarily equal a lack of planning. The general design aesthetic outweighs the technical specification of these plans. Further, what goods went were, especially the types of goods on the ground floor, could be decided closer to store opening. What is significant in the ground floor drawing was the conformation to open selling floors with street-front display windows.

The first, second, and third floors included atria to the ground floor and were likely lit during the day by a skylight. The main sections of all three floors were open and unlabeled in these plans. In the rear, however, specific areas were designated. The first floor held the costume salon, for full outfits, and the refreshment and tearoom.⁴¹ The second floor housed the model hat room and the carpet hall, with a separate chamber for Persian rugs.⁴² The carpet hall was featured

⁴⁰ Herman Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss EG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201263>, mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität München (mediaTUM); Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 1. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201266>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 2. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201267>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 3. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201268>, mediaTUM.

⁴⁰ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Keller*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201265>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Souterrain*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201264>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 4. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201269>, mediaTUM.

⁴¹ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 1. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201266>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025.

⁴² Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 2. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201267>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025.

in one of the advertisements for the new building. Under a drawing of a large room with chandeliers, a caption reads, “The carpet hall, in whose subdued light the treasures of the Orient are displayed.”⁴³ The main portion of the carpet hall extended into the third floor, the double height of the room can be seen in the advertisement. The other noted department on the third floor was the jewelry salon.⁴⁴ Both carpets and jewelry were specialty goods, so delineating their space in the plans and with built features marked them as distinct from other departments. The more stylized nature of the Tietz plans resulted in a different focus on details than we saw in the Walsh plans. This is primarily clear in relation to infrastructure. For example, there were no lavatories or water closets in the Tietz plans. And, although drawn, staircases and elevators included less detail in this case. The differences in inclusion of detail could be part of larger differences in architectural plans between the two countries or that the Tietz plans were not meant to be built from but more stylistically. General information about certain spaces took precedence over important parts of everyday life.

In addition to the four floors dedicated to sales spaces were three back-of-house floors: the fourth floor, the cellar, and the basement. The cellar primarily had warehouses, but also included the metalworking shop, the boiler, cold storage, and the two-story machine hall (the second half of which was in the basement).⁴⁵ The boiler was also on both floors, but was not noted on these plans as the machine hall was.⁴⁶ While a significant part of the basement was warehouses, there were other rooms in which work was to be done on goods and storage. In the

⁴³ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 10 April 1914 Erste Morgen Ausgabe, 4, ZPNRW. The original text read, “Der Teppichsaal in dessen gedämpftem Licht die Schätze des Orients zur Schau liegen.”

⁴⁴ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 3. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201268>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025.

⁴⁵ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Keller*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201265>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025.

⁴⁶ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Souterrain*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <https://mediatum.ub.tum.de/1201264>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025.

basement, the most notable rooms were the incoming and outgoing goods rooms and the staff lavatories. There were two rooms for outgoing goods, which would have been goods being delivered to customers. The delivery routes and delivery frequency were points of note for the business; in the same week that the new building opened, the *Kölnische Zeitung* featured a full-page ad for the free delivery service.⁴⁷ The basement also featured the first provision of lavatories for anyone in the building, with two sets of rooms, one each marked with “D” and “H” – *Damen* (women) and *Herren* (men) – but, as we saw in the Walsh building, there were more drawn spaces drawn on the plans for men than for women. Whether this was reflected in reality is unclear.

The fourth floor included a wide range of rooms, from workrooms to the directors’ offices. Looking from the back of the building on Hohe Straße toward Schildergasse, the plan shows were staff lavatories, a kitchen and canteen, a printing room, two director’s offices with an antechamber, the legal representative’s office, a consulting room, two conference rooms, and two central offices. Along the front of the building were another office, the sample room, two rooms for meeting with dealers, and the health insurance office. Opposite these were the archive, the registration room, ten workstations, and the main cash desk. In the front corners of the building were two manager’s offices. Down the hall along St. Agatha were five small work rooms, the cash register control office, another manager’s office, and the special bookkeeping room. In the far rear were a further two small work rooms, six large workrooms, another set of staff lavatories, and the schoolroom.⁴⁸ The workstations were segmented into smaller rooms rather

⁴⁷ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 5 April 1914 Erste Morgen Ausgabe, 4, ZPNRW. The text of the ad read, “Mit 9 Autos expedieren wir gekaufte Waren in einem Umkreis von 80 Kilometern frie ins Haus” with a map of the 10 different delivery routes, a chart with the day the route was serviced, and an image of the delivery vehicle.

⁴⁸ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 4. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201269>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025.

than open workrooms. The inclusion of directors' offices again sets these plans, and this business, apart from John Walsh.

From the plans of the 1911 Tietz building and surviving images, it is clear that this version of Leonhard Tietz's flagship store was beautiful, with clean lines and streamlined organization. Billing's plans for the exterior feature numerous windows but minimal decoration. Which spaces Billing labeled in his plans depended on whether the space was dedicated to shopping or to business. Shopping was becoming understood as a leisure activity which took place in beautiful, open spaces.⁴⁹ The non-shopping areas were more contained; offices and workspaces were in separate rooms and the warehouse and industrial rooms were below ground while offices were at the top of the building. This is not to say that back-of-house space was more regulated than front-of-house in this example. Rather, how social regulations were enforced and what people thought of the uses of space were more significant. The following section builds on this and further discusses the organization of space within stores and the meaning imposed on and by it.

Organization of Space within the new stores

Space within department stores was highly mediated. Spaces were given meaning by designers and architects, influenced by owners, and their beliefs in the organization of people and things. These meanings were defined by middle-class norms and ideology, the foremost of which was the idea of respectability.⁵⁰ However, the occupants of these spaces further gave power to these meanings through the acceptance of divided space and its use. Sales space was broken down into departments which included specific goods and were staffed by either men or

⁴⁹ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 43, 160-170; Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*, 57.

⁵⁰ Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 112, 150; Geoffrey Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion," in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870-1914*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick (Croom Helm, 1977), 30-31; Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 18, 24.

women, depending on the type of good. Back-of-house staff spaces were also divided by purpose and the appropriate occupants. As we will see in chapters three and four, occupation and use of these spaces worked in conjunction with definitions of work and behavioral patterns to provide sociocultural capital alongside some amount of financial capital to help fashion retailing people create and enforce middle-class standing. This section utilizes the above building examples and descriptions of store interiors to discuss how space was organized and some of the meanings found within and across these spaces.

In the floor plans, the salesfloors are generally open, with the potential to house varying goods over time. While some of the sales space was designated on plans, like the carpet and jewelry rooms at Tietz's, the spaces not designated on plans did not remain undesignated for long. Where departments were inserted into salesfloors depended on the type of good they sold. Thus, open space in building plans could be very divided. This was truer for the divide between the ground and first floors. The ground floor would have had hats, gloves, and haberdashery, as well as cash desks. The first floor in most department stores was reserved for women's clothing, ready-made, costumes, underclothing, and so on. Gendered segregation between men and women happened on the sales floors for both shoppers and employees. Customers were freer in their movements than store employees. In stores where assistants served through (where an assistant accompanied a customer across departments) there would have been more opportunities to interact with assistants from different departments. In stores where assistants stayed in their own departments and floor walkers transferred shoppers between areas, assistants were siloed off. The result of this was that sales assistants operated in mostly self-contained worlds. The lack of walls and physical divides on salesfloors was for the customers and was part of the

construction of shopping as a leisure activity that occurred in beautiful spaces. Workers could see the lines, knew where they were drawn, and stayed within them.

Gendered assumptions and divisions also existed in the back-of-house spaces. They are particularly clear in the English case with John Walsh. That business devoted more resources to staff rest areas, partially as an effect of living-in, than did the Tietz store. Separate spaces were created in Walsh's store not only by building walls and discrete rooms, but also by naming and organizing those rooms. On the third floor, the main point of note is the relationship between the parlor and the smoking/billiard room. This reflects the gendered division of spaces within Victorian homes and marks these spaces as domestic within the department store world. The parlor would have been for women to spend their non-working time. In large domestic spaces separate from businesses, parlors were less formal rooms, as compared to drawing rooms. In smaller homes, the drawing room and parlor were one and the same.⁵¹ In a home, the parlor was a domestic space, more or less out of the public eye. In a department store, the parlor was in the back of house and away from the eyes of customers but not away from the eyes of management. Regardless, the single meeting place for working women in which to spend their leisure time resembled the modest homes in which many grew up. The male assistants' smoking room, hand-labeled "billiards," served the same purpose as the female assistants' parlor. In the private homes of the wealthy, smoking and billiard rooms were part of a move toward sex-segregated spaces.⁵² It was unlikely many men who entered shop employment grew up in homes with this type of homosocial space. In many middle-class family homes, parlors/drawing rooms would also have been used by men when families congregated. In the department store setting, establishing the

⁵¹ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 174, 215.

⁵² F.M.L. Thompson, *the Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (Harvard University Press, 1988), 157.

two divided sets of rooms pulled expectations from the upper middle class (and higher) to impose behavioral expectations for the rising lower-middle-class people working in those stores. The implied gentility of these sex-segregated spaces provided employees with claims to respectability as part of employment. The configuration of space to middle-class standards and norms was reinforced by expectations of behavior, as discussed in chapter three, which allowed all people associated with fashion retailing to claim class standing.

Another place of gendered division is with the personal care facilities, for both employees and customers. More facilities were noted in the Walsh plans than the Tietz plans, and the exclusion of customer lavatories in the latter is surprising.⁵³ At Walsh's, the provision for female customers is unsurprising, given the importance of women shoppers.⁵⁴ The Walsh and Tietz stores had quite similar facilities for their employees in the work areas. At Tietz's, lavatories were confined to non-salesfloors and men's and women's rooms were adjacent.⁵⁵ Spaces, at Walsh's store for water closets, lavatories, and cloaks for both men and women were spread across the back-of-house with space on the ground, first, and second floors.⁵⁶ The facilities themselves were placed at the rear of the building, away from the valuable street-front footage. For men at Walsh's, there was only a cloakroom with toilets on the ground floor. For women, there were water closets on the first and second floors. There was also a cloak room with a W.C. at the back connected to the workrooms. It is not specified if it was for men or women, but likely

⁵³ More research into the physical building would need to be done to conclusively determine whether this was omitted stylistically in the plans or also in the actual building.

⁵⁴ Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 79-85.

⁵⁵ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Keller*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201265>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Souterrain*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <https://mediatum.ub.tum.de/1201264>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 4. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201269>, mediaTUM, accessed 26 January 2025.

⁵⁶ Flockton, "High Street," CA206/2649a1, a2, b1, b2.

for women as they would have been the majority of workroom employees. At Walsh's, some of the facilities were located in what could have been used for sales and were also physically distant from rooms for the opposite gender. There was, perhaps, a reasonable business justification for this decision by Walsh and the architects, but the Tietz organization was more straightforward to an outside viewer.

The major difference between the two stores was the space dedicated to employee rest or leisure. Living-in at the turn of the century was primarily an English phenomenon, which had a significant impact on the infrastructure of store buildings. In the Tietz plans, the vast majority of the non-salesfloor area was devoted to workrooms, warehouses, and offices. While the Walsh store also had workrooms and other business-related spaces, the vast majority of non-sales spaces were for housing employees. The ground and first floors were the only two that occupied the entire footprint of the building. Above those, the second contained space only in the rear of the building. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth floors were only above the front of the building, facing High Street. The sixth floor lacked a clear designation on the plans, but the other three were all staff bedrooms. With the addition of the second-floor spaces, a significant amount of physical resources in John Walsh's store went to maintaining living-in services and the people who needed them.

Interpreting space and the formation of general patterns

One of the highest priorities in the organization of space was preventing different groups of people from encountering each other at inappropriate times. Who was prioritized when and where depended on which priority of the potentially competing options was chosen by the people involved. At the most general level, beliefs about gender influenced the organization of every store and department. These divisions included how departments were arranged and who did

what work. Internal arrangement of departments was also influenced by other concerns, such as profitability and space needed for display. Ground floor departments were designated based on type of item or targeted audience. Some products, such as those in haberdashery, were not large or pricey, but enticed the female shopper into the other departments, located further in or up.⁵⁷ Other ground floor products included outerwear accoutrements—gloves and hats—which could be purchased easily and quickly.⁵⁸ Men's clothing and outfitting was also frequently on the ground floor because that limited male customers in space. There would be no reason for unaccompanied men to venture to the first floor. The upper floors housed women's clothing and shoes.⁵⁹ A major part of this configuration was limiting contact between men and women, customers and employees. Some of this was for the "comfort" of female customers and their ability to shop for clothing and personal items in a space free from men.

Changes in the interior configuration of stores, particularly the establishment of departments and their locations in different parts of the various showrooms, followed social understandings of organization and respectability. Ground floor space was devoted to smaller departments, with items that were less intimate than those of underclothing, dresses, or furnishings. Perfume, books, gloves, and hats, could be perused at a customer's leisure, could draw in passers-by, and could be added to a purchase as impulse buys. In 1895, Leonhard Tietz's Hohe Straße store included the following arrangement: basement: glass, porcelain, enamel kitchen household items; ground floor: haberdashery, ribbons, linen, jersey, trimmings, lace, aprons, silks, clothing materials, furs, soaps, and perfumes; first floor: tapestry, plaster, corsets,

⁵⁷ Kelley Graham, *"Gone to the Shops": Shopping in Victorian England* (Praeger, 2008), 46.

⁵⁸ Although displays were less mobile than some of those today, this is similar to the thinking behind moving umbrellas to the front of a store when it's raining.

⁵⁹ Graham, *"Gone to the Shops,"* 16.

white goods, woollens, furniture fabrics, carpets, curtains, linen goods, cotton goods; second floors: toys, Japanese goods, fancy goods, beds, mattresses, bed springs, bedroom furnishings.⁶⁰ Furniture was often located on the highest sales floor where it did not need to compete for space with other departments or crowds of shoppers. Kitchen and household goods, on the other end of the spectrum, could easily be relegated to the basement where there was less of a need for light to show off products. By informing the public of their interior structures, stores like Tietz could claim to be open to all comers, regardless of buying intent. However, in reality, by publicizing their layout, and having porters at doors (as referenced in the article for the new store in 1895)⁶¹, it was clear that owners and managers wanted certain visitors only to shop in some places. For example, a single man on the first floor would be socially suspect whereas a woman in most of the store would not be (the exception being specifically men's clothing). One-stop shopping increased elements of convenience for some people and created a space in which leisure time could be spent, but never completely or equally for all people.

The impropriety of seeing and occupying space was a part of mourning customs. Mourning practices specifically curtailed women's behaviors and when and where they could be seen.⁶² Although late Victorian norms about mourning had loosened compared to the previous decades, seclusion in the immediate aftermath of a death remained important, as did some level of sartorial change.⁶³ Many of the stores in Sheffield sold mourning wear in addition to everyday fashions and accessories. Some of the stores were also involved in undertaking and funerals,

⁶⁰ *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 22 October 1895, page 6, ZPNRW.

⁶¹ "Aus dem Geschäftsverkehr," *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 24 October 1895, page 3, ZPNRW.

⁶² Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 377, 386-398; Rebecca N. Mitchell, "Death Becomes Her: On The Progressive Potential of Victorian Mourning," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 41, no. 4 (2013): 595-620.

⁶³ Judith Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 380-384.

which they advertised on occasion.⁶⁴ Often mourning wear was part of advertisements and never was this truer than following Queen Victoria's death in January 1901. The difference between regular mourning and official mourning was the visibility of its consumption. Initial stages of mourning required that close family members curtail their public, social engagements, including shopping.⁶⁵ Store owners catered to this by offering mourning wear fittings in clients' homes. For example, Cockayne's notified customers of in-home fittings explicitly in their January 1901 sale advertisement.⁶⁶ This was part of the advertisement's section for mourning wear and was likely a general policy at Cockayne's. It is remarkable in this case because of the juxtaposition to the Queen Victoria's death just three days later. Immediately after the Queen's death, many stores altered their advertisements to include information on mourning wear and altered hours to align with the holiday for the state funeral and switched window displays from colors to black.⁶⁷ By the turn of the twentieth century, the strict mourning customs of the mid-Victorian period were easing, but the initial seclusion requirements continued. By providing for this in their service, department store owners upheld and reinforced the norms of who could acceptably occupy space and when they could do so.

One of the longest lasting practices in English stores was that of living-in. As we saw above, the continuation of living-in necessitated the allocation of space within buildings. The imposition of living-in and the restrictions it put on people's behavior had consequences for work and class standing. Here, though, the most significant consequence of living-in was that only men at the highest ranks would have been able to afford an established household, conforming to

⁶⁴ The jump from drapers and cabinet makers to funeral directors follows the same logical path from drapers to furnishers to electrical engineering and plumbing. Department stores were increasingly invested in every part of people's lives—quite literally from cradle to grave.

⁶⁵ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 377.

⁶⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, 19 January 1901, 1, SA.

⁶⁷ *Sheffield Telegraph*, January 24, 1901, 6, SLSL.

middle-class standards. In the 1901 census listing for Walsh's, the most senior man was a twenty-seven-year-old drapery buyer.⁶⁸ He was most certainly not the highest ranked buyer, but the older men did not live-in, since buyers could afford to establish their own households. The most senior woman was the forty-eight-year-old housekeeper.⁶⁹ At other stores and in other censuses, the manageress was listed first, as most senior. The Manageress would have had more control and power over the lives of most employees. While the housekeeper would not have held power over the women while they worked, when the manageress lived-in, she would have been almost omnipresent. The close, perpetual observation by management had impacts on both men and women's ability to form a social life outside the store.⁷⁰ Lack of private space for live-in employees combined with enforcement of standards and rules constrained these people's lives. The limits of employee's movements stands in stark contrast to shoppers, who moved through the city in pursuit of goods, and to owners, who lived miles from their work.

Department stores occupied an ambiguous place in their physical environments. New, large, modern department stores were not just parachuted into city centers by newcomer owners. They were often built over time by small-scale traders, some of whom had been in the community for generations. Innovations in retailing, particularly in the visual realm, shaped the built environments of department stores: new builds and old conglomerations. The divisions of space within department stores contradicts beliefs about the organization of middle-class society: open, airy spaces that utilized new building technology proclaimed the modern aspects of them while department locations and the division of showrooms and sales floors from general public viewing inscribed on the stores the central social divisions of class and gender.

⁶⁸ 1901 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "High Street," RG 13/4369, page3, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

⁶⁹ 1901 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "High Street," RG 13/4369, page 4, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

⁷⁰ Control over employee's time and movements is a further discussion in chapters two and three.

The Department Store Landscape: Large Stores in Sheffield and Cologne

Beyond the walls of the largest department stores, both Sheffield and Cologne had vibrant fashion retailing landscapes. Businesses of all sizes dealing in clothing, fabric, or accessories operated in virtually every corner of the cities. Small businesses were dispersed throughout the city, from centers to suburbs. Department stores were congregated within city centers, evolving from centralized shopping streets into major shopping districts. This section primarily discusses large stores in both cities and establishes some of the store histories. In other sections and chapters, small fashion stores are important, but the number of businesses which can be classified as “department stores” during this period merits extended examination. Large stores in both cities were complemented by small businesses, which also met shoppers’ needs and, as a general form, continued to prosper during this time. Small businesses existed both as independent store fronts and as front-room operations in residences. This section builds on the previous section by expanding the world of fashion retailing beyond the walls of the department store. The spaces within department stores aligned with ideologies about organization, but they did not exist in isolation. Beyond the similarities inside Walsh’s and Tietz’s new stores were similarities to other stores in their cities. This section expands focus to other large stores which featured similar internal organization. Seeing and understanding the similarities in Sheffield and Cologne provides further evidence that there were many paths across context to the department store form that persisted across the twentieth century. It continues to establish the material realities employees, owners, and customers populated. This section supports the section that follows it by situating business premises as a counterpoint to residences and how, where, and when business and residence were the same place. It is in this final section that front-room businesses are important. Front-room establishments operated as businesses and residences; thus,

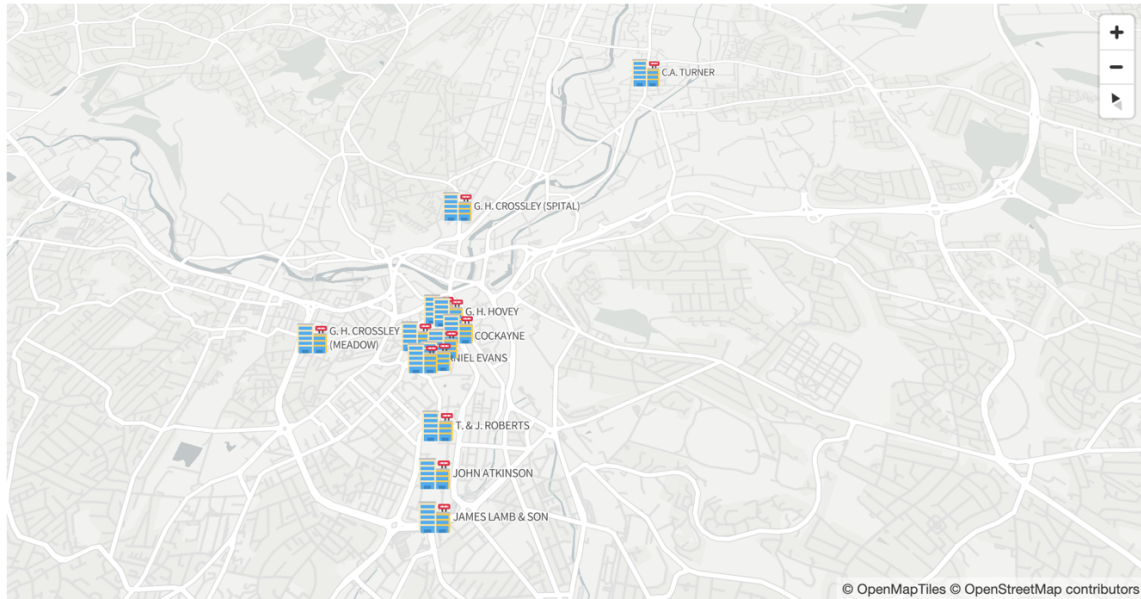
they occupied an ambiguous space in the retailing landscape. Ultimately, this section and the previous one establish department stores in Sheffield and Cologne as concrete, material realities which cast shadows across the retailing landscape.

Sheffield's Department Stores

Sheffield, at the turn of the century, was home to ten or twelve department stores. Not all of these were grand palaces of consumption, and none of them began the period as such. We will see how department stores constructed physical spaces and were concerned with the trade of goods in many areas. The stores were modernized in various ways between 1890 and 1905 with new buildings and/or plate glass windows, open show floors, elevators, and electric lights. Furthermore, these stores housed some of the employees while the owners moved further away from the city center, Figure 4 provides a general look at the stores in the city. The four most important were John Walsh, T. B. & W. Cockayne, Cole Brothers, and John Atkinson. These represent the largest and most successful stores. They also had the longest histories in the city and had continued presences into the twentieth century. A variety of factors, from 1920s buyouts to the COVID pandemic, led to the closing of all of the department stores except John Atkinson, which is still trading in The Moor as of this writing.

Sheffield Department Stores

Major department stores & selected small businesses



Marissa Knaak; made with addresses from *White's Directories of Sheffield, 1890-1914*

Figure 6: Map of major department stores and select small stores in Sheffield. A larger version of this map and a link to the interactive web version are available in Appendix B.

All of the department stores stood in Sheffield's city center. Here, the city center is the area developed before 1736 which was not part of the steel production area.⁷¹ However, of the four main stores, all except Atkinson's were within two-tenths of a mile from each other. Locations in the center of town put these stores in the historic area of the city where small shops had dominated. Individual streets housed many of the fashion shops we are concerned with. By 1900, the four central stores had expanded outside their original premises, absorbing adjoining buildings and properties as the city incorporated outlying villages. This resulted in new buildings, resembling the palatial department stores of London and Paris. Cole Brothers location was known as Cole's Corner for its prominence at the intersection of Fargate and High Street.⁷²

⁷¹ C. R. Warman, "City of Sheffield Historical Growth," ca. 1963, X615/9, X615 – South Yorkshire County, Sheffield City Archives (SA), Sheffield, UK.

⁷² David Perry, *Victorian Sheffield in Advertisements*, (Moss Valley Heritage, 1984), 26.

Cole's building was refurbished in 1892 and was six stories. These improvements happened after forty-five years of business.⁷³ The old store was an impressive building, with the main entrance on the corner of Fargate and High Street and roughly twelve large windows along the street. After 1892, the building had similarly large windows, but had expanded to include neighboring properties⁷⁴ T. & J. Roberts' address was often simply listed as "Moorhead" for its location at the top of South Street Moor.⁷⁵ T. B. & W. Cockayne also expanded in the 1890s. For example, they introduced a new bedding warehouse on Watson Walk in May 1892.⁷⁶

All of these stores started as drapers, tailors, or haberdashers. Many of the owners trained in an apprentice system and sometimes served as assistants at shops that would be their competitors. For example, John Atkinson trained at Cole Brothers before establishing his own store in 1872.⁷⁷ By 1890, most had expanded to include at least a handful of departments. The most common were drapery, silks, furnishing/cabinets, millinery, and hosiery. Some of the smaller department stores stopped at this early level of expansion. They continued to focus on drapery and furnishings, with the occasional foray into accessories and notions. The larger stores continued to expand their offerings. Branching out first to similar departments: outfitting, hats, furs, upholstery, ironmongery. Later, after the turn of the century, they added others: decorating, electrical engineering, plumbing, stationary, confectionary, patent medicines. By the First World

⁷³ Sangeeta Champaneri, "Cole Brothers 1847-1997," 1997, 6080M, local studies miscellaneous papers, Sheffield Local Studies Library (SLSL), Sheffield, UK; Perry, *Victorian Sheffield* 26.

⁷⁴ *Sheffield Independent*, April 16, 1892, page 3, Gale Primary Sources British Library Newspapers (GPSBLN).

⁷⁵ For just one instance, see: *Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood* (Kelly & Co, Limited, 1893), 104.

⁷⁶ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, May 19, 1892, page 1, Gale Primary Sources British Library Newspapers.

⁷⁷ "Atkinsons: Independent Sheffield Department Store Celebrates 150 Years," *BBC News*, March 7, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-60647715>.

Atkinson's work at Cole Brothers is part of the cited news article, however, in the 1841 census, John Atkinson (age 30) was listed first at a building in Angel street as a draper with a John Cole (age 25) listed as a journeyman. I am looking into this further. 1841 Census of England, Sheffield West ED 3 page 5.

War, John Walsh's housed departments in everything from baby linen to undertaking, including sanitary plumbing, perfumery, and catering.⁷⁸

The expansion of the large stores was slow throughout the late nineteenth century but exploded after 1900. Prior to the 1880s, many stores had limited offerings, focusing on one area or a handful of related areas. Those that expanded bought adjacent properties and retrofitted connections between them, leading to cramped, poorly ventilated showrooms. The addition of most of the departments listed above did not happen until the 1890s at the earliest. Between 1884 and 1913, the most prominent stores, at least, doubled their departments. The years of greatest expansion were just after 1900, around the time when many were renovating or rebuilding their spaces. This reflects broader patterns of development across Britain.⁷⁹ These patterns include projects for purpose-built stores, streamlined cash handling, home delivery, and telephone systems.⁸⁰ The significant increases in departments would have mandated expanded sales floor space to display more types of items and more styles. The expanded space in new or renovated stores was part of a modernization drive in display. Rather than the cramped spaces of amalgamated stores, new premises included open floorplans, skylights, and a significant number of plate glass windows. The innovations of the late nineteenth century worked to tie aesthetic and technological modernity to shopping and consumption. Within beautiful, modern settings, department store owners could promote an idealized life, now available to their shoppers.⁸¹

⁷⁸ *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield, for 1895-1896*, 19th edition (William White, Limited, 1895), 437; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 35th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1913), 740.

⁷⁹ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 69.

⁸⁰ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 45, 48, 54.

⁸¹ Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton University Press, 1981), 178-189.

The increased need for sales space did not, for many of these stores, mark the immediate end of the living-in system. Living-in was certainly a remnant of the older styles of guild training, which is not surprising given the continued use of apprentices and the histories of department store owners who trained as draper's apprentices themselves. (John Walsh worked at T.B. & W. Cockayne before opening his own store.)⁸² In Lancaster's study, the growth of British stores, and the demand for more sales space, led to the demise of living-in, allowing for the adaptation of valuable floor space from staff accommodation to sales. However, Lancaster claims the living-in system was falling out of favor by 1891, citing census enumerators' books, particularly of Newcastle and Sunderland. He further claims that living-in was in "rapid decline" in "pioneering centres of department stores" in Manchester, Newcastle, and across Scotland.⁸³ This is only partially reflected in Sheffield.⁸⁴ The highest point of living-in was in 1901 and the peak number of departments in a store achieved in roughly 1905-1907. The census records show twenty-five people living-in at Walsh's in 1891—in the old building.⁸⁵ In 1901, in the new building, there were seventy-six employees living-in.⁸⁶ If living-in had truly been declining during the 1890s, it is unlikely that so much space would have been dedicated to staff accommodation in Walsh's newly remodeled building, most of which was for behind-the-scenes life (either in workrooms or staff space). The continued presence of living-in in provincial centers helps illuminate the discrepancy between industry-wide changes, local needs, and the beliefs of the owners. The economic need to maximize selling space existed in tension with the

⁸² Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 126; Pat Dallman, *The story of Sheffield High Street from 16th century to Modern Times*, (ALD Design & Print, 2003), 84.

⁸³ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 127, 129.

⁸⁴ According to one local study, living-in persisted at Walsh's until at least 1925 in some form. David Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (Carnegie Publishing, 1998), 181.

⁸⁵ 1891 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. "High Street", RG12/3815, ED 20, page 1-2, FindMyPast.co.uk (at SA).

⁸⁶ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG13/4369 page 3-6, microfiche, SA.

impetus to have a convenient labor force and rhetorical claims of patriarchal care for the same labor force. Living-in resulted in at least part of the labor force living in close proximity to their work and subject to the oversight of management. Further, living-in was justified by owners because of this oversight and their middle-class standing. These factors are further discussed below and in chapters two and three. However, the expansions of department stores fed overall store profits and the ability of the owner families to live middle-class lives, while catering to changing shopper expectations.

A further aspect of expansion and the need for space for new departments can be found in the legal documents of some stores. When Cockayne's became a limited company in 1899, their articles of incorporation listed different acceptable lines of trade. In what was a truly astonishing range, "the objects for which the Company is established" included more than twenty departments and seventeen individual subdivisions of what fell under "Manufacturers of and Dealers in." Further, under the terms of the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1898, they were able to "carry on in any part of the world" this business.⁸⁷ By including this list in their official documents, the owners showed their business aspirations. Rather than limit themselves to their original trade, they were branching out according to the aspirations of their owners. These aspirations could be marketed to their shoppers.⁸⁸ In actual offerings, the only part of daily life that was not fully encompassed were foodstuffs in these documents. While they could sell "refreshments" and be "Fishmongers, Dealers in game, and Poulterers,"⁸⁹ they could not sell produce and daily baked goods. Consumables were a significant part of life, and, for many people, the vast majority of their weekly budget. However, for those who could afford to shop at

⁸⁷ T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Incorporation", 1957, SY492/B1/1a, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), SA, Sheffield, UK, iii-iv.

⁸⁸ Miller, *Bon Marché*, 180-182

⁸⁹ Cockayne, SY492/B1/1a, iii.

Cockayne's, provisioning was not the same type of concern as for those who worked there (or who could not afford their other goods). Other stores filled the need for general groceries, some of them department store-esque. Greengrocers, and grocers, abounded, and Co-Operatives carried a range of products similar to department stores but on a different economic set-up.⁹⁰ By the first decade of the twentieth century, a single department store could fashion one's life from cradle to grave.

Smaller department stores often did not have the same range of products, but they, too, renovated their premises. Frequently, the impetus for these changes was an external factor, such as fires or street widenings. As Lancaster notes, early department stores were plagued by fire given their ad hoc construction with buildings cobbled together, gas lines haphazardly laid to provide light, and cramped spaces.⁹¹ One of the Sheffield stores that likely updated after a fire was John Atkinson. The store suffered fire damage on December 17, 1898. Unlike many other department store fires at the time, Atkinson's escaped complete destruction. By January 1899, they were advertising for the "sale of salvage drapery stock." The sale was to commence on 13 January and replaced the usual January annual sale. From the advertisement, we learn that "the stock is not burnt, but very much damaged by water and smoke" and that the stock was covered by insurance so "he [John Atkinson] can afford to almost give it away, and, as it is a custom in January to have an annual stock-taking sale, he has taken this opportunity of making this a huge thing by having the whole of his immense stock much more reduced than ordinarily."⁹² The fire

⁹⁰ The British Co-operative movement developed in the middle of the nineteenth century as part of the working-class and non-conformist movements. Originally concerned with the provision of food and clothing and insurance, co-operatives were based on membership: only members could shop at co-ops and yearly dividends were paid out. Over time, co-ops expanded and opened their doors to non-members and included more and more types of good. Today, the Co-operative Group continues to operate today in the UK, although to varying degrees of success. For a general overview see, Martin Purvis, "Co-operative retailing in Britain," in *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c1800-1914*, ed. John Benson and Gareth Shaw (Leicester University Press, 1992), 107-134.

⁹¹ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 46.

⁹² *Sheffield Independent*, 10 January 1899, page 1, GPSBLN.

did not hamper business too much, and even provided an opportunity for profit, since the goods were covered by insurance and the store would have had a January sale regardless of circumstances.

Many stores remodeled without the catalyst of a fire. Changes to the physical space were part of a modernization process that department stores claimed to be leading.⁹³ The new, open, light-filled, well-ventilated spaces presented a specific image to supporters and detractors. However, even without the ever-present potential danger of a literal inferno, sleek and bright palaces of consumption did not convert everyone.⁹⁴ Fires, and their prevention, were a convenient reason for re-building but if they did not happen, owners' ambitions found other routes to change.

In addition to unplanned disasters, sometimes planned civil infrastructure or regulation changes necessitated building changes. This was not limited to city-led endeavors in Britain. In response to the introduction of new building regulations, F. Alsberg in Cologne was required to make changes at the start of 1903.⁹⁵ To facilitate this, the store introduced a massive sale during December 1902.⁹⁶ The sale, during which many products were offered for almost half price, would serve to reduce stock to prevent too much carry-over when the store would close.⁹⁷

Throughout the late nineteenth century, the Sheffield City Corporation conducted street widening schemes. In 1895 this included High Street, which changed the front of Walsh's store. In 1897, further plans were implemented for a further thirty-four locations across the city. In 1899, these projects reached Snig Hill. The construction impacted Meeke Brothers' drapery and prompted a

⁹³ Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 55-61.

⁹⁴ Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 180-186.

⁹⁵ It is likely the changes in building code were related to fire prevention, but I cannot confirm that currently.

⁹⁶ *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 30 November 1902, page 12, ZPNRW.

⁹⁷ I am continuing to look in the newspapers for an announcement of their re-opening. They were likely closed past 31 January 1903.

clearing sale. According to the advertisement, the store was “offering...until the whole is cleared, five thousand pounds’ worth of general drapery, bedsteads, carpets &c., at prices which must command a quick and absolute clearance.”⁹⁸ The clearance sale and rebuild did not hamper Meeke’s business permanently. By early 1901, their regular advertisements returned, and they continued trading. City-wide endeavors to infrastructure were a temporary nuisance or inconvenience, but ultimately benefited shops. Wider streets allowed for increased traffic, including pedestrians, and tram lines more easily connected the ever-expanding cities to the centers, particularly the suburbs.

Disaster or city construction were not the only causes for rebuilding; some projects were undertaken to support expanding business. John Walsh’s rebuild is the focus of the third section. However, they were not the only store to extensively remodel without external cause. G.H. Hovey, at the corner of Angel and Castle streets, expanded in 1899 to include a “new shop in Castle street...[which] affords the space so urgently needed for the display of Goods, and the convenience of Customers.”⁹⁹ These new premises were across the street from the original store, which differentiates Hovey’s from the other building projects outlined here. The two primary departments affected were cabinets and house furnishing. These departments needed more space to accommodate changing display techniques and best practices.¹⁰⁰ Without detailed, extensive financial records it is hard to check the veracity of these claims. Across Europe the share of retail sales held by department stores remained minimal.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the reverse could have been true. Rebuilds could have been undertaken to promote increased sales. In all likelihood both were true. There was some expansion in sales and the amount of products in stores which made

⁹⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, 3 August 1899, 1, GPSBLN.

⁹⁹ *Sheffield Independent*, 13 January 1899, 1, GPSBLN.

¹⁰⁰ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 51.

¹⁰¹ Mueller, *Kaiser*, 4.

existing sales space inadequate *and* owners wanted to modernize their buildings in order to draw more consumers in the door to promote impulse buying.

Sheffield's department stores were owned by men who were connected to each other in various ways. They operated similar businesses which competed for customers, but many of the owners were part of the Sheffield Drapers' Association and other local trade societies.¹⁰² Further, some of them trained with each other before starting their own businesses. There does not seem to have been, among these men at least, vicious competition. There was competition for sales between them, and the smaller businesses, but, for the most part, they were able to coexist.

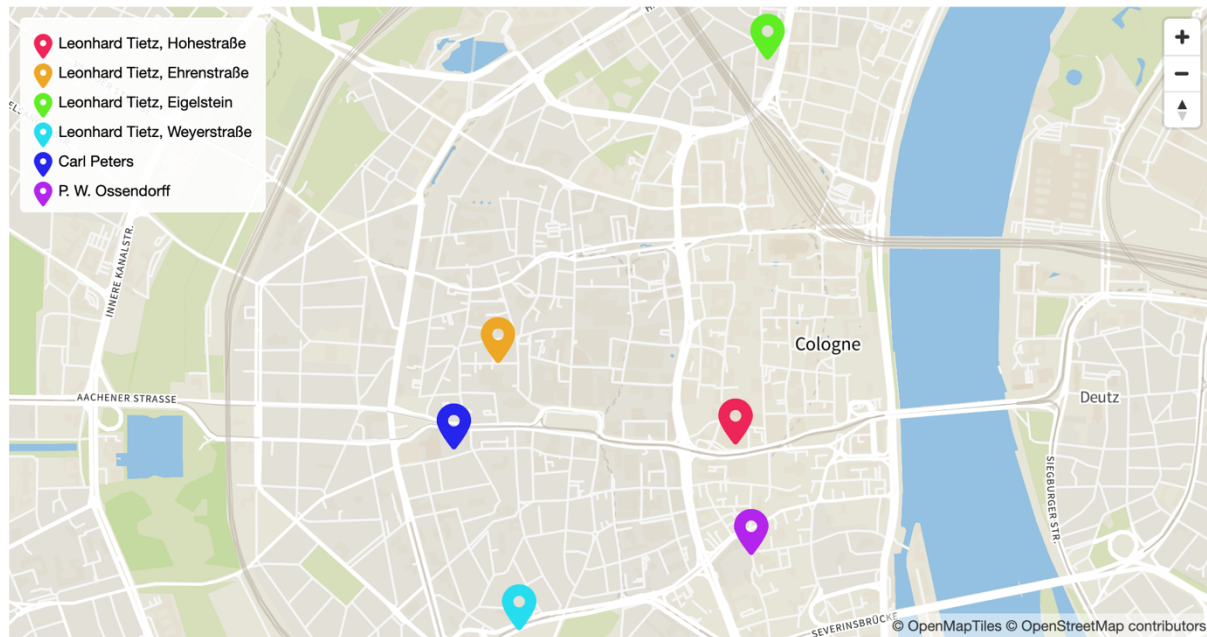
Cologne's Department Stores

Cologne's department stores and smaller fashion shops developed alongside each other and coexisted in the market. They were largely located in the old city, with some neighborhood shops in the suburbs. Almost all of the proprietors lived on-site or nearby. There were fewer than half a dozen stores of similar size and scope to those in Sheffield. In this section I discuss just three: Leonhard Tietz, P. W. Ossendorff, and Carl Peters. Figure 5 shows the four Tietz locations, P. W. Ossendorff, and Carl Peters. These three large businesses have different origin stories compared to each other and the Sheffield stores. This difference in origins promotes a narrative of department store evolution that featured multiple paths to similar ends. Finally, this section also introduces the idea of multiple locations and chains as part of retailing businesses. This practice spread beyond Germany, but it was a characteristic of German businesses early in their development.

¹⁰² *The Sheffield Year Book and Record, 1913* (Sir W. C. Leng & Co. (Sheffield Telegraph), Ltd., 1913), 336.

Cologne Department Stores, 1900

Leonhard Tietz, Carl Peters, & P. W. Ossendorff locations in 1900.



Marissa Knaak; data from *Greven's Adreßbuch, 1900*.

Figure 7: Major Cologne Department Stores. A larger version of this map can be found in Appendix B.

The most prominent store in Cologne was the Leonhard Tietz firm, which moved its headquarters to Cologne in 1895.¹⁰³ L. Tietz became the main department store chain in the Rhineland and into Belgium through the early twentieth century. L. Tietz had started his business in Straslund (north of Berlin) 1879, but moved to the Rhineland and expanded over the next decade to Elberfeld and Koblenz, establishing Leonhard Tietz in the west.¹⁰⁴ The first store in the vicinity of Cologne opened around 1890 and the first store in the city opened in 1891.¹⁰⁵ From this point, the company expanded both in the city and across the region. Eventually there would

¹⁰³ Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 39; Nils Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz: Fuhrmannssohn und Warenhauskönig von der Warthe an den Rhein* (Hentrich & Hentrich, 2014), 34.

¹⁰⁴ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 21, 2.6

¹⁰⁵ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 26.

be four Cologne locations and stores in Antwerp and Brussels, among other cities.¹⁰⁶ As the Leonhard Tietz chain grew, its stores were expanded and updated to match changes in technology and retailing practices. Across the period covered here, the men in control of the company were related to either Leonhard or Flora Tietz and were trusted with everything from buying to training employees in new stores.¹⁰⁷ Unlike stores in Britain, the Tietz stores did not house employees on-site.¹⁰⁸ The workrooms at Hohe Straße in the center of Cologne were extensive and located in the two basements while the corporate offices sat on the top floor.¹⁰⁹ By 1902 the façade was an imposing structure in the Cologne city center.

There were two other significant businesses in Cologne which can be classified as “department stores” by the start of the First World War. The first is Carl Peters which first appeared in the directory in 1892. The business had early connections to Hamburg and was primarily a wholesaler.¹¹⁰ The store was on Breite Straße, also in Cologne’s city center, but

¹⁰⁶ Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft, *50 Jahre Leonhard Tietz 1879-1929* (Cologne: Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft, 1929), 12.

¹⁰⁷ Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft, *50 Jahre*, 12, 13.

¹⁰⁸ Herman Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss EG. Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201263>, mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität München (mediaTUM); Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 1. OG. Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201266>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 2. OG. Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201267>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 3. OG. Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201268>, mediaTUM.

¹⁰⁹ Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Keller. Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201265>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Souterrain; Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201264>, mediaTUM; Hermann Billing, *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 4. OG. Kaufhäuser & Handel*, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201269>, mediaTUM.

¹¹⁰ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven’s Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Detuz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven’s Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1892), II Theil, 114, 241; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven’s Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Detuz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven’s Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1893), II Theil, 119, 249; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven’s Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Detuz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven’s Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1894), II Theil, 260, 124; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven’s Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte bayenthal, Detuz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk*. (Greven’s Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1895), II Theil, 120, 275; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven’s Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Detuz,*

expanded through the next two decades to include most of the block, taking over and repurposing smaller buildings. Through 1913, the business included a wholesaler in the directory listing, even as the goods they dealt in expanded from the general haberdashery and woollens to the staples of a department store. While many department stores included wholesaling, Carl Peters is the only to prioritize this aspect above retailing for so long. From 1903, the business called itself a “Großes Kaufhaus” with sixteen listed departments. Carl Peters lived at the business from 1893 until 190, but in 1902, he moved to auf dem Berlich 3, just two blocks away, and then to Elisenstraße 9, a further two blocks away, where he lived until at least 1914.¹¹¹ All of these

Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1896), II Theil, 138, 293.

¹¹¹ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1897), II Theil, 143, 304; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Kiehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1898), II Theil, 157, 333; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1899), II Theil, 173, 369; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1900), II Theil, 393, 183; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1901), II Theil, 408, 190; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1902), II Theil, 201, 429; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1903), II Theil, 206, 443; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1904), II Theil, 468; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1905) II Theil, 497; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1906) II Theil, 525; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1907) II Theil, 548; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1908) II Theil, 316; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1909) II Theil, 332; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1910) II Theil, 348; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1911) II Theil, 374; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und*

addresses are in the Neumarkt-Viertel, west of the Altstadt, but inside the ring road of Cologne. Additionally, many department stores included wholesaling, but Carl Peters is the only to prioritize this aspect above retailing for so long.

P. W. Ossendorff was founded by Peter Wilhelm Ossendorff in 1861 on Waidmarkt as a printing, weaving, and dyeing workshop next to the linen and manufactured goods wholesaler and retailer. In the late 1870s, Peter Wilhelm's sons, Adam and Otto, joined the business. Throughout this time, and after the business split between printing and dyeing and linen and manufactured goods, the family appears to have lived at the business premises. This changed after Peter Wilhelm's death in 1884. Although Adam still lived on-site, Otto moved and established his own business. P. W. Ossendorff continued to trade on Weidmarkt and Blaubach (adjacent streets) under the leadership of Adam, his sister Agnes Oster, and her sons until at least 1914. (The Ossendorff family and their situation has already been discussed in chapter one.) Like Leonhard Tietz, Carl Peters and P. W. Ossendorff advertised in the local papers, with increasing more regularity, and added telephone lines to facilitate further business development. Neither Peters or Ossendorff pursued the more radical rebuilding strategy of Leonhard Tietz nor expanded the company to multiple locations.

In addition to these three large stores, Cologne was also home to a vast array of smaller stores dedicated to clothing and décor. Throughout the city, both in the old center and the burgeoning suburban neighborhoods, tailors, haberdashers, and drapers plied their trades. Across Cologne, there were many other stores selling the same products but not in the same comprehensive way as departments stores. Whereas department stores sold multiple products of

Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1912) II Teil, 388; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1913) II Teil, 402; *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgegend, insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1914), II Teil, 417.

the same type across a significant number of departments, smaller stores focused on a few types of products with more limited ranges.¹¹² Wholesalers of cloth and materials would have supplied the myriad of tailors, dressmakers, modistes, and haberdashers. The small stores, *Einzelhändler*, worked as specialty shops. They were located in both the city center and also in the newly incorporated neighborhoods and suburbs.

One of the most significant differences between Cologne and Sheffield, and Germany and Britain at large, was the early prevalence of chains and multiple locations in the German fashioning trades.¹¹³ In Germany, department stores originated from drapers or small traders who expanded within and beyond individual cities. Leonhard Tietz started in Elberfeld, but the move to Cologne was the start of his expansion across the region. Other German chains included Hermann Tietz, Wertheim, and, later, Kaufhaus des Westens. These companies had regional markets but were also in Berlin. Not every German department store at this time was a chain, nor did they all have multiple locations. The ones that were one or both of these were frequently run by individuals and families connected to Birnbaum an der Warthe.¹¹⁴ In addition to being chains, German department stores often had multiple locations in a single city. Within Cologne, L. Tietz had four stores – Hohe Straße, Breite Straße (Ehrenstraße), Weyer Straße and Eigelstein.¹¹⁵ All

¹¹² Douglas Klahr, “Department stores and their display windows during the prewar Third Reich” in *Architectures of Display: Department Stores and Modern Retail*, ed. Anca I. Lasc, Patricia Lara-Betancourt, and Margaret Maile Petty (Routledge, 2018), 219; Pam Inder, *Busks, Basques and Brush-Braid: British dressmaking in the 18th and 19th centuries* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 7.

¹¹³ There has been some discussion about how to define chains and multiple store organizations. Some define both types as organizations with ten or more establishments, which leaves a grey area between two and nine stores. In this study, businesses with one or two stores are treated as department stores, as are those which started with multiple store fronts/house numbers but rebuilt in a single, large establishment. They could also be called early chains, but never fully materialize. Contrarily, the Leonhard Tietz business, and the other large German department stores, more closely resemble the multiples defined in the literature and what we, today, would consider a chain operation. For more see, John Benson and Gareth Shaw, editors, *The evolution of retail systems, c.1800-1914* (Leicester University Press, 1992).

¹¹⁴ Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 23; Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*, 37; Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 62.

¹¹⁵ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1901), II Theil, 551.

four stores were within the inner city, demarcated by the ring road which replaced the city walls. Despite this general concentration within the ever-expanding city, the locations were dispersed enough to serve different clientele within their neighborhoods. The Hohe Straße flagship store, with its modern edifice and corporate headquarters, was the center of a growing industrialized operation. Along with the other department stores operating chains and increasingly involved with the manufacturing process, the German retail landscape was more unified than that in Britain. Despite the ongoing, limited share of total retail sales held by department stores, the expansion of chains helped stoke fears and concerns over their social impacts.¹¹⁶

Department stores in Sheffield and Cologne evolved over the course of a quarter century from small, family-run businesses into large retailers, primarily employing non-relatives. The families that owned these stores maintained close relationships to them even as the business expanded. Department stores were centrally located within cities, often in areas that were historically shopping streets. Owners expanded stores from limited concerns, frequently starting from whole cloth or clothing to fields that were related, like accessories, and finally into most elements of life. Sheffield and Cologne could support multiple stores of this nature as well as the small fashion shops that continued to trade a single type of good or deal in bespoke clothing. Thus far many of parts of these stores remain unpopulated. Owners exist in business settings and as decision makers, and employees have been more of an idea than real people. In the next section, stores and the cities gain populations.

¹¹⁶ Part of this concern includes the antisemitic nature of anti-department store rhetoric, as outlined in Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*. British stores eventually merged into chain concerns, but that started after the First World War and accelerated after the Second World War.

Where People Lived and the Spaces Between Them

Department and fashion store employees occupied spaces beyond those dedicated to retailing. Examining where people lived, or spent their non-working, rest hours, further helps us understand their worlds. In this section I explore the lives of department store employees, store owners, and front-room businesspeople. First, I outline the practice of living-in, primarily in relation to Sheffield since living-in was almost only practiced in England by this time. I consider some of the effects of living at a department store, for living-in, in some ways, connects department store employees to their peers in small shops. Second, I look at department store owners and their moves away from either their shops or from industrialized areas to respectable residential neighborhoods. The flight of owners from their work locations connects them to other members of the new middle classes and the industrialist bourgeoisie. Finally, I discuss front-room businesses, their locations in cities, and the flexibility inherent in running a small business from the home. Together, the parts of this section promote an understanding of fashion retailing people separated by physical space as well as conceptions of social place, which were mutually reinforcing systems.

Living at Work: Employee Living-in as an English Oddity

Living-in was one of the hallmarks of the British department store. Early department stores across Europe and North America housed their employees, but the practice was discontinued in most places by the end of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ England, in particular, maintained the employee accommodations long after other areas, including within the United Kingdom.¹¹⁸ Part of the continued popularity was related to the ability of owners to claim patriarchal care of their employees; they said they provided respectable accommodations,

¹¹⁷ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 126-29.

¹¹⁸ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 129.

especially for young women who lived away from their families.¹¹⁹ Virtually every large store in Sheffield had assistants living-in until the First World War; however there is no evidence that the large stores in Cologne did so. Living-in provided employers with a dependent labor source. Employees living-in had accommodation and meals subtracted from their pay, faced restrictions on their movements (inside and outside the store), and were cut off from many of their peers and families.¹²⁰ Sometimes, employment in England was dependent on on-site residence, but I have no evidence of this policy in Sheffield.¹²¹ Sheffield's department stores housed every type of store employee—from sales assistants to workshop hands to parlor maids—and every store which housed employees included men and women. Employees living-in did not spend all of their hours inside the department store. However, they were more likely to have their movements constrained because they lived-in. Also, they did not have the physical separation from their place of employment as did the owners and many of their peers.

Purpose-built stores, like John Walsh, provided accommodation for employees and many employees lived-in despite increasing pressure for maximum sales space. What we see is the increasingly feminized workforce in all areas of department store employment (from sales assistants to workroom hands to servants). For six of the largest stores, the total numbers of live-in employees peaked in 1901 when almost 297 employees lived-in, and that number were similarly high in 1891, at 218 people, and in 1911, at 250 people.¹²² The vast majority of the

¹¹⁹ Hallsworth and Davies, *The Working Life*, 122-3; Bondfield, *A Life's Work*, 70.

¹²⁰ Whitaker, *Victorian and Edwardian Shopworkers*, 9; Joseph Hallsworth and Rhys J. Davies, *The Working Life of Shop Assistants: A Study of Conditions of Labour in the Distributive Trades* (The National Labour Press, 1910), 120-126.

¹²¹ Hallsworth and Davies, *Working Life*, 126.

¹²² The six stores are John Walsh, T.B. & W. Cockayne, Cole Brothers, John Atkinson (the family also lived at the store, but are not included in the totals), Robert Proctor, and G.H. Crossley. 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3815 #3 ED 19-20, RG 12/3818 #1 ED 12/13, RG 12/3802 ED 5, microfiche and FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4362 #3 ED 15, RG 13/4360 #1 ED 9, RG 13/4348 ED 4, RG 13/4364 ED 12, microfiche and FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1911 Census of England and Wales, district 510, sub-district 1 and 5, ED 5, 9, 17, 22, 23, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

employees who lived-in were women by 1911. In 1891, John Walsh, T.B. & W. Cockayne, and Cole Brothers together housed 128 of the total 218 (58%) people living-in at major department stores in the city, of which half were women. Part of this high proportion of men is a consequence of lower numbers generally and Cole Brothers' policy of only hiring men for sales positions and women for workroom and servant positions. At Cole Brothers, of the 42 employees who lived-in in 1891, just six were women (the housekeeper, cook, and four general servants) compared to thirty-six men (one waiter, thirty-five draper's assistants) Just ten years later, in 1901, the same three stores housed 159 of the total 297 (54%) employees living-in at the major stores, of which sixty percent of those who lived-in were women. Although Cole Brothers continued to only hire men for assistant positions, in 1901 they housed fewer employees, whereas both Cockayne and Walsh housed significantly more (partially due to the new Walsh building). By 1911, living-in had peaked, as seen in the decrease in absolute numbers, but women were once again over fifty percent of the total. The only store housing more employees in 1911 than it had previously was Cole Brothers, but despite employing female assistants from 1909, the company still housed only male assistants and female servants. Although the workforce was increasingly composed of women and nationwide living-in was falling out of favor, neither all-encompassing nor were they necessary to economic success.

In Sheffield's department stores, employees who lived-in worked in every area of the stores. Most frequently, employees were listed as "draper's assistants," who were, essentially, sales floor assistants. In every store, assistants were both women and men, except at Cole Brothers, where they were just men.¹²³ Although men and women were included in the assistant's category, there were often more men, while women were engaged in other work. For example, at

¹²³ See chapter 2 for more on this.

Cockayne's in 1891, of the forty-six draper's assistants living-in, twenty-six were men and twenty were women. Despite this imbalance, more women lived-in because all of the servants for the employee accommodations were women. Sometimes "draper's assistant" was listed alongside a specific department in census records, such as mantle cutter, dressmaker, or milliner.

¹²⁴ These positions were not solely sales floor, but also included jobs in workrooms. Workers here could have had some contact with the sales floor and could have been drafted to sales when needed.¹²⁵

Some census records include specific department information but the general "draper's assistant" was likely a catch-all term that designated the type of establishment and the general position within its hierarchy. Individuals with higher internal status had their positions listed, were frequently older, and occasionally widowed. Sara Wheeler, draper's manageress at Cockayne's in 1901, fit all three; in addition to being the manageress, she was a fifty-year-old widow.¹²⁶ "Older", of course, was relative. The vast majority of shop workers were under thirty and, according to Hallsworth and Davies, three-quarters of shop assistants aged out by thirty-five.¹²⁷ Thus, one of Cockayne's senior employees in 1911 was thirty-five-year-old John Gibson, the store shopwalker and house steward. As the steward, he was recorded as the "Chief Resident Officer or Person in Charge" in the census enumeration book.¹²⁸ The older employees who lived-in were often servants; when they were not, like Gibson, they were stewards or

¹²⁴ 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3815 #3 ED 20, microfiche, SA.

¹²⁵ Inder, *British dressmaking*, 166.

¹²⁶ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4363 #3 ED 15, microfiche, SA.

¹²⁷ Hallsworth and Davies, *The Working Life*, 114.

¹²⁸ 1911 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Dorothy Tindall", District Sheffield No 510, sub-district South Sheffield no 1 ED 22, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA). In the 1911 census, large institutions were recorded in special books, labeled "Enumeration Book for an Institution of Large Establishment," rather than with the general street addresses as they had been in the past. Department stores joined hospitals, children's homes, and schools as large institutions. The Shopwalker was the theft prevention system of the time, but also included work shepherding customers to appropriate departments.

superintendents. This was particularly true for women: the oldest women who lived-in were housekeepers or cooks. Female assistants who rose through the ranks to become managers or buyers did not live-in.

Given the long hours, short breaks, and strict rules of work in a department store, most employees took meals at the stores as well. These occurred in shifts and were frequently gender segregated.¹²⁹ A Cockayne's store insurance record from 1900 stated that eighty employees lived and slept on the premises and fifty-four slept out but ate meals in the store.¹³⁰ All 134 employees would have eaten at least one meal on-site, but the eighty who lived-in would have eaten three. Breakfast occurred in shifts. The first group started work at 7:45 a.m. but was only allowed to eat (and dress) after the second group arrived from breakfast and dressing at 8:30 a.m. Everyone was to be dressed and ready to work at 9:30 a.m.¹³¹ Dinner and supper were scheduled in similar shift fashion. For those who lived-in, restrictions like those on meals, left very little time outside, no fresh air, and only sunlight filtered through glass.¹³²

Store accommodations housed another group of people: servants. In most discussions of living-in, these women were and continue to be left out.¹³³ Although some men worked in back

¹²⁹ T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Rules to be Observed in the Establishment of Messrs. T. B. and W. Cockayne", n.d., MP54L, miscellaneous papers, SLSL; Whitaker, *Victorian Shopworkers*, 20.

¹³⁰ T. B. & W. Cockayne, "Insurance: Staff (list of numbers of employees in each department with total salaries (compiled for insurance purposes))," ca. 1900, SY492/B8/1, SY492 – Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (formerly T. B. & W. Cockayne), SA.

¹³¹ T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Rules to be observed in the establishment of Messrs. T.B. & W. Cockayne," 1872, SY492/B18/1, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), SA.

¹³² Given the emphasis given to fresh air and outdoor activity amongst the middle classes, and the relocation of owners and upper management to the suburbs, the restriction of assistants and servants inside is stark, particularly in the northern European winter (at the winter solstice, Sheffield less than seven and a half hours of daylight and Cologne just under eight).

¹³³ Bondfield, *A Life's Work*, 62-74; Hallsworth and Davies, *The Working Life*, 120-127; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 126-129; Margaret G. Bondfield, "Conditions Under which Shop Assistants Work," *The Economic Journal* 9, no. 34 (1899): 277-286; Kellie K. Bradshaw, "Reality, Expectations and Fears: Women Shop Assistants in London, 1890-1914" (PhD diss., George Mason University, 2019), 59-90, ProQuest (13881082).

In none of these sources are servants mentioned, even when their presence is directly implicated, as with the provision of meals or with the cleanliness of the surroundings.

of house, the people responsible for making living-in domestic were women. Department store servants had the same occupations and many of the same jobs as domestic servants in households. Housekeepers, cooks, and maids of all types kept employees fed and living spaces clean. For example, at Cole Brothers, the only women who lived-in were servants. In 1891, of the forty-two people who lived in, thirty-six were men (one draper's superintendent, thirty-four draper's assistants, and one waiter) and six were women (the housekeeper, a cook, and four general servants).¹³⁴ By 1911, forty-eight employees lived-in: thirty-eight men and ten women. Every man was listed as a draper's assistant, while the women included two housekeepers (one marked "business") and eight domestic servants.¹³⁵ This work was vital to store success. (More of this work will be discussed in chapter three.) Separated from their employers in ways that their domestic peers were not from the master or mistress, they were also separated from the other employees. In the Cole's example, servants were the only women who lived-in, despite the business also employing women in the workrooms (they did not employ female sales assistants until 1909). These women, then, were separated from the other employees living-in by gender, type of work, and class standing. Servants worked primarily behind the scenes, away from the customers and the open spaces, but lived on the same floors.

Relegation to the hottest, dirtiest, smelliest places doing the most manual labor of the establishment positions servants at the intersection of business and domestic, as well as the most difficult, least visible work. Department store owners claimed their place as patriarchal leaders, providing safe homes for their employees – complete with servants. The physical presence of servants and their work illuminates the lack of difference between business and residence. In this

¹³⁴ 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3815, ED 19, pages 3-5, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

¹³⁵ 1911 Census of England and Wales, RG 510, sub-district 1, ED 9, "Fargate," accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA.

light, and thinking about how to make servants and their work visible, we can think about how other workers in department stores made servants' work invisible. When, where, and how work happened affected the ways in which that work was interpreted as work.

Living-in kept employees separate from assistants in other stores as well as separating people from other members of the new middle class. Employees who lived-in chose to do so for many reasons or were compelled to do so as part of their contracts.¹³⁶ Large stores could house dozens of people, even more in metropolises. At the end of the nineteenth century, most of these stores had a single premises, unlike German stores which were already chains. Thus, all employees who lived-in with their employer were congregated in a single building.¹³⁷ One store in Sheffield was different: G.H. Crossley. Crossley's had two locations that housed employees: one on Spital Hill and the other on Meadow Street.¹³⁸ The Spital Hill location was east of the city center, across the River Don, in the Burngreave Ward while the Meadow Street location was north of the city center in St.Philip's Ward. Neither location was the most fashionable, as were those were in the city center itself, and the two neighborhoods catered to different clientele. Spital Hill was reliably working-class given its proximity to the steel industry. Unlike the glorious buildings on High Street and Fargate, these stores would have been much more modest. In addition to older accommodations, housing employees across locations further separated them from their peers and families. Internal hierarchies existed in every store, but there would have also been differences across locations. Workers would have limited opportunities to talk to their

¹³⁶ Margaret Bondfield, *A Life's Work* (Hutchinson & Co. Limited, 1948), 67.

¹³⁷ There is some evidence that some stores housed employees away from the retail building, but still at addresses affiliated with the business. I have no record of that during this time in Sheffield.

¹³⁸ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4364 ED 12, page 1-2, RG 13/4373 #1 ED 2, microfiche, SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, registration district 510, sub-district 5, ED 5, "131 Spital Hill" and "139 Spital Hill", registration district 510, sub-district 2, ED 17, "29 Burnt Tree Lane," FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA). Sometime between 1907 and 1911, Crossley opened two additional stores, one on Angel Street and the other on Castle Street. These two locations were in the city center and within blocks of some of the largest stores in town.

peers and discuss conditions or circumstances. Because they lived and worked at smaller establishments, their social lives and relationships were limited in ways that live-in employees at large stores or employees who lived-out did not experience. It is, in many ways, similar to the circumstances faced by live-in domestic servants in small establishments.

By the end of the nineteenth century, most Sheffield owners lived off-site, but this was not the case for the Atkinson family. Living on-site connected the family to the business more intimately. The lack of separation of work and family life does not necessarily mean that Atkinson's was not a modern industrialized business. As happened to other stores, Atkinson's expanded after fire damage, advertised heavily in the local newspapers, expanded departments, and utilized large window displays. The continued presence of the family living on site did not preclude these advancements. It was not necessary for Atkinson and his family to immediately jettison all components of pre-industrialized retailing. From at least 1879 through 1911, the South Street store housed the John Atkinson family as well as shop assistants and servants.¹³⁹ By 1891, the Atkinson family included two more sons and significantly more employees: nine male assistants, two male apprentices, six female assistants, and two general servants. The total household equaled twenty-four.¹⁴⁰ In 1901, the whole household had decreased to eighteen people: John Atkinson, his wife, Clara, two sons, two general domestic servants, six draper's assistants (five women, one man), and six draper's apprentices (all men).¹⁴¹ None of these counts included the general servants advertised for in the newspapers.¹⁴² The business cook and maids likely lived away from the shop. John and Clara's eldest son, Harold, was working as a draper's

¹³⁹ William White, *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, Chesterfield, and Worksop, and all the Parishes, Townships, and Villages within a Distance of Twelve miles from Sheffield as a Centre*, (William White, 1897), 398; *White's*, 1911, 412.

¹⁴⁰ 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3802 ED 5 page 33-34, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

¹⁴¹ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4348 page 15 District Ecclesall Bierlow 508, sub-district 4 Ecclesall Bierlow, ED 4, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

¹⁴² *Sheffield Independent*, January 14, 1901, 2, microfilm, SLSL.

assistant in a large drapery establishment in Leicester.¹⁴³ Serving time away from the family business was a tried-and-true method of training across many of the families. After his marriage in 1906, Harold and his wife returned to Sheffield. By 1910, Harold and his family were living in the Millhouses area, three miles southwest of the store. They remained there until the First World War.¹⁴⁴ In 1911, the household had decreased again to sixteen: just John, Clara, two servants, and thirteen employees.¹⁴⁵ Unlike in the other stores, the 1911 census information for the occupation of the store employees just lists them as “assisting in the business” rather than more specific jobs or departments. Another of the Atkinson sons, John Walter was still working for the business but, like Harold, lived with his family southwest of the city.¹⁴⁶

Harold and John Walter Atkinson moving to the suburbs while their father stayed in the city center is an example of the malleability of the changing retail scene and the ambiguity tied to location. The trends of the industrialist bourgeoisie, both in retailing and other heavy industry, was to move away from their shops and the city centers. However, the Atkinsons did not follow this trend and the Atkinson business did not suffer from either John’s presence or his sons’ absence.¹⁴⁷ One did not have to accept, wholesale, what was deemed “modern.” Indeed, the success of individuals, families, and businesses relied on contextually contingent decisions to

¹⁴³ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/3007 ED 44 page 5, AncestryLibrary.com. I suspect this to have been Joseph Johnson’s department store, given the census address. The store was significantly larger than any in Sheffield.

¹⁴⁴ *White’s Directory* (1910), 395; *White’s Directory* (1912), 424; *White’s Directory* (1913), 432; 1911 Census of England and Wales, registration district 509, sub-district 5, ED 20, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

¹⁴⁵ 1911 Census of England & Wales, 116 & 114 South Street Moor, registration district 509, subdistrict 7, ED 3 and 116, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

¹⁴⁶ 1911 Census of England & Wales, registration district 509, subdistrict 5, ED 18, 32 Montrose road, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

The middle Atkinson son, Edgar, was working for the City Corporation in 1911 as a Charge Engineer at the Electric Generation Station, and, like his brothers, lived with his wife southwest of the city (1911 Census of England & Wales, registration district 509, subdistrict 5, ED 6, 68 Edgedale Road, AncestryLibrary.com).

¹⁴⁷ As I have referenced elsewhere, the Atkinson store fared remarkably well compared to the other department stores in Sheffield and is the only one still open.

adopt or reject innovations. This was not only the case with ideas, norms, and practices, but also with the arrangement and management of physical space and people's locations within it.

Promoting or requiring living-in allowed English owners and managers to exert power over their employees' non-work lives. Where living-in was required, male employees were prevented from attaining many milestones of masculine adulthood.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, living-in kept employees in the disciplinary structure of the department store. In Cologne, employees were not restricted in this way. They could live anywhere in the city they could afford. This changed the nature of shop work. For those living-in, shop work was more closely related to service and the work of a servant. For those who did not, there were more options for movement and leisure. Thus, employees who did not live-in could take advantage of the opportunities of modern urban life more easily than their live-in peers.

Living-in was very popular in Sheffield's department stores at the turn of the twentieth century. Across the three relevant English censuses for this period, dozens of employees lived in the stores in which they worked. The practice itself was highly debated, and experiences of it were ambiguous. People's views of living-in and its effects on their lives are discussed in more depth in chapters three and four. For the people who lived-in, ultimately, the lack of separation between work and domicile, especially given the long working hours, constrained movement in ways that those of any rank who lived separately did not experience.

Flight to the Suburbs by Owners and Managers

Despite differences between Sheffield and Cologne, owners of large establishments in both cities lived in nicer neighborhoods and achieved middle-class addresses. Sometimes this translated to a suburb or new terraced housing; other times homes were in centrally located areas,

¹⁴⁸ Christopher P. Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries': Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (July 1999): 322-352.

but in nicer neighborhoods. These moves were in line with the shifting residential patterns of other owner-capitalists. Small-scale industrialists/owners continued to live in old areas of cities, but across most industries—including fashion stores—as wealth increased, so did the nature of their neighborhoods. Moving to more respectable residences was a tried-and-true method used by the new industrialist bourgeoisie to claim higher social status. The replication of this process by shopkeepers who had made the transition to department store owners reinforced the importance of address to social standing and the division between business and home, public and private, domestic and industrial. However, these divisions only existed for some, mainly the owners and their families, but others, most of the employees and small business owners, continued to live where they worked. Thus, department stores offered opportunities for change and improvement only to some.

Respectability as an ideology was part of the prevailing thought of the time.¹⁴⁹ This applied to people's behavior and included qualities like thrift and temperance.¹⁵⁰ This ideology also organized and controlled space. Within domestic spheres, space was divided by use.¹⁵¹ The use of built features, like walls and doors, marked the boundaries of where one specific area ended. For example, the dining room was supposed to be separate from the sitting room. This was not possible for most people, particularly the working classes, but the owners and their families, who were busy establishing themselves solidly in the middle class, could afford to control spaces. As we saw above, this control also translated into the spaces they were in charge of, as with the living-in spaces in John Walsh. The organization of space did not merely apply

¹⁴⁹ Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 112, 150; Geoffrey Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion," in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870-1914*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick (Croom Helm, 1977), 30-31; Caroline Oldcorn Reid, "Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield" (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1976), 151.

¹⁵⁰ Reid, "Middle Class Values," 557.

¹⁵¹ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 9, 137.

within homes but also worked to organize cities as they expanded. In Britain, industrial parts of town were located on east sides, most famously London's East End.¹⁵² The eastern part of Sheffield held the industrial steel workshops near the River Don. The western part of the city included newly incorporated suburbs, the botanical gardens, and close proximity to the Peak District.¹⁵³ In Cologne, moves toward respectable addresses were more centrally located. The city center, Altstadt, was not industrialized in the same ways as British city centers. Upscale neighborhoods were not in the newly incorporated suburbs of Cologne. In fact, suburbs were often centers for certain types of production, for example, Nippes was a center for modern industry and housed many railway workers.¹⁵⁴ Instead of moving further from city centers, in Cologne, the new fashionable neighborhoods surrounded the ring road that replaced the city walls: Sachsenring Hohenstaufenring, Hohenzollernring, and Hansaring. In both cities, the newly middle class moved to new domiciles with access to space, so their homes could feature the divisions which marked respectability, and so that they had access to clean, refreshing air, to maintain their health.

Space and its occupation had marked class belonging prior to this period. However, we can see how the two were tied together at the turn of the twentieth century through the patterns of behavior exhibited by the owners and their families. First, the ability to move to nicer, better accommodation (inhabiting or vacating) space signified higher wealth. Second, maintaining two (or more) establishments, a domestic one and a business one, both with enough area to meet standards required an income that would have been out of reach for most others. Third, the move

¹⁵² Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 29; Bondfield, *A Life's Work*, 63.

¹⁵³ C.R. Warman, "City of Sheffield Historical Growth", after 1963, X615/9, X615 – South Yorkshire County Record Office: Map Collection, SA.

The Fiftieth Milestone - John Walsh Ltd., High Street, Sheffield", 1925, SY492/B22/3, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield City Archives (SA)

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Mergel, *Köln im Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (Greven, 2018), 57.

away from densely populated city centers removed owners from the world of their employees, whether those employees lived-in. Additionally, that department store owners followed the housing trends of other rising middle-class entrepreneurs shows the similarities between them and their peers. The links between owners of various industries, particularly in lifestyle, shrinks the divide between ideas of production and consumption. Department store owners produced spaces of consumption, the profits of which allowed them and their families to live bourgeois lives at the expense of their employees. Rather than just shopping or a place for leisure, department stores were a vital innovation in capitalist society. The primary innovation was the inclusion of many goods under one roof: the industrialization of shopping. The effects of these innovations trickled down into every part of clothing production and consumption. Separating department and fashion stores solely into places of consumption opens a chasm between them and the rest of the worlds they inhabited.

In Cologne, the movement of the wealthy and the newly wealthy away from the Altstadt and Innenstadt did not involve quite as much distance as their counterparts in Sheffield. Small business owners did not move as frequently as their British peers; either having a status-appropriate address held less meaning or the mechanisms for changing domicile were not as malleable. In both cities, however, workers continued to live in old neighborhoods, often in the vicinity of industrial production. The middle classes moved into modern dwellings, with access to green space and fresh air, while the lower classes did not.¹⁵⁵ This separation promoted the perceptions of difference between groups and created space for value judgments to be placed

¹⁵⁵ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, 3rd edition (Routledge, 2019), 358-9; Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, culture and society in nineteenth-century Britain* (Routledge, 2016), 28-9; Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 26-7.

upon where one resided. For people with middle-class aspirations, moving to a proper address was important.

The most mobile of the Cologne set were the Tietz family, illustrated in Figure 6. Although Leonhard Tietz initially had no separate residence listed when the store appeared in the 1892 directory nor in any through 1898, once he established a separate residence in 1899, the family lived solely in respectable residences. Further, only seven years at the store was a marked difference from the Peters and Ossendorffs, below, or Tietz's peers in Sheffield. From the 1896, Sally Baumann, Leonhard's brother-in-law, lived separately in respectable neighborhoods. Max Baumann, another brother-in-law, also lived near Leonhard near Sachsenring.¹⁵⁶ From 1900 through 1914, the three families lived along both Sachsenring and Hohenstaufenring, congregating in the same respectable neighborhood just north of the Volksgarten.¹⁵⁷ The Tietz families, in addition to living at respectable addresses, modeled their lifestyles on modern metropolitan norms. Leonhard was chauffeured in an electric automobile at the start of the twentieth century.¹⁵⁸ Despite their addresses and lifestyles and general acceptance as "recognized and respected citizens," some elements could not be overlooked by the old families of the city,

¹⁵⁶ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die eingemeindeten Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1892), II Theil, 325; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1896), II Theil, 16, 394; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1899), II Theil, 20, 496.

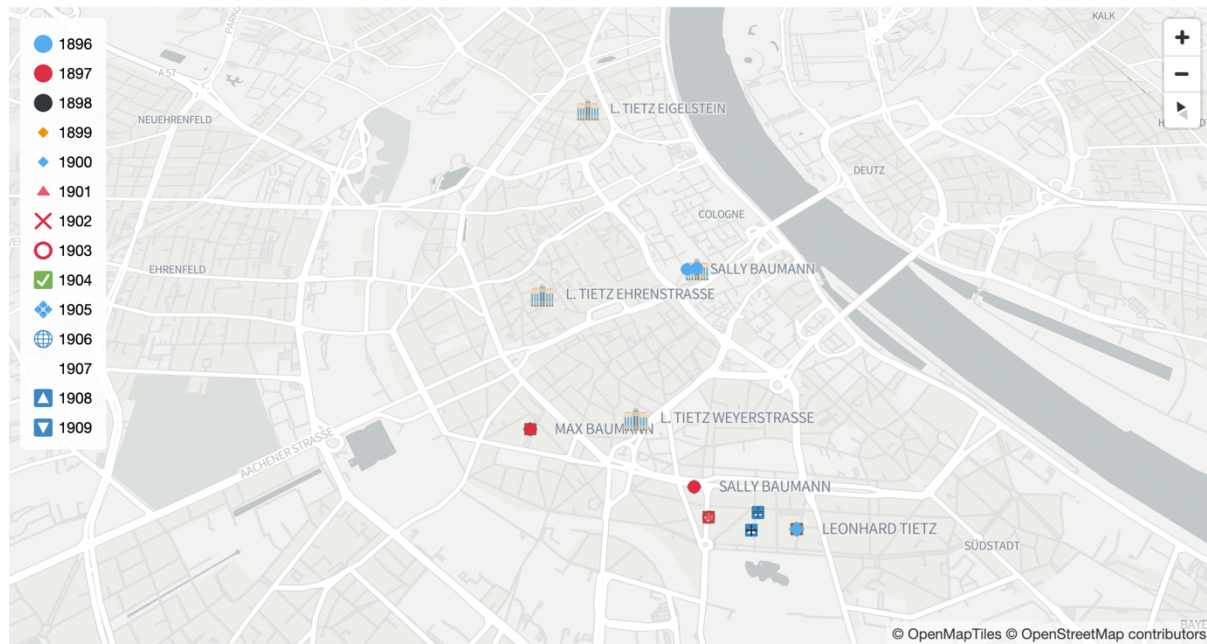
¹⁵⁷ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1900), II Theil, 21, 530; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1901), II Theil, 22, 551; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgegend, insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1914), II Theil, 24, 563; Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 64-65.

¹⁵⁸ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 64-65.

particularly the origins of their fortunes and their Judaism.¹⁵⁹ Address mattered but was not everything.

Map of Tietz Addresses in Cologne, 1896-1909

Addresses for the Tietz stores and Tietz and Baumann residences.



Marissa Knaak; data from *Greven's Adreßbuch*, 1896-1909.

Figure 8: Map of Tietz addresses in Cologne, 1896-1909. For a larger version of this map and a link to the interactive web version, see Appendix B.

Carl Peters followed the established path of many owners, where the store functioned as business and home for the first few years, but eventually the two separated. The first directory listing of Carl Peters' store was in 1892 at Breitestraße 52, which also served as his residence. In 1896, the business and family moved down the street to Breitestraße 117-121, a building which Peters owned. This was again both home and business until the business expanded in 1902 to include 113-123 on the same street, but in that year the family was listed as owning their domicile at auf dem Berlich 3. In 1905 the family moved to Elisenstraße 9. From 1896 the family

¹⁵⁹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 64-65.

and business shared the same telephone number. After 1906, the residence shared only line 2506 with the business, which added two lines (ultimately having ten in 1914). The Peters family continued to live on Elisenstraße through 1914.¹⁶⁰ The business, however, continued to expand in the neighborhood. Unlike the Tietz family, or most of the families in Sheffield, the Peters lived just blocks away from their store.

One final family in Cologne, the Ossendorffs, show the limits of movement for owners' families. From the founding in 1861, P. W. Ossendorff was trading on Waidmarkt. The business housed Peter Wilhelm and his two sons, Adam and Otto. After the business split in the 1880s, when Peter Wilhelm died, Adam continued to live at the business.¹⁶¹ Otto Ossendorff, however, changed residences and business locations for the next two decades.¹⁶² Peter Wilhelm's daughter, Agnes, also lived at the business with her husband, Otto Oster, and their sons. The Oster family lived at the warehouse on Blaubach.¹⁶³ In this case, and that of the Peters family, maintaining residences at the business provided stability and longevity across generations. The exact place of

¹⁶⁰ Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1892), II Theil, 114; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1896), II Theil, 138; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1902), II Theil, 201; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1905), II Theil, 497; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1906), II Theil, 525; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1914), II Theil, 417.

¹⁶¹ E. Kluge, *Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz und Mülheim am Rhein sowie der Geschäftsfirmen der Umgebung Köln's* (Verlag von Wilh. Greven, 1861), I Theil 126; W. Greven's Söhne, *Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz und Mülheim a. Rh. Sowie die Umgebung Köln's* (Greven & Bechtold, 1877), I Theil 127; A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz u. Mülheim sowie die Umgebung Köln's nebst Stadt-Plan* (Greven & Bechtold, 1882), I Theil 140; A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, Nippes sowie die Umgebung Köln's nebst einem Plane für die Städte Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, nippes und Umgebung, sowie des Kölner Stadttheaters* (Greven & Bechtold, 1885), I Theil, 147.

¹⁶² E. Kluge, *Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz und Mülheim am Rhein sowie der Geschäftsfirmen der Umgebung Köln's* (Verlag von Wilh. Greven, 1861), I Theil 126; W. Greven's Söhne, *Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz und Mülheim a. Rh. Sowie die Umgebung Köln's* (Greven & Bechtold, 1877), I Theil, 127; A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld sowie die Umgebung Köln's* (Greven & Bechtold, 1884), I Theil, 141; A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, Nippes sowie die Umgebung Köln's nebst einem Plane für die Städte Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, Nippes und Umgebung* (Greven & Bechtold, 1886), I Theil 153-4; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1891), II Theil 227; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1892), II Theil 236; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1893), II Theil 243; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1896), II Theil 287; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1914), II Theil, 408.

¹⁶³ A. C. Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, Nippes sowie die Umgebung Köln's nebst einem Plane für die Städte Köln, Deutz, Kalk, Mülheim, Ehrenfeld, nippes und Umgebung, sowie des Kölner Stadttheaters* (Greven & Bechtold, 1885), I Theil, 147.

the Ossendorff family in the larger Cologne social world cannot be reconstructed, thus the costs of not moving to a more fashionable address are impossible to calculate. One of Agnes' sons gained training as a lawyer despite the family's residence at their warehouse. Therefore, address did not fully determine success.

In Sheffield, the owners and their families often lived away from the city center. These moves came after early successes and expansions. If they ever lived on-site, they quickly moved away. Over time, one way of tracking the success of a business is to track the movement of families towards the suburbs. Most frequently these paths signify upward economic movement, smaller households, and conformation to middle-class norms. Infrequently, the move away from the city could indicate movement away from shopkeeping. This was the case with the majority of the children of Thomas Bagshaw and William Cockayne, founders of T. B. & W. Cockayne. The families, on the whole, moved away from the city center and their success enabled some members to leave the city altogether. Successful climbing of the social ladder included residence on owned property, with space to be divided and with proximity to fresh air, and with the ability to leave the trades behind. This existence resembled the lives of the landed gentry.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, particularly in the British case, where one lived and the material realities of location were deeply entwined with one's social position.

One of the clearest examples of this is the Walsh family. John Walsh and his family never lived at their store, but over the course of forty years, moved from the industrial Brightside Bierlow to the bucolic Ranmoor neighborhood.¹⁶⁵ During this time, they also lived in the

¹⁶⁴ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2019), 205-6, 226; Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 100, 129.

¹⁶⁵ Stephens & Mackintosh, "Business street map of Sheffield," c. 1900, S41L, Map cabinet, SLSL; 1881 England Census, RG 11/4623 page 13 ED14, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1901 England Census, RG 13/4351 page 9 ED27, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1891 England Census, RG 12/3799 page 2 ED37, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

A "Bierlow" is an administrative district and there are two in Sheffield: Brightside and Eccesall.

Broomhall neighborhood which was becoming a middle-class enclave. Notably, Brightside was (and is) on the east side of Sheffield and home to many of the steel factories and workshops. Broomhall was (and is) west of the city center, up a hill, and near the botanical gardens. Ranmoor was also west of the city center and about halfway to the Peak District. At the same time that the family moved, it also changed composition. Early on, the Walsh family housed store employees but, by 1891, they had stopped doing so. Across every census both the family of John Walsh and his son, Walter John (who took over the business in 1900¹⁶⁶), employed and housed domestic servants. In 1911, Walter's household in Ranmoor included him, his wife, their six children, a governess, two nurses, four maids, and a cook. In two generations, Walsh went from modest, Irish-born draper to the epitome of the self-made, middle-class family.

The Cockayne and Cole families lived in the Sheffield area longer than the Walsh family and had more branches.¹⁶⁷ However, their paths to the suburbs were parallel. Figure 7 visualizes some of the Cockayne family addresses between 1851 and 1911. One of the founders of T. B. & W. Cockayne, William, senior, and his family, lived in the Norton Lees suburb south of the city for the entire second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁸ Edward Shepherd Cockayne, William's son, and his family lived in the Tapton House suburb northwest of the city for almost as long.¹⁶⁹ The other founder, Thomas Bagshaw, lived on Abbeydale road, south of the city center by Nether

¹⁶⁶ "The Fiftieth Milestone - John Walsh Ltd., High Street, Sheffield", 1925, SY492/B22/3, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield City Archives (SA), Sheffield, UK.

¹⁶⁷ Family trees for the Cole, Cockayne, and Walsh families are available in Appendix B.

¹⁶⁸ 1851 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," HO 107/2336 ED2a page 388; 1861 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," RG 9/3467 ED 1 page 29; 1871 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," RG 10/4667 ED 51 page 17; 1881 Census of England, s.v. "William Cockayne," RG 11/4629 ED5 page 35. Norton Lees was part of Ecclesall Bierlow.

¹⁶⁹ *Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood*, (Kelly's Directories, Ltd., 1883), 191; 1881 Census of England, s.v. "Edward Shepherd Cockayne," RG 11/4634 district 507, sub-district 4, ED 25, page 30-31.

Edge.¹⁷⁰ Even the younger generation lived outside the city center. The furthest from their Angel street shop was Henry J. M. (grandson of William) and family in 1901 at Kingstead 74 Dore road, listed in the census as in Derbyshire but now within Sheffield city limits.¹⁷¹ The family's longer presence in the area allowed them to live outside the city center and in burgeoning suburbs by the period considered here. Some of William's children ended up on the Channel Islands.¹⁷² The successful business helped support large families without the need for all male members to active in it or for female members to make business related marriages. Their lives at respectable addresses surely helped in this.

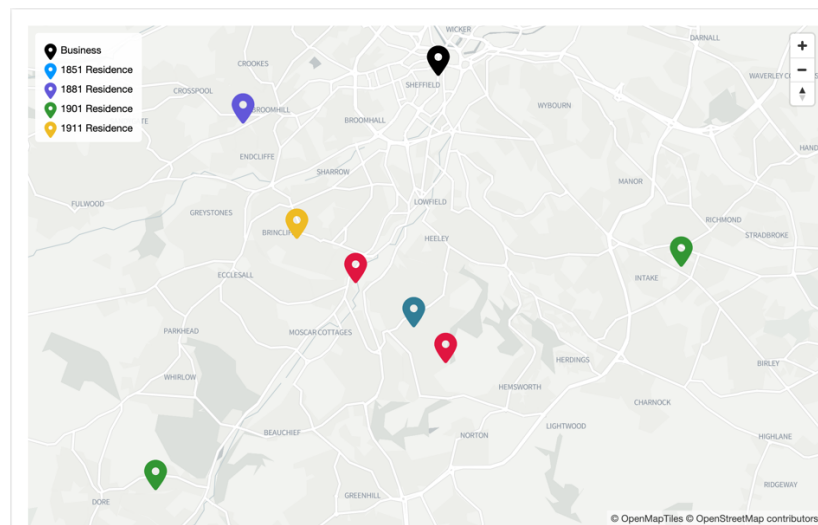


Figure 9: Various Cockayne family addresses, 1851-1911. The store is marked in black. For a larger version of this map and a link to the interactive web version, see Appendix B.

The owners of smaller department stores also moved out of the city center. However, these moves often happened later, largely during the 1890s. Robert Proctor and his family lived

¹⁷⁰ 1841 Census of England and Wales, HO 107/1336/7, ED 16, page 21, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1851 Census of England and Wales, HO 107/2337, ED 1e, page 37, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1861 Census of England and Wales, RG 9/3468, ED 6, page 31, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1871 Census of England and Wales, RG 10/4674, ED 47, page 10, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

¹⁷¹ 1901 England and Wales census, s.v. "Henry J.M. Cockayne," RG 13/4346 ED 2 page 11.

¹⁷² 1891 Channel Island Census, RG 12/4696, ED 48, page 13, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1891 Channel Island Census, RG 12/4696, ED 39, page 4, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

on-site at the Fargate shop from the establishment of the store sometime in the mid-nineteenth century until the 1880s. By 1891, the family had relocated to Broomhall. The relocation also marked the end of shop assistants living with the Proctors.¹⁷³ By 1911 Robert Proctor, junior, was managing the store. He, his wife, their infant son, and a servant lived in Nether Edge, southwest of the city center.¹⁷⁴ Despite the late move to the suburbs and the limited number of departments in the store, Robert Proctor and his family mirrored the success of the large store owners.

Managers and buyers also lived away from the city center. For example, John Spurr, a buyer and, later, manager and director at T. B. & W. Cockayne from 1891 to 1913, lived in Broomhall with his wife.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, Isaac Schofield, secretary at Cole Brothers between 1903 and 1913, lived in Nether Edge with his family.¹⁷⁶ Both suburbs housed owners' families. The middle-class suburban lifestyle was accessible for some higher-ranking men but remained out of reach for the vast majority of fashion store employees.

Department store owners and their families lived in respectable areas of their respective towns when they could. The distance between their residences and their stores varied—in Cologne, it was shorter, while in Sheffield, longer. Distance was not the only factor in creating a respectable image. In respectability norms, there was no mandated, clearly written distance to be maintained. Rather, the separation of residential from business spaces was a first step. The

¹⁷³ 1871 Census of England and Wales, RG 10/4678 ED 19 page 16, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1881 Census of England and Wales, RG 11/4643 ED 19 page13, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3805 pg 16, ED 28, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

¹⁷⁴ 1911 Census of England and Wales, district 509, subdistrict 5, ED 15, 46 Ecclesall Hall Road, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

¹⁷⁵ 1891 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. "John Spurr", RG 12/3821 ED 30, page 1, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1901 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. "John Spurr", RG 13/4350 ED 20, page18, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1911 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, s.v. "John Spurr", district 509, sub-district 2, ED 13, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); *White's* 1913, 707.

¹⁷⁶ *White's Directory* 1903, 659; *White's Directory* 1905, 659; *White's Directory* 1906, 643; *White's Directory* 1907, 604; *White's Directory* 1910, 629; *White's Directory* 1911, 653; *White's Directory* 1912, 669; *White's Directory* 1913, 683.

further one could move the better—as we can see in Sheffield, where a detached house with a garden was better than a terrace house regardless of size.¹⁷⁷ For some department store families, moving was not possible, for example the Atkinsons or the Ossendorffs. For the small business owners this was impossible. For store employees, distance from the business was occasionally impossible, as it was for assistants who lived-in.

Front Room Stores: Small Businesses Run from the Home

Another consideration in the spatial arrangements within fashion stores are the stores in which home and business were intertwined. This includes both the larger stores which also housed the owner/operators and the small, specialized businesses. The latter were dispersed across both cities, established where people lived and run out of front rooms.¹⁷⁸ Some of these businesses functioned through the labor of the owners' families and records of this labor is shaky.¹⁷⁹ However, we can infer what that work looked like. Because they were smaller establishments, the profit margins would have been slimmer, the need for quality work done quickly higher, and the potential for exploitation just as high. Other businesses would have hired staff, some of whom would live on-site. In Cologne, the specifics of many small stores can be difficult to trace, but there were a significant number of individuals listed within relevant occupation groups. In Sheffield, the census records show these arrangements across time. The relationships between, largely, women in these close environments cannot be known for certain.

¹⁷⁷ As Flanders has noted, "Terraced houses cannot readily be translated into "American" from "British." Row houses are the nearest equivalent, but unlike the American row house, the English terraced house is highly flexible socially and economically, encompassing everything from a humble worker's cottage to the grandest aristocrat's mansion. The only requirement for a "terrace" is that the row, street, or neighborhood be designed in harmony, with repetitions of the initial design appearing with each house or row of houses, and with all houses sharing party walls." The important division here is the presence of additional green space surrounding the four walls of the house. Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 20.

¹⁷⁸ Inder, *British dressmaking*, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Inder, *British dressmaking*, 120-121.

They could just as easily have been healthy and supportive as toxic and confining.¹⁸⁰ Small, front-room businesses share characteristics with both department store owners and live-in employees. Small businesses offered great flexibility and could be ephemeral. This means that they can be harder to trace, but many women had access to trades that could maintain their residence in respectable, if modest, accommodation.

Living-in at a department store could have been confining and isolating, but so could living-in at a small establishment. Additionally, living at one's workspace did not necessarily equal meeting people from outside one's class. The largest space of class mixing away from the shop floor would have been between the servants and the assistants, but, importantly, it is likely that class divisions and behaviors were replicated in this new domestic space.

Unlike the large stores that evolved into department stores, small businesses in the same trades operated across the city, in both Sheffield and Cologne. Although department stores included an increasing number of concerns, the small stores focused primarily on a single trade. In this study, I focus mainly on drapers, haberdashers¹⁸¹, milliners, linen and white goods traders, dressmakers, and tailors.¹⁸² The gender division of owners for these types of stores depended on the year and location. Although there was often high turnover, many front-room businesses persisted across the 1890s and 1900s.

Small businesses that achieved long-term success were present in both Sheffield and Cologne. These businesses were frequently run by women, occasionally with familial connections, and utilized newspaper advertisements. One such example from Sheffield was

¹⁸⁰ Inder, *British dressmaking*, 271.

¹⁸¹ Here I use "haberdashery" in the British sense of small goods for sewing, dressmaking, and knitting. In the United States, these items are referred to as "notions" or "sewing notions."

¹⁸² In Cologne, dressmakers and tailors sometimes separated into *Kleidermacherin* and *Schneider(in)* early in the 1890s. However, through the period addressed here, *Kleidermacherin* evolved to *Damenschneiderin*—effectively dressmaker to female ladies' tailor. Men's tailors remained, throughout, *Schneider*.

Derby & Schollick, milliners and costumiers. The business name remained the same from 1893 to 1911 and was largely run by an Emma Beaulands. In 1901, Beaulands was assisted by three other women and the household contained two servants. Although the individuals likely changed over the life of the business, four women for the business with two servants likely remained the configuration.

In Cologne, the Bel family operated two businesses across six decades. Although they sold generally the same goods, the two stores were Bel-Federhen and Joseph Bel in Cologne. Started by 1854 by Jakob Bel, the businesses ran in some form until sometime in 1902. Bel-Federhen was listed in virtually every directory during this period. Joseph Bel was frequently not included in the directories between 1860 and 1895, but also traded in the same goods. The business gained the ability to be listed as “royal purveyors” in the late 1860s. The largest change in the business came with Jakob’s death in 1886. From that point, his widow and her female relatives, Josephine, her sister-in-law, Magdalene La Ruelle¹⁸³, Johanna Bel, and Mathilde Bel, continued to run the businesses until their retirement in 1902.¹⁸⁴ Josephine was the sole listed name for the first few years, joined by the others in 1891. Originally based on Hohe Straße, with a counter on Marspfortengasse, in the early 1870s, the store moved to Glockengasse, where the family lived and worked until it closed in 1902. The Glockengasse address was listed as owned by an Erben Bel, but they are not listed separately. After the store closes, the family leaves Glockengasse and the address went vacant. The rapid closing of a business, even a long-run one, was not extraordinary.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Magdalene was also a widow—her husband, Prosper, was an office manager at Groß St. Martin church, after his death, sometime in the 1860s or 1870s, the directories list did not list Magdalene. She returns to them in the 1880s, at Glockengasse with the Bels.

¹⁸⁴ I suspect Johanna and Mathilde were Jakob and Josephine’s daughters.

¹⁸⁵ E. Kluge, *Adreßbuch der Stadt Köln* (Köln, M. Lengfeld, 1854), I Theil, 9; Wilhelm Greven, *Adreßbuch für Köln, Deutz und Mülheim am Rhein sowie der Umgebung Köln’s* (Köln: Wilh. Greven, 1867), I Theil page 9; Greven,

Consistent, profitable business for more than a decade was indeed a success when, in Sheffield, between 1900 and 1902, there was a net decrease of seven in Sheffield's listed milliners, dropping from 115 to 108.¹⁸⁶ Only seventy-five businesses operated across all three years. While the net decrease of seven might seem small, there were between thirty and forty businesses that either closed, opened, or did both during just this three-year span. The precarity of these businesses will be addressed in chapter four. The sheer scale of businesses, however, speaks to their prevalence throughout the city.

Tailoring and dressmaking provided many with a skilled trade that could reliably provide income regardless of location. Although many tradesmen and women who opened businesses were locals, some were immigrants. Unlike John Walsh or Leonhard Tietz, the immigrants who had skilled trades did not obtain the heights of success, but, then, the metric of success was likely different. At the turn of the century, Sheffield housed a handful of Russian-born¹⁸⁷ tailors and their wives with their often British-born children. For example, Abraham Woolf and his wife, Jessie, lived in Sheffield in 1901 with their five children.¹⁸⁸ The Woolf family lived in London for both the 1891 and 1911 censuses.¹⁸⁹ Sometimes these families also had live-in servants—a standard marker of economic success. Possession of a trade provided immigrants skills that could result in economic stability, but they were not tied to a single location as other tradesmen.

Greven's Adreßbuch (1886), I Theil, 11; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1891) I Theil, 16, 179 and II Thiel, 87; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch* (1902), II Theil, 31, 330 and III Theil, 56, 146, 368.

¹⁸⁶ *White's General Directory of Sheffield 1900*, 890-891; *White's General Directory of Sheffield, 1901*, 961-962; *White's General Directory of Sheffield, 1902*, 984-985. Compiled from the index of "Milliners" and leaving out those located in Rotherham.

¹⁸⁷ In the census records, multiple people's birthplaces included both Russia and Poland. Maintenance of a Polish identity regardless of the existence of a Polish nation-state is unsurprising. Whether it was the individual or the recorder who included both pieces of information is unretrievable.

¹⁸⁸ 1901 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Abraham Woolf," RG 13/4352 page 4 ED 30, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

¹⁸⁹ 1891 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Abraham Woolf," RG 12/301 ED 10 page 18, AncestryLibrary.com; 1911 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Abraham Woolf," Registration district 8, sub-district 1, ED 59, AncestryLibrary.com.

One characteristic all small stores had in common, regardless of trade, longevity, or ownership, was their dispersed localities. Unlike department stores, which were congregated in city centers, small businesses operated out of front rooms across cities, with most neighborhoods having at least one shop, but more often having a handful. Other than dressmakers, grocers were the most frequent small business type. Even as department stores expanded and came to be social places to see and be seen, neighborhood shops persisted. Visiting the department store when one only needed thread or ribbons would have been a waste of time for many people and the department store itself uninviting, especially early on, for those outside their target audience.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, bespoke clothing remained popular, even as ready-made products gained traction, thus dressmakers and tailors continued trade. The ease with which a small business could be established allowed many people access to income necessary to maintaining respectable addresses.

Conclusion

The built environment and physical geographies of department stores are important beginnings to this study. Not only do they help us establish an image of the world in which people lived and worked, a discussion of space and its divisions show how people could be brought together or split apart—sometimes in the same space. On many levels, department stores and their people experienced multiple terrestrial divisions. Within the stores were divisions between departments, customers and workers, and men and women. At the same time, there was contact between these same groups. It would have been impossible to completely isolate people and, despite the efforts of management, departments. Outside of the stores, the centrality of department stores separated them (and their employees) from their customers who were

¹⁹⁰ The clientele differed across stores. In Britain, the large, flashy stores catered to a middle-class audience, with the lower-middle class shopping more over time, particularly during sales. In Germany, contrarily, many department stores prioritized working-class shoppers and promoted the economical nature of their products.

increasingly moving to the suburbs and other rising neighborhoods. However, the owners were also moving to the suburbs—where they would have encountered their customers. The physical geographies present a complex web of interactions, the intersections of which provide space for people to contest definitions of class, gender, and work.

Small businesses were dispersed throughout cities. Independent store fronts were common throughout various areas, but many were also operated in people's homes. In home-run businesses, front rooms served multiple purposes but necessarily needed to present a respectable setting in which to meet clients. Whether work actually occurred in these front rooms or if they were also used for other purposes is another place for further investigation.

The city center had long been the main site for shopping, with whole streets devoted to a particular trade. In Sheffield, this was along High Street, Fargate, and Angel Street. In Cologne, this was along Hohe Straße and Schildergasse. These streets were often home to both large and small stores, although the larger stores slowly gained prevalence. Shopping districts were convenient to consumers and allowed shopping to become, for some, a leisure activity. However, for the Sheffield employees living-in, the shift of residences away from the city center could have been isolating. Employees who lived elsewhere needed to travel to get to their jobs. Although this movement has not been focused upon here, investigation into how people commuted and from where could further this discussion of the relationship between occupation, residence, and class standing.

As the city centers developed and fewer people lived on their premises (of all industries, not just fashion and furnishing), the employees who lived-in were increasingly cut off from their peers and families. Some separation from one's family was a common experience for owners as they trained and for many young men. The difference with department stores was the high

number of women employed and living in them, and, crucially, able to move away from home to find employment elsewhere. For live-in assistants, there was likely a similar spatial unmooring that others who moved to cities experienced. Employees were also increasingly separated from their employers and managers. We can see this in Sheffield where the department store owners moved their families into the suburbs early on (or were there to start with) and as time passed moved farther and farther away.

In Cologne, the pattern of dispersal has a secondary element which is not present in Sheffield. Because the individual suburbs had specific associated industries and those owners prioritized their workforce living close to the factories, some workers were concentrated in certain areas, which aided social cohesion and organization (not only of unions but also social organizations and structures and religious ones).¹⁹¹ Part of the problem with organizing shop assistants was their segregation from each other and other working-class people. While the small shop owners and workers would not have been separated from their neighbors in the same way that department store employees would have been, they were separated from others concerned with shopkeeping or outfitting.

When looking at the configurations of fashion stores, their owners, employees, and spaces, we can come to a few conclusions. On the macro-level, considerations of class outweigh those of gender. While there were some gendered factors at play, the biggest influencing factor is that of class. From store location to who lived where, class and economic position dictated an individual's or family's position. That is not to say gender was not a factor; that the owners of Sheffield's larger stores were men with inherited wealth which increased their social position. Further, these men established households that reinforced the Victorian norms regarding family

¹⁹¹ Mergel, *Köln im Kaiserreich*, 223-225.

and domesticity—homes in which his wife and daughters did not work outside the home, had servants, and were in new terraced neighborhoods. Just as the servants in a store owner's home could not achieve the gender or domestic ideals of the time, his store servants and employees largely could also not achieve them. Hosgood discusses this in relation to men and masculinity, but it would have applied to women and femininity as well.¹⁹²

Working-class women could never meet the ideals of femininity espoused by the middle class.¹⁹³ When we consider the original class positions of many of the department store employees, this failure takes on new significance. The gendered expectations of women of the middle class were evolving and solidifying in the nineteenth century. For women of the new middle classes and the lower middle class (as well as the upper working class/aristocrats or whatever), these ideals were far more precarious than for the old middle classes or the upper middle class. While many women, particularly daughters, went to work in shops, those who lived-in would have been particularly susceptible to these failures.

This chapter has argued that the spatial configurations of fashioning stores, including department stores, and the people involved with them are important to understanding them as places of industrialized labor. The arrangement of space within department stores served to reify divisions between various groups while simultaneously claiming to erase them. Looking at the interior organizational structure of some stores shows how these claims could be made, but overlaying the social norms and standards introduces invisible barriers across and between spaces. Store buildings staked claims on city center real estate and changed the experience of seeing, particularly using plate-glass and electric lights. Most importantly, these material realities structured the world in which employees lived and worked and they cannot be disregarded. The

¹⁹² Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries'."

¹⁹³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

types of work done in stores of all sizes and the setting in which the work was done matters; in department stores long work hours and, in winter, short days means that many workers would only experience the day refracted through glass, despite middle-class claims to the benefits of clean air and nature. Ultimately, physical circumstances and material realities are important because they are where people live, and, to try to understand their lives, we must make an effort to meet them there.

Fashion as Labor: Women's work in stores of all sizes

Introduction

On Tuesday, January 15, 1901, John Atkinson, the draper, announced their annual stock-taking sale would commence on Friday the eighteenth. January white sales were a significant event in the department store calendar.¹ Large stores hired extra assistants to cope with demand, although Atkinson's had not for this sale. Atkinsons' advertisement included information about the scale of the sale: "J.A. has taken the opportunity of making this a huge thing by having the whole of his immense stock carefully gone through and reduced in price, thus making the greater part of the stock less than to-day's manufacturers' prices."² To prepare, the store would be closed all day Thursday and only open at 2 p.m. on the Friday. For the sale to be successful, Atkinson's staff had to put in an immense amount of work. The sales assistants had to conduct an inventory to see how much stock was left and what items were soiled for inclusion in the sale. They also had to work to arrange the sale of items and set the store in order. John Atkinson and the other managers decided this would take a whole day and a half. Atkinson's often closed for the day before any sale started. Other department stores often closed only for the morning, if they closed at all—John Walsh's January sale in 1901 started at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 27.³ In the days leading up to the sale and during it, assistants had almost constant work and pressure from buyers and managers to produce results.

This chapter looks at the ways in which department and fashion stores were industrialized sites of capitalist profit maximization. That is, all work done within these businesses promoted

¹ From the mid-nineteenth century, the post-Christmas sales often focused on white goods and inventory clearing. Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton University Press, 1981), 70-1; Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1914* (University of Illinois Press, 1986), 21.

² *Sheffield Independent*, 15 January 1901, 1, Sheffield Archives (SA), Sheffield, UK.

³ *Sheffield Independent*, 24 January 1901, 1, SA.

sales and thus the accumulation of profits for the owners and shareholders. This formulation moves away from divisions between production and consumption toward a more integrated understanding of retailing. Producing the environment in which consumption occurred, mass or otherwise, included the primary labor of fabrication hands, the secondary labor of sales assistants, the complimentary labor of servants, and the tertiary labor of buyers, managers, and advertisers.⁴ In addition to the elements of physical work, sales assistants contributed to the shopping environment through aesthetics and comportment, which are taken up in the next chapter. In this chapter, I argue that shop work on all levels in stores of all sizes was manual, skilled, and industrialized. It included physical labor that put stress on the body (occasionally injuring and disabling) and the tasks required frequently unteachable skills, mirroring the process of industrialization of other industries. I also contend that in addition to the feminization of shop work which shifted it to “unskilled” and, thus, invisible, the new forms of retailing also required significant emotional labor, as discussed in the following chapter. The discussion in this chapter starts with general changes in fashion retailing, including the scale of work, different groups’ positions in the field, the nature of fabrication and distribution, and the pace of work. Following that, I outline the different types of labor within these stores and the similarities and differences across businesses of different sizes. The final section of this chapter builds on the two preceding sections to show how the interpretation of department stores as “ladies’ paradises” obstructs our understanding of them as industrialized workplaces.

Department store work was not limited to sales assistants. Important work behind the scenes made sales possible. Although male fabrication hands contributed skilled labor to the business, they take a back seat in this chapter because those departments include the

⁴ Richard A. Walker, “Is There a Service Economy? The Changing Capitalist Division of Labor,” *Science & Society* 49, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 75-78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402626>.

construction, selling, and installation of large furniture items and appliances. The histories of furniture and appliances and their distribution encompass a different set of circumstances largely beyond the scope of this project. My focus, instead, will be on women at all levels—from servants to buyers—and how their labor contributed to profitability. When the comparison is useful, men working in similar positions enter the conversation.

Smaller fashion shops did not have stark divisions of labor. However, a lack of division between roles did not equate to a lack of division between genders. Women owned and operated only certain kinds of stores, but small stores of all types relied on women's work. I am using "fashion shop" as a catch-all category for the smaller establishments, including, but not limited to milliners, drapers, haberdashers, hatters, dressmakers, and tailors. This classification limits these stores to those dealing primarily with clothing, accessories, or the means to make clothing. Some, like general drapers, included the possibility of making and selling soft furnishings. These stores all sold products that were central to department stores, which largely evolved from drapers, hence the focus of this chapter on fashioning departments and stores.

The steps between mass production and mass consumption are often taken for granted. The studies about consumption and department stores that talk about the in-between steps frequently focus on the changes in selling and display techniques, but do not look at the people who make those things happen. Self-service shopping was only starting to be employed in department stores.⁵ Customers' relations to goods was still heavily mediated by shop staff. In the early nineteenth century, small stores focused on a limited range of products and sold goods over counters.⁶ Department stores changed this by combining many types of products under a single

⁵ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 63, 69, 196-97.

⁶ Martin Phillips, "The evolution of markets and shops in Britain," in *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c.1800-1914*, ed. John Benson and Gareth Shaw (Leicester University Press, 1992), 53-75; Dietrich Denecke and Gareth Shaw,

roof where customers could move from department to department choosing items for themselves before cashing out at a centralized point. Not all customers could move freely between and across spaces, particularly in British stores where floorwalkers monitored movements, and many products remained behind counters.⁷ At T. B. & W. Cockayne, for example, many goods remained behind glass or as part of non-interactive displays well into the twentieth century.⁸ Thus, shopping remained a mediated experience for many department store customers. Getting mass-produced goods into the hands of consumers necessitated the involvement of multiple layers of employees who shaped how and when this happened.

To support my argument about the nature of fashion retailing at the turn of the twentieth century, I focus on the tasks assigned to various positions and how those changed across department stores and fashioning shops. After a brief discussion of business records and how they can be used to understand the material realities of shop work, I outline some of the changes in retailing across the nineteenth century, primarily in the areas of scale, status, fabrication, and distribution. First, I outline the divisions of labor between female sales assistants, fabrication hands, and servants and men's jobs of all kinds. Understanding the different areas of work serves to highlight the different skills needed to successfully execute tasks, the physicality of all jobs, and the industrial organization of department stores as businesses. Second, I discuss the cultural construction of department stores as "ladies' paradises" and how this construction elides departments stores as the industrialized workplaces they were. Ultimately, what appears in this chapter are department stores as physical locations in which industrialized labor occurred. This

"Traditional retail systems in Germany," in *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c.1800-1914*, ed. John Benson and Gareth Shaw (Leicester University Press, 1992), 76-86.

⁷ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 69; Flockton, Gibbs & Flockton, "High Street, Sheffield – J Walsh – Plans", 1896, CA206/2649, CA 206 Sheffield City Council, Planning Department, SA.

⁸ "Blouse department, T. B. and W. Cockayne, Ltd., Nos. 1-13 Angel Street," 1914, t11654, Picture Sheffield (PS), via picturesheffield.com; "Ladies costume and tailoring department, T. B. and W. Cockayne, Ltd., Nos. 1-13 Angel Street," 1914, t11655, PS.

builds on the previous chapter's discussion of department stores in space, where spatial realities created and shaped effects in the lives of the communities in which they existed. Additionally, this chapter's argument about the tangible elements of fashioning store labor provides a springboard for the following chapter's argument about the intangible elements of this labor. The final chapter discusses how social understandings of department and fashioning store employment, and the uses to which individuals put this employment, separate it from its industrialized nature.

Records of Work and Daily Life

Shop employees were vital to store success and the “shop girl” captured parts of the collective imagination. However, it can be difficult to determine the centrality of shop workers to financial success because of a lack of records. Record keeping during the rise of department stores was a widely variable practice and larger stores' records survive today in some places but not in others and many smaller stores' records simply do not exist.⁹ Over time, as businesses relocated or were absorbed into larger corporations, records could have been lost or misplaced. This is particularly true for the businesses whose buildings were destroyed during the Second World War. Thus, finding quantitative data today is difficult and the results spotty. However, fairly thorough records exist today for T. B. & W. Cockayne and Daniel Evans, a milliner in the city center, both in Sheffield, records which support the conclusions presented here. Furthermore, the continued operation and expansion of many stores speaks to their profitability without needing quantitative data. By combing types of sources, we can construct an image of daily life for some of the employees of department stores.

⁹ Pam Inder, *Busks, Basques and Brush-Braid: British Dressmaking in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 3.

While there can be interesting data in financial records, beyond profits and costs, that data needs to be supported by information from other areas. Records of conditions of sales assistants generally across countries or cities more than specific stores can be found in governmental or union accounts.¹⁰ While financial records may contain information on whether a store was busy, they do not tell us how hard the work of conducting a sale was, how intricate a dress was to make, or how much cleaning the employee area needed. The Daniel Evans account books contain a good amount of detail about sales conditions, frequently about the weather, and some of the expenses for the family, but less so about how this translated to the lives of sales assistants. At the end of January 1903, the Daniel Evans sales figures were mostly accompanied with notes on the weather and that the 12th through the 17th was stocktaking week.¹¹ The “frosty” and “freezing” weather, thus, did not offer a respite for the staff from the work of stocktaking caused. January 24th, the second to last Saturday of the month, also marked the start of John Walsh’s winter sale.¹² For the start of the sale, John Walsh advertised on the entire front page of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* and included specific prices for a variety of products. Blanchard Brothers, R. Proctor and Son, G. H. Crossley, Cole Brothers, G. H. Hovey, T. B. & W. Cockayne,

¹⁰ See the accounts in Margaret Bondfield, *A Life’s Work* (Hutchinson & Co. Limited, 1948); Joseph Hallsworth and Rhys J. Davies, *The Working Life of Shop Assistants: A Study of Conditions of Labour in the Distributive Trades* (The National Labour Press, 1910); “Report of the Lancet Sanitary Commission on Sanitation in the Shop, Part II,” *The Lancet*; *Early Closing Record*, 331.880SQ, Local Journals, Sheffield Local Studies Library (SLSL), Sheffield, UK; UK Parliament, *Second Reading*, “Shop Hours Bill (no. 26),” House of Commons, 24 February 1892, London, UK, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1892/feb/24/shop-hours-bill-no-26>; UK Parliament, *House of Commons Debate*, “Factories and Workshops Bill,” House of Commons, 1 March 1895, London, UK, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1895/mar/01/factories-and-workshops-bill>; UK Parliament, *House of Commons Debate*, “Shops (Early Closing) Bill,” House of Commons, 19 February 1896, London, UK, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1896/feb/19/shops-early-closing-bill>; UK Parliament, *House of Commons Debate*, “Shops Regulation Acts, 1892 to 1904,” House of Commons, 4 August 1909, London, UK, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1909/aug/04/shops-regulation-acts-1892-to-1904>.

¹¹ Daniel Evans, “Daniel Evans, milliner, of George Street, Sheffield,” 1903, MD1392, MD1392-1399 – Daniel Evans, Milliner, of George Street, SA.

¹² Daniel Evans, MD1392, SA; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 24 January 1903, 1, Gale Primary Sources – British Library Newspapers (GPSBLN).

and T. & J. Roberts all also had sales running—all of the major department stores in the city.¹³ The sales, particularly John Walsh, just blocks from Daniel Evans, were important enough to be included in this store's business records and likely impacted the number of visitors.¹⁴ Therefore, during the month of January, the staff of Daniel Evans experienced a variety of conditions. For example, sales brought higher traffic to department stores, so with eight running simultaneously, these sales would have been a major event in the city center as shoppers moved between stores comparing goods and prices.¹⁵ The increased foot traffic brought people into the proximity of other stores, who could hope to benefit from the situation. By combining the evidence given to government or official bodies, evidence from newspapers, and anecdotal evidence from other locales with that of a specific business, even though fragmented, we can start picturing the lived experiences of assistants in stores.

Data about fabrication or production in stores of all sizes is similarly spotty. Further, such data, or data about pay and commission generally, does not provide qualitative information about the nature of the work. Fabrication hands did their work to specific deadlines to ensure customer satisfaction—especially important in small businesses where word-of-mouth advertising contributed to success. While there may be records of numbers of garments produced, and potentially where they went, this would not include the difficulty of maintaining standards or of producing fine work in unideal circumstances.¹⁶ This is the difference between the value assigned work as reflected in price and the psychological costs of that work. Remuneration was a

¹³ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 24 January 1901, 1, 16, GPSBLN.

¹⁴ Daniel Evans, MD1392, SA. The daily takings for the 19th-24th include an extra set of numbers beyond those which correlate to those of pounds, shillings, and pence. These very well could be numbers of visitors given they are lower on days with lower takings and higher on days with higher takings (January 24th, the Walsh sale, saw £15.19.3 with 77 adjacent; contrarily, January 22nd, saw £0.15.6 with only 13 adjacent).

¹⁵ Miller, *Bon Marché*, 26-7; Christopher P. Hosgood, “‘Doing the shops’ at Christmas: women, men and the department store in England, c. 1880-1914,” In *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Ashgate, 1999), 101, 108.

¹⁶ Inder, *Busks*, 133, 269.

reflection of owners' and managers' beliefs about labor involved, value, and the potential profit.¹⁷ The pay and commission for a sales assistant was the same whether the customer knew what she wanted, expressed it clearly, and was pleased with the items presented or she had a vague conception of what she was looking for, expressed it poorly, and found fault in the entire exchange.¹⁸ In both interactions, any item purchased cost the same for the store to acquire, sold to the customer for the same price, and the assistant was considered at fault if the exchange was frustrating or lengthy. For example, during three weeks of December 1907, the salaries at Daniel Evans were only five shillings higher in the week before Christmas than in the two preceding weeks.¹⁹ Wages for these weeks might have been higher than for slower parts of the sales year, but assistants made the same wages during the three weeks before Christmas, regardless of the approaching holiday.

The interpersonal elements of being a business servant cannot be quantified but can be found in reading qualitative sources alongside descriptions of domestic service. Business servants would have had many of the same tasks as domestic servants, but, in many ways, scaled up. For example, in the wet winter, rather than working to keep a family's home clean of the mud and wet, a department store servant would have had many times more tracks to clean.²⁰ Most business servants in large stores would have not worked alone, but with a cook and at least one other maid.

¹⁷ For more on the creation of value see: Karl Marx, "Capital, Volume One," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 294-438.

¹⁸ As Margaret Bondfield noted in *A Life's Work*, "But in the West End, very rarely were we [shop assistants] regarded as other than the lackeys to wait upon the customers as did their domestic servants. Sometimes they were charming, as only cultured people can be charming; at other times they could be as rude as only cultured people can be rude." Bondfield, *A Life's Work*, 63.

¹⁹ Daniel Evans, "Daniel Evans, milliner, of George Street, Sheffield," 1907, MD1393 page 48, MD1392-1399 – Daniel Evans, Milliner, of George Street, SA.

²⁰ Judith Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England* (W.W. Norton & Company), 138, 142.

Relying on financial records for specific businesses elides different ways in which work can produce outcomes but not be equally profitable. For example, the effects of advertising are difficult to track, and in labor theories of value are unproductive. However, stores increasingly relied on advertising to drive customer numbers and sales.²¹ What mattered most to owners and shareholders were sales and profits—if a department was deemed necessary to the overall experience, its profitability was not necessarily the most significant factor in its survival.²² Some departments lost money but were kept around; according to the owners' logic, once someone was in a store, they were more likely to buy. Other departments that did not produce profits could be closed or merged with more successful ones. Furthermore, as fashions changed, so did departments. For example, the Gentleman's Boots and Shoes department at T. B. & W. Cockayne, introduced in mid-1907, recorded only losses in 1908, and only once turned a profit over £50 (in winter 1914).²³ Eliminating this department, however, would not have been an option because its inclusion meant the store could offer complete wardrobes and still compete with other department stores that had the same offerings. Similarly, the tearoom/restaurant was nowhere near profitable, but it was a place for women's refreshments, which was non-negotiable.²⁴ Tea rooms and restrooms provided relief for women spending hours away from

²¹ Lisa Tiersten, "Marianne in the department store: gender and the politics of consumption in turn-of-the-century Paris," In *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Ashgate, 1999), 125; Uwe Spiekermann, "Theft and thieves in German department stores, 1895-1930: a discourse on morality, crime and gender," In *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Ashgate, 1999), 141; Miller, *Bon Marché*, 50, 219.

²² Kelley Graham, *"Gone to the Shops": Shopping in Victorian England* (Praeger, 2008), 16, 121; Gareth Shaw, "The evolution and impact" in *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c. 1800-1914*, 151-153 (this section includes analysis of the Cockayne's accounts SY492/B5 that I use in the following example).

²³ T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Trade accounts, profit and loss accounts and balance sheets (half-yearly)," SY492/B5/67-82, SY492 – Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (formerly T. B. and W. Cockayne), SA.

²⁴ T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Trade accounts, profit and loss accounts and balance sheets (half-yearly)," SY492/B5/50-82, SY492 – Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (formerly T. B. and W. Cockayne), SA.

The August 1913 trade account and balance sheet recorded a loss of £229.12.7 (roughly £23,400 in 2024) for the period. This was less than 2% of the total gross profits across all departments, but still more than the profits of six

their own homes and enticed them to turn shopping into an outing in and of itself rather than a necessary endeavor. Financial records belie the significance placed upon certain elements of business which further complicates their place in historical studies. Profits and dividends are a priority of any business, in any time period, but attracting customers, whether they purchased anything, put a store in the public eye and created a place for itself.

At the turn of the twentieth century, almost every retailer relied on employees from outside the family. From the largest department stores with scores of employees to the small fashion shops, run by a single family only employing a daygirl to assist in domestic work, only the smallest front-room businesses could have gotten by without outside help, but even these would rely on the domestic labor of daughters. Because of their size, department stores hired people for specialized positions. Specific needs might see individuals transferred from one department to another. For example, during the busy season, a workroom seamstress might serve as a sales assistant or model, or a skilled salesman in cabinets might move to manager in furniture. This scenario happens in *W.A.G.M.U.S.*, Böhme's novel about department stores, when Agnes Matrei and Karen Lynengaard are transferred, individually, to the antiques department at the request of various influential men.²⁵ Fashion retailing was part of an industrialized economy which led to changes in the nature and organization of the work involved, all of which impacted the people occupied with it.

Changes in Retailing

Over the course of the nineteenth century many elements of retailing changed. Some of these changes are discussed elsewhere in this study, but this section refocuses our attention on

other departments (Berlin, Ribbons, Toys, Gent's boots & shoes, and Paper & twine). The total gross profits for the period were £17575.8.4 (roughly £1,784,600 in 2024).

²⁵ Margarete Böhme, *The Department Store: A Novel of To-Day [W.A.G.M.U.S.]*, trans. Ethel Colburn Mayne (D. Appleton and Company, 1912), 150, 233-39.

four of the most significant in terms of the shop assistants and the work expected of them. These changes are to the scale of retailing, the groups involved in shopkeeping and their identities, fabrication and distribution within and across stores, and the pace and flexibility of shop work. Throughout this discussion it is important to remember that changes were not all-encompassing or inevitable. Some, such as the feminization of the labor force, were the product of owners choosing to employ women, who could be paid less, as well as the strengthening beliefs in the divisions of spaces along lines of propriety. Despite the changes in retailing wrought by department stores, small fashion shops and front-room businesses continued to provide people with vital income. The larger influence on the changes was the shift of full economies and societies to industrial capitalism.

The skilled trades of cloth and clothing creation and selling had fundamentally changed by the end of the nineteenth century. No longer protected by guilds, drapers and tailors were left to expand or collapse in the capitalist market.²⁶ It was no longer possible for some stores to rely solely on the labor of the owner, his family, and a small number of apprentices and assistants. Many department stores evolved out of these industries and expanded to include a vast array of departments. Department stores followed along earlier industrializing trends which separated the residences of the managerial class from their employees and businesses.²⁷ As in other sectors, this separation distinguished the department store from the home, and, thus, the public from the private. While not every department store featured such a clear distinction for the owners and managers, it was a general characteristic of the form.

²⁶ In influence of guilds in these fields had been waning since the late eighteenth century (see Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 258-9 and Inder, *Busk*, 16-24). Other guild-like organizations continued or evolved into unions – in Sheffield, The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire was founded in 1624 and is still operating.

²⁷ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2019), 181, 242, 283.

Mixing business and residence was a continuation of earlier forms of fabrication and distribution. Small fashion business owners differed from outworkers in other industries, including in sweated garment work, because they controlled the pace of work and kept the profits. Some of the plotlines in Böhme's *W.A.G.M.U.S.* feature the distinction between businesses run from the home (and their difficulties and failures) and Müllenmeister's stores and residences. For Joshua Müllenmeister, absorbing small home-run firms and hiring their owners was a matter of course, but relocating his home from the business premises, or proximity to it, to a fashionable neighborhood at his second wife's insistence was galling because he did not like being so far away from the business.²⁸ Small businesses were just as likely to be owned and operated by women as men. Furthermore, front-room businesses allowed women to earn necessary incomes without leaving their residences. The work done in these small businesses was just as strenuous and important to profitability as that done in large stores but could not be separated from the domestic in the same way. Working from home collapsed the fragile distinctions between domestic and business, private and public. Rather than a romanticized notion of small shopkeepers, front-room businesses were much closer to people doing sweated work for the clothing industry.

While many small businesses remained, and relied on small staffs, the department stores employed significantly more people. Urbanization brought many people to cities to work in stores, and, increasingly, these prospective employees were young women. In both Britain and Germany, the day-to-day labor of mass selling at the turn of the twentieth century had become deskilled and feminized in the eyes of observers.²⁹ The feminization of sales assistants provided

²⁸ Böhme, *Department Store*, 14, 63.

²⁹ Bill Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (Leicester University Press, 1995), 137; Carole Elizabeth Adams, *Women clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of class and gender* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 132.

employment opportunities for women that were not to be found in factories or in nursing or teaching, which required more education. They were, therefore, highly attractive for women from a range of backgrounds and department store employment offered benefits beyond consistent wages. These benefits will be discussed further in chapters three and four.

Department stores were large establishments with many sales departments, back of house workrooms for garment finishing and tailoring, and staff rest areas. In Britain, rest areas included accommodation, but in both countries, there were at least dining and cloak rooms for all employees. Each of these areas required different types of labor. On the sales floor, each department had assistants and a buyer. There were also floorwalkers (also called shopwalkers), cash boys, cash girls, and porters. In some stores there were separate cash rooms which handled all transactions away from the selling floor, necessitating proper sales forms to be transported across the stores. The vast majority of front-of-house employees were sales assistants. Workrooms hired seamstresses and tailors to make and alter clothing and were overseen by a lead, or first, hand.³⁰ Other workrooms were staffed by woodworkers and carpenters. Employee meals were made by cooks, and all parts of the stores had to be cleaned. Each position had set tasks to be accomplished in specific areas. The determination of who did what was vital to accomplishing owners' goals of making profits.

Large stores sold goods ranging in quality, use, and completion. They depended on visible and invisible labor, both in-house and from manufacturers. Small shops were more limited in their ranges, focusing on a particular aspect of fashion or clothing or for a specific clientele or use. Often working long hours and required to stand unless on a break, sales employees labored under strict physical regimes. Even efforts to amend the situation were

³⁰ Inder, *Busks*, 154.

contested. Although the British “Seats for Shop Assistants Act 1899” passed and went into effect in 1900, there were claims from both assistants and members of the House of Lords about whether it was necessary.³¹ Furthermore, whether it could be effectively enforced was unclear. Like much shop legislation in both Britain and Germany, the impact on the material realities of sales assistants was probably negligible. For the back-of-house employees, there was less scrutiny around behavior and interactions, but the physical demands of cutting, sewing, and altering clothing were just as high as sales. To fully understand the nature of department and fashion store work, our definition of work needs to encompass the vast array of tasks assigned, the environments in which they were completed, and the standards they had to meet.

Owners of fashioning businesses generally came from families in the same trades. Over the course of the nineteenth century, some of these trades gained status while others lost it. As industrialization affected the availability of products and their cost, businesses had to adapt. Some continued to find their place in small-scale retailing, while others capitalized on possibilities. The environments and contexts in which future department store owners lived and worked affected the outcomes of their businesses and the status of retailers as a group. The major changes affecting the cities in this study were to religious minorities, particularly Jews in Germany and the general standing of Methodists in Britain, and the place of women in owning businesses and the recognition of this standing. Social changes across Europe provided opportunities for people to change their circumstances or make choices that impacted their social locations.

³¹ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 17 July 1899, 3, GPSBLN. The most outspoken member of the House of Lords was the Earl of Wemyss, who “said they would have next ‘The Shop Girls’ Wet Shoes and Stockings Bill’” and called this effort “petty hysterical legislation” (*Sheffield Independent*, 22 July 1899, 6, GPSBLN; *Sheffield Telegraph*, 22 July 1899, 6, GPSBLN).

The unification of the German Empire in 1871 and changes in the status of Jews within it provided opportunities for movement and settled trade which resulted in the rise of the main department store families. Simultaneously, however, symbolic connections were being made between modernity, cosmopolitanism, consumption, and Jewishness, which contributed to rising antisemitism.³² The establishment of a cohesive economy in a national setting was beneficial for the department stores that expanded into regional chains and established connections with wholesalers and ready-made production companies. Legal changes around migration and settlement provided those Jewish families with experience in trading textiles and small goods greater opportunities to settle west of their birthplaces.³³ For example, Leonhard Tietz and his extended family network moved from Birnbaum an der Warthe (today Międzychód, Poland) to the Rhineland, Thuringia, and Berlin, where they established multiple department store networks.³⁴ For Leonhard Tietz, this success came in just three decades.

Almost all of the department store owners of Sheffield were drapers, and many had training with other stores in the city before opening their own doors. The Cole brothers and John Walsh trained at Cockayne's and John Atkinson trained at Cole Brother's before all opening their own stores.³⁵ This provided social connections between businesses that were reinforced by other relationships as time went on. As sellers of whole cloth, drapers could easily expand their business to any type of cloth and products which could be made from cloth. Thus, they expanded

³² John F. Mueller, *The Kaiser, Hitler and the Jewish Department Store: The Reich's Retailer* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 19; Volker Berghahn, "Demographic growth, industrialization and social change," in *19th Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society, 1780-1918*, ed. John Breuilly (Arnold, 1997), 192-193; Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880-1940* (Cornell University Press, 2015), 56-58.

³³ Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 15.

³⁴ Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 23.

³⁵ Caroline Oldcorn Reid, "Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield" (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1976), 131-132; Pat Dallman, *The story of Sheffield High Street from 16th century to Modern Times*, (ALD Design & Print, 2003), 84; "Atkinsons: Independent Sheffield Department Store Celebrates 150 years," *BBC News*, March 7, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-60647715>.

from linen drapers to silk mercers, soft furnishers, and ladies' underclothing. It also was logical for stores to add small haberdashery areas, which expanded, and outfit accessories, like hats, gloves, and shoes. Industrial product and increased mechanical ability transformed what had been specialized trades into areas of mass production. One of the clearest examples of this was the decline in shoemaking, which had previously been a skilled trade but was becoming overshadowed by the ready-made shoe industry, which led to shoe shops increasingly were included in department stores.

A major difference in Sheffield, compared to Cologne, was the religious identity of the owners. The Cole and Cockayne families were involved in the local Methodist circles. For the Coles, this involvement dated to the family's arrival to the area in the 1840s.³⁶ John Walsh was Catholic and an Irish immigrant.³⁷ Walsh did not suffer the same discrimination as many Irish immigrants to Britain because of their position in the working class and their Catholicism. (This stands in distinct opposition to the realities for Polish-German Jews in Cologne and other parts of Germany.³⁸) Walsh was likely insulated by his standing as a shopkeeper and the success of his business. Adopting many of the social norms, both for his family and his business, helped. The other owners were also Christian, likely members of the Church of England. Although Methodists had been marginalized and distrusted earlier in the nineteenth century in the city, by this time, many of the leading business families were Methodist.³⁹

³⁶ Reid, "Middle Class Values," 131-132.

³⁷ F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (Harvard University Press, 1988), 178-9, 318; Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, culture and society in nineteenth-century Britain*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2017), 265-6, 270.

³⁸ Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1987); Till van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925*, trans. Marcus Brainard (University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

³⁹ David Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (Carnegie Publishing, 1998), 209.

At the turn of the century, female proprietors of fashion shops were numerous and visible. Dozens of women operating fashioning businesses appeared in every year's directory in both cities. They also advertised in newspapers—some almost daily. From the women's directory listings, we can see that most operated businesses out of residential spaces. In Cologne, in 1901, for example, Augustus and Maria Baumgärtner lived at Lungengasse 24, which was listed as Augustus' apartment. Augustus' business was at Marsilstein 19, where he worked as a joiner. Maria, meanwhile, was a women's tailor at the apartment.⁴⁰ The two appear to have married in 1896 or 1897 and moved to Lungengasse and by 1898, Augustus had set up shop with Christian Heinrichs in Marsilstein. From 1901, Augustus ran the joiner's business alone.⁴¹ The couple moved a few times between 1902 and 1910, but their occupations remained the same.⁴² The lack

⁴⁰ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1901), II Theil, 22.

⁴¹ Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1896), II Theil, 16; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend köln u.d. eingemeindeten Vororte, sowie für die Umgebung, besonders Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven: 1897), II Theil, 16; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Kiehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1898), II Theil, 19; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1899), II Theil, 20; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1900), II Theil, 21; Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln*, (1901), II Theil, 202.

Christian Heinrichs remained a joiner but in 1901 he was operating out of Agrippasträße.

⁴² Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1902), II Theil, 23; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1903), II Theil, 24; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1904), II Theil, 25; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1905) II Theil, 28; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1906) II Theil, 29; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1907) II Theil, 31; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's

of separation between work and home for Maria and these women mirrors that of assistants who lived-in. This conflation of work space and domestic space helped to redefine clothing and accessories as feminine and prevented women from establishing large stores separate from their relationships with men.

Participation in different forms of retailing early in the nineteenth century provided opportunities for ambitious individuals and families to start or expand businesses as the larger production and distribution systems industrialized. Furthermore, changes in governments and policies opened doors for different groups to enter the market, as with Jews in the German Empire. Structural changes allowed for individuals and groups to take advantage of situations that favored them and provided business opportunities. The ability to transform economic and financial potential into actual financial capital and, thus, to social and cultural capital, was not guaranteed but depended on the changing status of the individuals involved.

The changes in fabrication and distribution which provided customers with the ability to buy ready-made garments off the rack without the assistance of a shop girl perpetually hides a chain of labor, much of which happened within the store. Disregarding the labor needed to make cloth and the piecework to create at least the base of a garment (whether a costume, a skirt, or a shirtwaist), there was still the decorating, finishing, altering, stocking, monitoring, cashing-out,

Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1908) II Theil, 18; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1909) II Teil, 19; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1910) II Teil, 20.

From 1911, Maria does not appear in the directories. It is possible she simply stopped working, but it is also possible she died. (Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1911) II Teil, 22; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1912) II Teil, 23; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1913) II Teil, 23; Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgegend, insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1914), II Thiel, 24).

and packaging to take a garment from raw material to owner's wardrobe. Some garments were increasingly finished when they reached the sales floor but continued to be mediated by sales assistants. However, many continued to need alterations⁴³, and the continuing presence of dressmakers and ladies tailoresses speaks to the ongoing strength of the bespoke market. The processes and movement of goods can be found in the types of departments and advertisements for services. Additionally, there would have been advertisements by either store or producer for new lines or sales and shop workers aided customers in finding specific products and advising them on appropriate items to purchase, should aid and advice be needed.⁴⁴ For example, an evening dress, ready-made, needed to be stocked on the sales floor and monitored by sales assistants. If a customer needed assistance, a shop girl might present the dress as an option and, at some stores, another employee might model it.⁴⁵ Once it was chosen, the customer's measurements might be taken and the dress sent for alterations.⁴⁶ When it was finished, it would have been packaged and potentially delivered to the customer's home by either delivery van or post. Quick alteration and delivery were selling points for department stores.⁴⁷ One did not simply walk into a store, find a specific item, pay for it, and carry it home. Fashioning retailing involved multiple layers of labor, but the true labor was in making the other labor invisible.

⁴³ Inder, *Busks, Basques, and Brush-braid*, 122.

⁴⁴ Kellie K. Bradshaw, "Reality, Expectations and Fears: Women Shop Assistants in London, 1890-1914" (PhD diss., George Mason University, 2019), 33, ProQuest (13881082); Katherine Mullin, *Working Girls: Fiction, Sexuality, Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 100.

⁴⁵ "What if Means to be a Department-Store Girl: As Told by the Girl Herself," *Ladies Home Journal*, volume 30, no. 6, June 1913, 8, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.319510005833685?urlappend=%3Bseq=462%3Bownerid=13510798903023046-522>.

⁴⁶ Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton University Press, 1994), 62; *Sheffield Independent*, 19 January 1901, 1, SA.

⁴⁷ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 54; *Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 17 September 1895, 2, Zeitungspunkt NRW (ZPNRW); *Sheffield Telegraph*, 16 September 1895, 1, SLSL.

For the sales assistant, quickly assessing a customer's needs, including whether they needed help once free-browsing gained popularity, and suggesting the right garment for an occasion and a woman's appearance, was a requirement. Being slow to assist the customer, suggesting an ill-suited garment, or otherwise breaking the store's rules could spell the end of a woman's employment.⁴⁸ Although sales training programs were starting, and the biggest department stores had their own sales training programs, customer service skills were not easy to teach.⁴⁹ Service skills often include intangibles and variables that could not be rationalized or industrialized easily. In an effort to create standard policies and actions, Leonhard Tietz sent a team with Max Baumann, manager of the Cologne flagship store, to each new store weeks before they opened to train new employees.⁵⁰ This policy worked to establish and implement standards of work and standardization of experience. Baumann's early, and likely recurring, presence, promoted an understanding of expectations and oversight.

Derby & Schollick, a milliners' and costumiers' establishment on Sheffield's Glossop Road, was one of the most successful small businesses of its kind. By taking an extended look at this one business, we can see how small shops, including ones owned and operated by women, were part of the changing fashion retailing landscape. The women of Derby & Schollick were active participants within industrialized fabrication and distribution. The store had a stable presence at a single address for years and frequently advertised in the local newspapers. In the city directories, there is only one entry that was connected with an individual whose surname was Derby; the store was never connected with a "Schollick," and the provenance of the name

⁴⁸ For some idea of the precarity of London shop workers see, Bradshaw, "Reality, Expectations and Fears," 33-41.

⁴⁹ Susan Porter Benson, "The Cinderella of Occupations: Managing the Work of Department Store Saleswomen, 1900-1940," *The Business History Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 1-25, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3114439>.

⁵⁰ Nils Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz: Fuhrmannssohn und Warenhauskönig von der Warthe and den Rhein* (Hentrich & Hentrich, 2014), 34.

was never explained. Despite some employee turnover, the store maintained a stable enough client base to continue operating. The store operated, at least, between 1893 and 1911. For much of the 1890s, Derby & Schollick was run by Emma Beaulands.⁵¹

Utilizing census data and city directories, we can see some aspects of life and business at Derby and Schollick. In 1901, on-site at Derby & Schollick lived Emma Beaulands, employer, with two fitters, Harriet Sutton and Kate Pass, a saleswoman, Marion Merrison, and two servants, Eliza Sanderson and Victoria Booth.⁵² Beaulands was likely in charge of both financial and creative matters, with Sutton and Pass working in both general fabrication and some customer interactions. If more people were employed at the business remains unclear, but unlikely. Four women ran a successful enough business to stay open, under the same name, largely under the same leadership, and on the same premises for almost twenty years. Part of the metric for success was the presence of two servants. The ability to support not only a live-in maid but also a housekeeper speaks to the financial success of the store. Most lower-middle-class families would have had, at best a single live-in maid of all work, while many would have only had a maid in for the day.⁵³ The economic prosperity needed to support multiple servants, including housing them, speaks to the profitability of the store. Live-in servants would have done all of the manual work of the household, most likely including cooking, which freed the rest of the household to conduct business.

Derby & Schollick is distinct from the other women-run fashion businesses of the time, not only for the consistency of their name, but also because they were the only women-run

⁵¹ *Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood* (London: Kelly & Co, Limited, 1893), 504; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield* (London: Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1911), 1034.

⁵² 1901 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, Sheffield West, enumeration district 11, RG 13/4362 #1, microfiche, SA.

⁵³ Lucy Lethbridge, *Servants: A Downstairs View of Twentieth-century Britain* (Bloomsbury, 2013), 9.

business that frequently advertised in the local newspapers. The store advertised as milliners and costumiers, regularly noting sales, new merchandise for the holidays, and ready-made blouses, and noted their court mourning wear when Queen Victoria died in January 1901. While their advertisements, and those of other small shops, were more limited in scope and space than those of the department stores, their consistency kept the business' name in the mind of the newspapers' readers. The standard participation in the new media environment shows the participation of small businesses in the modern, industrialized society.

Regardless of structure, work in businesses that constructed or tailored clothing it was difficult. Slim margins dictated a quick pace with few protections, and department stores required a fast turnover in goods to make profits on low prices.⁵⁴ For the businesses in both unfinished and fully finished products, the pace of work would have changed with the seasons and selling itself resembled the pre-department store age. For the tailors and dressmakers, however, seasonal changes in the pace of business existed in addition to the increased amount of work needed on an everyday level to make ends meet for the business. To stay open, these businesses had to attract and retain customers, which meant low prices and fast turnarounds. There was also always the possibility of customers not paying in a timely fashion. In Böhme's novel, one of the central characters needed to settle accounts when she closed her business. This required a visit to the department store owner for payment on his wife's account. During the conversation, she quoted a single dress at four hundred marks, of which fifty were for the labor, which took two employees three days, and the rest for the materials of quality.⁵⁵ Because she needed to settle the accounts, and payment was late, she did not include a profit on this work.

⁵⁴ Inder, *Busks*, 117, 118, 129; Graham, "Gone to the Shops," 30; Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 84.

⁵⁵ Böhme, *The Department Store*, 127.

Proprietors of small shops outside of fiction demanded fast work, at a consistently high quality, to offset the ever-present potential of financial failure or even to turn a profit.

In addition to making new garments, dressmakers remade garments in new styles. Remaking, however, did not lighten the workload because turnaround would have been faster. Depending on the number of changes between styles or the detail involved, the work to remake could rival that of simply making a new garment. Many garments, however, lent themselves to remaking.⁵⁶ In 1895 Cologne, one could have a costume remade in the newest fashion in twenty-four hours for just 10 $\mathcal{M}$, an outfit cut for customers to sew themselves for 2 $\mathcal{M}$, and classes in clothing creation for 15 $\mathcal{M}$.⁵⁷ Offering multiple services in the same vein provided the business with multiple income streams and a way to weather some economic vacillations.

Obladen & Grevemeyer, in Cologne, were unusual in teaching their clientele alteration skills: most stores only trained apprentices. However, the department stores included paper patterns in their inventories from the late 1890s. In May 1899, Walsh's advertised paper patterns for sale.⁵⁸ The increased availability of sewing machines would have lightened some of the workload, but this would have mainly affected pieceworkers completing ready-made clothing. The women doing the intricate finishing, tailoring, and remaking increasingly used sewing

⁵⁶ Inder, *Busks*, 122.

Inder also remarks that the changing nature of textiles impacted their ability to be remade. For example, many chemical dyes or treatment made fabric weaker, which also impacts the conservation of garments (Inder uses the example of oxide of tin treatments to stiffen silk, a naturally strong fiber/textile, which has caused remaining examples to be extraordinarily brittle).

⁵⁷ *Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 17 September 1895, 2, ZPNRW; *Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 16 Sept 1895, 2, ZPNRW.

The store was Obladen & Greveymeyer, a luxury and fancy dress store on Schildergasse.

Although translations to present-day currencies and amounts is imprecise, it can be useful to have some estimation of the relative cost. According to the 1914 Sheffield Red Book, 1USD was equal to 4.5 $\mathcal{M}$. In 1913 US dollars, then, the three prices would have been roughly \$2, \$.50, and \$3.50. In 2024, that translates to \$63, \$16, and \$111. *The Sheffield and Rotherham Red Book and Almanack* (Pawson & Brailsford, 1914), 405. Inflation rates from <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>.

⁵⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, 16 May 1899, 1, SA.

Carl Peters, in Cologne, advertised their stock of paper patterns in June 1906. *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 16 June 1906, 1, ZPNRW.

machines, but home production of clothing required more specialist training, which small shops could provide.⁵⁹ This was due to the intricacies of women's fashions at the time.⁶⁰ By selling paper patterns, and fabric, department stores were providing some of their customers alternatives to their finished products. This, in turn, potentially fed some of the smaller businesses that traded in finishing clothing of all types.

In small shops that employed multiple people, the divisions were often based upon skill sets.⁶¹ Skill, in many ways, aligned with class. To own the store was also to be the primary mind behind design and execution. Other employees worked in construction or cutting. Some businesses had apprentices who were often tasked with menial jobs and, in some places, did not learn the trade or even multiple skills.⁶² Preventing apprentices from learning a whole trade kept them in subservient positions. However, even poor training in an apprenticeship could lead to "improver" positions, in both small shops and department stores.⁶³ In small businesses, non-owners were listed as having more specific occupations, rather than the catch-all "improver" category. Household businesses also had servants, occasionally living-in, but often only working as day girls.

The versatility of small stores in adapting to social changes shows their ability as a group to fill, indeed, to fit the gaps left by department stores. Many people could not afford to regularly

⁵⁹ Inder, *Busks*, 142, 187. There is other evidence that buyers of sewing machines, particularly Singers in Britain, was dominated by outworkers and tailors into the early 1890s. For more on this see, Andrew Godley, "Singer in Britain: The Diffusion of Sewing Machine Technology and its Impact on the Clothing Industry in the United Kingdom, 1860-1905," *Textile History* 27, no. 1 (1996): 59-76, <https://doi.org/10.1179/004049696793711725>. Sewing machines were available from the 1860s, but dressmakers of all calibers did not trust them for the intricate styles. As the technology improved, their use spread, which in turn, expanded the possibilities and markets for ready-made clothing.

⁶⁰ Elodie Nevin, "Scripts, Skirts, and Stays: Femininity and Dress in Fiction by German Women Writers, 1840-1910" (PhD thesis, Birkbeck University of London, 2015), 56-65, Online repository of Birkbeck Institutional Theses, <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/40147/>; Jane Farrell-Beck, "Nineteenth-Century Construction Techniques: Practice and Purpose," *Dress* 13, no. 1 (1987): 11-20, <https://doi.org/10.1179/036121187803657390>.

⁶¹ Inder, *Busks*, 94, 95-96, 133, 265, 268, 269.

⁶² Inder, *Busks*, 94.

⁶³ Inder, *Busks*, 95-96.

buy goods at department stores, especially as cash or immediate payment became preferred. Small businesses were more likely to offer credit to known customers. Additionally, for working-class people, shopping at a department store might be a special occasion traveling far from their neighborhoods, while small shops across the city were more convenient. However, the most significant factor that distinguished the small, front-room businesses from at-home piece workers was their direct interaction with their clientele. For example, at Obladen & Grevemeyer, shop employees interacted with customers as they completed finishing work and during courses in clothing finishing. Obladen & Grevemeyer ran advertisements for these services consistently over a decade to increase business when necessary.⁶⁴ Rather than finishing garments and sending them along to be sold elsewhere, garments were finished for specific clients that came directly in contact with the owner. Thus, in addition to being skilled at manufacturing garments, owners also had to be savvy businesswomen and manage customer relations.⁶⁵ Small businesses depended upon the business owners could bring on their own. The entire enterprise relied on positive customer experiences, which themselves were a new product to be marketed and relied on affective considerations that could not be explicitly communicated. Small businesses that failed could be subsumed into the home-work production sphere, as happened in Böhme's novel to the Ribbeck family, which posed an ongoing unfavorable outcome.⁶⁶ Although department store owners also felt the pressures of running and managing a successful business and ensuring the smooth running of operations, their margins were wider. For small business owners, success was never guaranteed, and they had to do most jobs themselves.

⁶⁴ See fn. 72 and *Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 11 June 1906, Zweite Blatt, 2, ZPNRW.

⁶⁵ Much of this can still be seen in businesses that run off Etsy or similar sites; despite a third-party platform, many shops are small and run by individuals who are responsible for every aspect of business.

⁶⁶ Böhme, *The Department Store*.

Frequently small shops relied on the flexible labor of family members, but department stores required access to the labor of female family members in some circumstances. One of the most frequent moments a business required women to step into was after a death. For example, Hawksley Hatters, in Sheffield, was started by a man but continued by his wife and children after his death.⁶⁷ Many women assumed control of a business or trade when their husbands died. Sometimes, death was not the cause of wives entering the business, although the exact circumstances cannot be discerned. Wives joining the business, rather than children, show how women's labor in fashion shops, especially small ones, was flexible. Women could assist in the shop when extra labor was needed but could also spend most of their time in home duties or with small children. In Sheffield, one example of this is the Turner family who ran a drapery in the Attercliffe neighborhood. Charles A. Turner started as an assistant in another shop, as was the pattern at the time. By 1891, he was running his own business, married, had a son, and had three employees (two servants, one assistant) living with the family on-site. For the next twenty years, Charles' wife, Sarah, was not listed in the censuses as helping with the business, likely because of her small children. This changed in 1911, when Sarah and her two sons were listed as helping Charles with the business.⁶⁸ Their sons likely had been working in the business since they were teenagers. Sarah, however, could have been assisting the whole time, when necessary or possible, and she is unlikely to have been paid for her work. Wives of some department store owners had worked in the store but stopped as stores expanded. For example, Flora Tietz had run

⁶⁷ Ancestry.com, *England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995*, 1887 (London, England): 230, Henry Hawksley. Accessed via AncestryLibrary.com 26 October 2023; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3823 ED 9 page 23; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4340 ED 22 page 29.

⁶⁸ 1891 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Charles Albert Turner," RG 12/3838 ED 8 page 4, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1901 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Charles Albert Turner," RG 13/4384 ED 11 page 20, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA); 1911 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Charles Albert Turner," District 510 sub-district 7 ED 11, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA).

the retail operations and done the window dressing in the original Stralsund store.⁶⁹ Sisters were also involved in these relationships. Also in Cologne, Agnes Oster, *geb.* Ossendorff, started being listed as a partner in her family's business after her father's death and one of her brother's departures. Agnes clearly had experience in the business if she was able to gain partnership status to replace a brother. This experience helped the business continue, and her sons were eventually incorporated as partners. Had Agnes not stepped in, her sons might have joined the business, but the opposite could have happened; without enough family support, the business could have folded after the departure of two of the main partners in 1885. For businesses, large and small, the flexible labor of women, short- and long-term, could be the difference between continued operation and closing.

The changes to fashion retailing as part of the economic and social transition to industrialized capitalism affected large and small shops. The scale and pace of work needed to increase and quicken if a business wanted to continue trading. Religious minorities were able to find various successes in the rise of department stores as they took advantage to changing social, legal, and economic circumstances. Women could assert claims to tradeswomanship and ownership which placed them squarely within bounds of shopkeeping. Furthermore, the changes to retailing as a whole had impacts on the work done in the businesses.

Fashion Retailing Work

As we just saw, women were vital to the continuation of fashioning businesses and did much of the work within them. Women were involved in almost every level of work in large and small stores. As fashion retailing diversified, the workforce was increasingly made of women. This section breaks down the different roles women filled and the different aspects and

⁶⁹ Busch-Petersen, *Tietz*, 20, 38.

requirements of each. There were three main areas women worked in: sales, fabrication, and service. In large department stores, there could be some overlap in roles depending on the season and whether a store was short-staffed. In small stores, women often did multiple jobs depending on the needs of the moment. Within this section, I also consider men's jobs overall as a counterpoint; though men continued to do some of the work they historically had done, however, men were increasingly in positions of power which were closed to women. In outlining the positions and their requirements, this section establishes fashion retailing work as labor, that was industrialized and physical.

Sales Assistants—Women

The most visible employees at department stores of any size were the sales assistants. Before the 1890s, many assistants had been men, but, as stores expanded assistants were increasingly women. Women served in linens, ready-made clothing, women's shoes, hosiery, millinery, perfumes, books, and toys. Overall, women working as sales assistants were required to have a thorough knowledge of at least their own department and current fashions as well as present themselves respectably and interact with customers properly. The physical work of selling—standing and presenting the appropriate items in a specific interaction and keeping an area tidy—encompass only part of the labor of selling. In addition to the tasks and skills discussed here, ideas of presentation and behavior were significant parts of the sales assistant job and will be the focus of chapter four.

In most stores, assistants worked a single department, but in some stores, assistants “served through” where they accompanied customers across departments to facilitate all the sales for that individual. Serving through remained more popular in smaller stores, where earlier retailing practices continued to be popular and there were fewer employees. By the turn of the

century, serving through was rare in Sheffield and positions where it was required noted that in the listing. For example, Joseph Till, draper and silk mercer, advertised for “an experienced Saleswoman, for Underclothing and Baby Linen Department, and to serve through” in October 1895.⁷⁰ Serving through did not seem to be a common part of sales roles in Cologne, especially at Leonhard Tietz. At smaller stores, like P. W. Ossendorff, serving through might have been practiced. In both cities, serving through was likely a daily, unrecorded practice, at smaller establishments with fewer delineated roles. Serving-through provided an elastic labor force to fit needs as they arose which was even more essential to family stores which relied on the often unpaid labor of wives and daughters. Therefore, serving through was a practice continued from earlier methods of selling that persisted alongside new patterns.

The stores that did not have assistants serve through listed their jobs under particular departments. This was especially noticeable during the sales or when new departments were being opened. By tracking which category certain departments were listed under, we can see beliefs about both gender and class. Departments as distinct spaces delineated who worked where, which established and reinforced divisions between people, as we saw in chapter one.

Assistants were most in demand before sales, but advertisements for openings occurred year-round. Stores in both Sheffield and Cologne hired women and men for certain departments, following the same patterns. John Walsh advertised the most for temporary positions. During the winter sale in 1901, the store had listings for women and men. “Experienced young lady assistants” were wanted “in all Departments” and “experienced salesmen” were wanted “in all Drapery Departments, also Clothing, Furnishing, and Ironmongery”.⁷¹ Women were wanted for all departments generally, but they would not have worked in every department. Women’s

⁷⁰ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 12 October 1895, 2, SA.

⁷¹ *Sheffield Independent*, 12 January 1901, 2, SA.

departments included hosiery, gloves, haberdashery, ribbons, and lace.⁷² Some stores, like John Walsh, held social cachet, which made positions highly sought after and more socially valuable than positions at other local businesses.⁷³ The most significant women's departments in both countries were those selling clothing, including ready-made pieces, purpose-specific outfits, and outerwear of all types. Sometimes assistants would serve in two of these departments, like those advertised for in January 1901 in the *Kölner Zeitung*, for the “*Costüm und Mäntel-Abteilungen*” at F. Alsberg, whose offerings included women's clothing.⁷⁴ These employees would have worked in both the outfits and coats departments.⁷⁵ Men would have had sole domain over departments like furnishing and ironmongery, but also men's clothing. The same F. Alsberg advertisement included a salesman for the furniture department. Outside the heavy departments, women were increasingly part of the sales force across department stores in Sheffield and Cologne—and across Europe and North America.⁷⁶

Additionally, within some stores there were divisions among sales assistants of individual departments. The most experienced or capable would be in charge of “first sales.” These people would handle the original request of a customer, an interaction which could determine whether someone continued to shop both that day and in the future. First sales positions were also explicitly noted in listings.⁷⁷ Above the highest sales assistants were the buyers. At the other end of the sales spectrum from the buyers were the cashiers. Relatively new positions, desk cashiers or cash girls worked registers and handled all transactions, with sales slips delivered by

⁷² *Sheffield Telegraph*, 5 January 1901, 2, SA.

⁷³ Alison Turton, “Rackhams Span the Century: Rackhams of Sheffield: A History, 1875-1985,” *Sheffield and Yorkshire Today*, April 1985, 40, FRAS1297, HF-GUAS.

⁷⁴ *Kölner Zeitung*, 2 January 1901, Abend Ausgabe 4, ZPNRW.

⁷⁵ The direct translation of *Kostüme*, with the modern spelling, is “costumes”. However, the direct translation can be misleading to modern readers, invoking images of Carnival or Halloween. Historically, costume was a mode of fashion that include whole outfits, like those for travel, bathing, or riding.

⁷⁶ Adams, *Women Clerks*, 3, 8-9, 142.

⁷⁷ *Sheffield Independent*, 8 January 1901, 2, SA.

mechanized means.⁷⁸ These positions included skills that could not be learned on the job, such as the social cues or how to read an individual's status, and listings frequently included requirements like "intelligent" and "experience required."⁷⁹ Compulsory primary schooling assisted women in attaining the skills needed for these positions, but they still would have been high stress jobs, especially during the sales. Although compulsory, not every child attended school regularly, so requirements of this sort limited those who could apply to those whose parents had seen education as a path for advancement.⁸⁰ Simply having the required competency in writing or arithmetic did not meet the constitutional requirements of working in a department store. Thus, in addition to the physical or tangible aspects of the job were the intangible or aesthetic aspects.

In Cologne, some sales assistants were required to speak languages other than German. This requirement was not part of the listings in Sheffield. Therefore, a city's location and relationship to its geographic surroundings contributed to the demands of the job. In Cologne, the most frequently specified language was French.⁸¹ With Cologne's proximity to France, this is unsurprising, especially if a store was trying to attract higher class customers or make claims of connections to Paris. Sometimes employers also required English, as was the case at Gebrüder Liebmann & Dehme in Cologne. Their July 1906 listing required a skilled assistant for the trimmings, haberdashery, and gloves departments to be fluent in French and English. Consistent with other requirements, she was also to be between 20 and 22.⁸² Sometimes English was the

⁷⁸ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 48.

⁷⁹ *Sheffield Independent*, 16 January 1901, 2, SA.

⁸⁰ Gunilla Budde, "From the 'Zwergschule' (One-Room Schoolhouse) to the Comprehensive School: German Elementary Schools in Imperial Germany and the Weimar republic, 1870-1930" in *Mass Education and the Limits of State Building, c. 1870-1939*, ed. Laurence Brockliss and Nicola Sheldon (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 100-101.

⁸¹ *Kölner Zeitung*, 11 March 1888, Zweite Ausgabe 4, ZPNRW.

⁸² *Kölner Zeitung*, 8 July 1906, 3, ZPNRW.

preferred language, as was the case at Hermanns & Froitzheim in 1895.⁸³ Regardless of whether the language was French, English, or both, the ability to work seamlessly in multiple languages added a layer to the difficulty of sales work. These skills were not accessible to every applicant and narrowed the pool of potential employees, which worked to elevate the status of certain employees. The ability to speak a non-German language represents a skilled aspect of sales work and was a part of the cultural capital sales assistants used to claim higher class status.

Sales assistants were the department store employees most visible to the shopping public, and their work required the most diverse set of skills. Sales required women to do both skilled and manual labor within their designated spaces. This work was manual in that it required standing, presenting goods, attending customers (sometimes multiple people simultaneously), and possibly modeling clothing, in addition to tidying and organizing a department. It was skilled because assistants needed to know the products within their department, at least general information about goods across the store, current fashions and their relationship to an individual's social standing, and arithmetic, penmanship, and languages.

Work done in fashion shops and smaller department stores was less likely to be as compartmentalized as that done in large stores. Unlike at the big stores, small store assistants were more likely to serve through, where they followed a customer across and between departments until they were finished shopping. Both men and women were required to serve through in the smaller stores. For example, in 1906, William Clague, a draper on St. Philip's Road, advertised for an "experienced assistant for soft furnishing, and serve through, live out, permanency."⁸⁴ Serving through required assistants to accompany customers across departments rather than passing them off to different assistants in each department. Harrison, on Sheffield's

⁸³ *Kölner Zeitung*, 21 September 1895, Zweite Morgen Ausgabe 4, ZPNRW.

⁸⁴ *Sheffield Independent*, 14 July 1906, 2, SA.

High Street, advertised in 1895 for an “experienced young lady to serve through, with a thorough knowledge of gloves.”⁸⁵ In addition to gloves, this position required knowledge of hosiery. Extensive knowledge of one’s primary department was vital to any shop assistant, but extensive knowledge of multiple departments put an added level of pressure on even the most experienced sales assistants. This pressure would have come from the need to know about more types of products and what distinguished one style from another. Even with the smaller overall number of products in smaller stores, needing a thorough knowledge of multiple departments was more to learn, recall, and deploy than employees in just a single department. Sixteen years before the above listing for William Clague, the same business advertised for a “Young Lady, as second, in Millinery and Mantles” but also to serve through.⁸⁶ This woman was not in charge of either the millinery or mantle department, as a second, thus had fewer responsibilities than a first-hand. However, the requirement to serve through would have necessitated her knowing some information about the other departments. Even for assistants who served through, there were still divisions between departments. It is not a coincidence that either of the Clague assistants or the Harrison assistant from hosiery/gloves listing were advertised under “female assistants” given their primary departments. Some male assistants would work glove departments but not as frequently as women. Further, there were some departments in which men would not work regardless of size, for example, women’s underclothing and baby linen.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 8 October 1895, 2, SA.

⁸⁶ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 30 September 1890, 2, GPSBLN.

⁸⁷ This division increased over time and depended on the size of the store. John Walsh’s original store sold baby linen and women’s underclothing, but by the 1890s, no men would have worked in those departments. Additionally, the original store also employed his wife and female assistants who were more likely to have staffed the women’s underclothing counters. *Sheffield Telegraph*, 12 October 1895, SA.

One of the most important parts of the department store was the workroom. Here seamstresses would fabricate and finish clothing sold in the store. Over time, ready-made clothing increased in availability, but clothing was still tailored in-store.⁸⁸ The work done by these women was occasionally mentioned in advertisements. Two examples concern furs and mourning wear. In September 1895, Cole Brothers advertised their ability to remake sealskin jackets and other furs in the current styles for the upcoming season, but added they “would be glad if Ladies requiring...Re-making and Altering” to “forward them at once, and thus avoid delay” later in the season.⁸⁹ Furs took effort to remake because they were easier to mar and ruin through poor workmanship. Mourning wear had to conform to specific requirements but also needed to meet the fit and styles of the day. This led to fitters being dispatched to customers’ homes—mourners would not be seen outside the home but still received quality service. Even during the sale, fitters were sent to receive instructions regarding mourning wear—as T. B. & W. Cockayne’s made clear in their January 1901 Annual Sale advertisement: “During the Sale the usual prompt dispatch will be given to all Orders for Mourning, competent fitters being sent to any address to receive all instructions (without extra charge).”⁹⁰ By advertising the ability of a store to finish or alter clothing, department stores made claims to skilled trades that tied them to traditional methods of creation and quality and required them to employ workers with the

⁸⁸ Laura Ugolini, “Ready-to-wear or Made-to-measure? Consumer Choice in the British Menswear Trade, 1900-1939,” in *Textile History* 34, no. 2 (2003): 193; Anne J. Kershen, “Morris Cohen and the Origins of the Women’s Wholesale Clothing Industry in the East End,” in *Textile History* 28, no. 1 (1997): 40; Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 26, 28; Busch-Petersen, *Tietz*, 46.

⁸⁹ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 16 September 1895, 1, SLSL.

⁹⁰ *Sheffield Independent*, 19 January 1901, 1, SA.

requisite skills.⁹¹ Department store customers had access to the bespoke and mass produced goods simultaneously because stores employed these skilled workers.

Work in the fabrication divisions would have been similar to the labor done at dressmakers and tailors. This work remained skilled despite the changed location. As historian Pam Inder outlines in *Busks, Basques and Brush-Braid*, a study of British dressmaking in the 18th and 19th centuries, department stores were attractive employers for dressmakers and tailors as they provided employment without the dangers of operating a small business.⁹² For young people looking to learn a trade or gain employment as a journeyman or improver, department stores offered protections against some exploitation.⁹³ At Walsh's, the Costume Room hired apprentices and improvers, functionally journeywomen, in addition to "thoroughly experienced" workers—particularly for bodices and skirts.⁹⁴ The call for experience included managing other workers. For example, on January 26, 1901, Proctor's Fargate advertised for an "Experienced Skirt Hand Required, immediately, to take charge of skirt table."⁹⁵ This urgent listing speaks to the centrality of the workrooms—particularly during the sales. Alteration hands often had some training, sometimes with dressmakers, but found the potential for a better life in department store work, much like sales assistants.⁹⁶ Dressmaking and costumes were not the only departments assisted by workrooms. Millinery departments also relied on workrooms in some stores. Walsh's millinery workroom advertised for apprentices in January 1901.⁹⁷ Although sewing machines

⁹¹ For a discussion of the perception of value related to material goods and status, see Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

⁹² Inder, *Busks*, 154-155.

⁹³ Inder, *Busks*, 265, 269.

⁹⁴ *Sheffield Independent*, 11 January 1901, 2, SA.

⁹⁵ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 26 January 1901, 2, SA.

⁹⁶ Inder, *Busks*, 152-155.

⁹⁷ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 26 January 1901, 2, SA.

were increasingly available at the end of the nineteenth century, most of the alterations and finishes would have been done by hand. This was intricate work that strained hands and eyes.

In Germany, there were fewer workrooms attached to specific, individual stores. Department stores, like Leonhard Tietz, often made connections with manufacturers or owned their own manufacturing facilities. There is no reason to suggest, however, that individual stores did not employ women (and men) to alter ready-made clothing to individual customers' specifics. Part of the continued strength of small establishments, and the fabrication divisions of department stores, was the social status given to bespoke clothing. Bespoke and altered clothing provided claims to social standing as ready-made working men's clothing and the secondhand trade had long been part of working-class circles. Furthermore, the fashions of the middle-class elites included elements that were still difficult to mass produce.⁹⁸ Making and finishing clothing, even in small businesses, was pulled into industrialized society as it needed to keep pace with the mass production of other goods and the increased pace of fashion.

One aspect of the fabrication hands' job was altering some items for the new season. Changing out the accessories or drape of a hat, dress, or skirt could stretch a wardrobe through the notoriously quick-shifting sands of fashion at the turn of the century.⁹⁹ Some of this would have been done by the item's owner, thus, stores of all sizes sold ribbons and flowers for hats. However, some work could only be trusted to trained hands. Furs, for example, required more skill to alter. In Sheffield, Cole Brothers requested customers "forward them at once" to "avoid delay when the season is more advanced" in September 1895.¹⁰⁰ Remaking "Sealskin Jackets and other Furs" in new styles for the upcoming winter was a smart economic decision by owners.

⁹⁸ Inder, *Busks*, 142, 187.

⁹⁹ Inder, *Busks*, 85, 122

¹⁰⁰ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 16 September 1895, 1, SA.

The alterations themselves, however, would have demanded great skill applied to a specific schedule. All department store work was to established standards, but when there was little room for mistakes—an ill-placed stitch or injudicious cutting could ruin the entire garment—the stakes were even higher.

Department and fashion stores were sites of multiple kinds of production. Some of these are fairly obvious, for example, making or altering clothing in-house. Others are less obvious and need to be more fully theorized as productive. Even the in-house clothing production does not fit with large-scale industrial or factory production of ready-made clothing, which was gaining popularity during this time. Individual department stores, like those in Sheffield, did not have the same reach as the large stores of London, Paris, or New York. The regional department stores, like Tietz in Cologne, did not have the same capacity as the Berlin stores. Furthermore, the fashions of the time could only be partially mass produced, even where finished garments were sold, individuals altered them to fit their bodies snugly.¹⁰¹ It is important, then, to think about production as inclusive of more than simply large-scale factory systems. Production of goods within an industrialized society happened in a variety of places and influenced the distribution of goods.

Some of the smaller department stores also had fabrication divisions, which expanded the labor required for successful operation. Nicholas Joseph Baum, in Cologne, was looking for a seasonal model copyist in January 1901.¹⁰² This position would take the model design of an article of clothing and create either a pattern or a new garment. Paper patterns were still emerging, as we see in other examples, and many businesses relied on copyists to gain a pattern

¹⁰¹ Graham, “*Gone to the Shops*,” 45. Stores frequently sought alteration hands, for example, both Cole Brothers and John Atkinson were hiring good alteration hands in the summer of 1906 (*Sheffield Telegraph*, 13 June 1906, 2, SLSL; *Sheffield Telegraph*, 26 June 1906, 2, SLSL).

¹⁰² *Kölner Zeitung*, 26 January 1901, Abend Ausgabe 3, ZPNRW.

for themselves.¹⁰³ The Baum listing was likely for a woman to take apart garments in the upcoming season's styles, procured from other businesses, so that style could be sold in their store. Seasonal work in any store was an important first step for people looking to find long-term employment in retailing, either consistently or in repeated short-term positions.¹⁰⁴ Some of the other small stores, particularly those with roots in millinery, drapery, or tailoring, would have included some work in constructing products. In the small stores that did not construct products, assistants would have had to have some knowledge of production so they could advise customers on the best item to suit their needs. Where most department stores had some investment in fabrication, small stores, which offered more limited products, would not necessarily have fabricators, yet some small businesses were essentially all fabrication, like dressmakers and tailors.

At the smallest fashion shops, like those run out of residential front rooms, a division of labor would have existed on skill or class lines. Gendered divisions in these stores existed on the macro level, in determining which shops fell to men and which to women. Tailors' establishments in both Sheffield and Cologne were run by men. The persistent success of tailors was due to the earlier successes of tailors' guilds. By the turn of the century, the success of dressmakers and seamstresses, however, shows the tailors' weakening position across society. Decreasing profitability and success for tailors as a whole is one place where department store critics may have had a case, except that the decline was more to do with the industrialization of retailing and clothing as a whole than with department stores, in particular, undercutting tailors' trade. Mass-produced goods (often through mechanization) and the potential to pay female

¹⁰³ Inder, *Busks*, 149-150; Winifred Aldrich, "The Impact of Fashion on the Cutting Practices for the woman's Tailored Jacket 1800-1927," *Textile History* 34, no. 2 (2003): 134-170.

¹⁰⁴ Bradshaw, "Reality, Expectations and Fears," 35.

workers less was upending tradition across virtually every industry, not just retailing. In Cologne, the number of women earning some income via dressmaking or ladies' tailoring is astonishing. These women were listed in city directories as *Kleidermacherin* or *Damenschneiderin* (dressmaker and ladies tailoress, respectively). Rarely were they *Schneiderin* (men's tailoresses). These distinctions subdivided work based on customer need or social status. Other specialties included workers' clothing and children's wardrobes. Despite the differences in work done, some gendered divisions of labor persisted and were reinforced by middle-class values regarding propriety. Men could do almost any type of fabrication, while women were more narrowly assigned, and general tailoresses were uncommon. Men assisting men provided an atmosphere of masculinity and collegiality that was limited to the late nineteenth century. The macro gendered divisions were more present in Sheffield than in Cologne. The owners of *Kurzwarenhandlung*, *Manufakturwarenhandlung*, and similar fashioning stores were just as likely to be women as men. The stratification in types of shops shows the ways in which the clothing trades were divided and how those divisions shifted over time. Furthermore, clothing production and the provisioning of some types of accessories were increasingly done by women, which followed the general trend of feminization.

Servants—Women

Finally, the accommodation servants working behind the scenes contributed to the success of stores. The merits of the living-in system have been much debated, but the reliance on servants has received far less attention. The living-in system was a continuation of earlier guild-style accommodation.¹⁰⁵ Sales and fabrication employees frequently came from families with at least a day servant. Therefore, the need for servants is unsurprising. Just as in domestic spaces,

¹⁰⁵ Hallsworth and Davies, *Working Conditions*, 121; Adams, *Women*, 6.

servants were cooks, housekeepers, and maids. Even stores without live-in employees would have needed someone to clean floors and windows, in both front-of- and back-of-house spaces. The only domestic servant jobs for women that were not available in department stores were for nurses and governesses. In businesses with live-in employees, servants were included in this number but were often left out of agitation against living-in as a practice. Despite this, business servants were vital to the successful operation of a store.

At John Atkinson's on the Moor, the expansion at the end of 1900 necessitated hiring more help, including a business cook and housemaid. Each listing in the *Independent* had job specifications: for the cook, she must be a "respectable girl" and "able to cook plain dinner" but "not under 24 years of age"; the housemaid also had to be a "respectable girl" and "not under 22 years of age."¹⁰⁶ The respectability of the cooks differed from that of sales assistants. However, women in their early twenties would have had some experience in service, and, thus, would have a proven record of work; however, no recommendations were asked for, and the only real ability needed was for the cook to make "plain dinner" for the employees. Dinners, in Bondfield's London stores, were a standard meat, one or two vegetables, cheese, with another course or pudding every other day. The other meals were generally confined to bread and butter.¹⁰⁷ Should employees want any other provisions, they needed to buy them themselves. The food provided to live-in employees did not differ greatly from that of the working classes.¹⁰⁸ These positions at Atkinson's were filled quickly, as they were only listed in the two city newspapers for a couple of days. Interestingly, the *Telegraph* listing on January 14, 1901, for Atkinson's cook had the

¹⁰⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, 14 January 1901, 2, SA.

¹⁰⁷ Bondfield, "Conditions," 279, 281.

¹⁰⁸ Emma Griffin, *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (Yale University Press, 2020), 211-218; Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 82, 262-270.

minimum age at twenty-one.¹⁰⁹ There is no obvious explanation of the different age requirements, and the relative politics of the newspapers offer no answers.¹¹⁰ More importantly, these listings tell us nothing about the day-to-day work or conditions for the women who were hired. Despite conditions or expectations, there were enough women looking for work that the positions were filled quickly. Department store work in every area was not advertised for long, which shows its popularity among the workers of the area.

As department stores expanded to include tea rooms and restaurants, waitresses were added to the bevy of employees. These women were in-between employees—not sales assistants and not servants, but a mix of both. One of the women charged with hiring waitresses for John Walsh’s restaurant was a Miss Dyer, to whom “experienced waitresses” could “apply at once, from 11 till 3.”¹¹¹ By 1901, Walsh’s was mainly hiring experienced workers for all customer-facing positions. The rise of restaurants and tea rooms, both in and separate from department stores, introduced a new type of position for young working women. As for other employees, waitresses could live-in. In 1901, three of the waitresses at Cockayne’s tearoom lived-in: Annie Gray, 18, Ruth Gray, 15, and Florence Storey, 24.¹¹² According to a 1900 insurance document, the restaurant had four employees: three waitresses and a mangeress.¹¹³ Thus the three waitresses listed in the census were likely the majority of the department. Ruth Gray was not the youngest

¹⁰⁹ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 14 January 1901, 2, SA.

¹¹⁰ Politically, the *Telegraph* leaned Conservative and the *Independent Liberal*, but how this would impact job listings is difficult to determine and rather beyond the scope of the current study. Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, 134-5; Alexander Jackson, “Football Coverage in the Papers of the *Sheffield Telegraph*, c.1890-1915,” *International Journal of Regional & Local Studies* 5, no. 1(2009): 68.

¹¹¹ *Sheffield Independent*, 8 January 1901, 2, SA. The Thatched House restaurant was not located within the store but was owned by John Walsh. Sometime during the 1890s the restaurant was renovated and became adjacent to the Walsh department store. The specifics are not straightforward, but, since the employees were advertised under the Walsh name, I have elected to include them here.

¹¹² 1901 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, RG13/4362 #3 ED 15 page 17, FindMyPast.co.uk, accessed via SA.

¹¹³ T.B. & W. Cockayne, “Insurance: Staff (list of numbers of employees in each department with total salaries (compiled for insurance purposes)),” 1900, SY492/B8/1, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne, SA).

employee at the time: one maid was fourteen and a sales assistant also fifteen. For servants, this was not unusual, but for both sales assistants and other front-facing employees, larger stores frequently hired older women with experience. Ruth likely faced a steep learning curve across all aspects of the job.

Servants worked in all parts of the department store but primarily would have been in the back of house. Because living-in was not prevalent in Cologne, this is a major point of difference between the two cities. The continued reliance on servants in business accommodation supports arguments about the centrality of servants to British life. For those entering store work from the middle class, servants would have been a necessary part of life.¹¹⁴ Some women entering store work would have helped complete domestic chores at home and tasks concerning their departments would have been part of their jobs. However, some domestic tasks would have been done by servants regardless of income, for example laundry.¹¹⁵ For the women, and men, living-in, these chores would have been unthinkable. Furthermore, live-in employees needed to be fed – both to support claims of paternalist care and to improve efficiency as employees could not leave the premises during their breaks and return in a limited time.

Examining the lives of the department store servants is important because they occupied one of the most precarious positions within the store's world. Much like their domestic sisters, store servants came from families of working-class backgrounds, who would likely have gone into service or had already been in service, under the control of the mistress or housekeeper, with few, if any, protections.¹¹⁶ For all that sales assistants and domestic servants were the subjects of

¹¹⁴ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 132.

¹¹⁵ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 130; Davidoff and, *Family Fortunes*, 387.

Laundry was a common employment for working-class women who needed some form of income but needed to stay at home to mind children (Adams, *Women clerks*, 22; Griffin, *Bread Winner*, 178).

¹¹⁶ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 139-40, 154-55.

concerns regarding sexual exploitation, store servants would have been just as vulnerable and isolated.¹¹⁷ Further, service was hard, often invisible, work that was essential to the running of establishments. Just as domestic servants were vital to middle class households and maintaining their image, business servants were vital to department stores.

Men's Jobs

Although retailing was generally feminizing, men were employed in department stores and were vital to store operations. Men working at department stores had a different range of potential jobs than women, encompassing more of the large or heavy departments or those that required technical skills, such as carpets or lighting. In small stores and those that preceded department stores, men were employed almost exclusively as sales assistants.¹¹⁸ Some of this employment included training in the trade, as with the drapers who became department store owners. The highest echelons of the department store were inhabited only by men, and sometimes they were the majority of sales assistants. Furthermore, the departments staffed by men were often the more profitable ones.¹¹⁹ In the department stores with furniture works, men would have been employed as carpenters, cabinet makers, turners, joiners, or upholsterers—their equivalent of the workroom.

By the turn of the century, men were rarely the majority of employees. Around 1900, T. B. & W. Cockayne employed roughly ninety men, with about a third living-in.¹²⁰ These men worked as cabinet makers, traveling drapers, electrical, plumbing and appliance salesmen and repairmen, ironmongers, assistants, porters, and carters. Part of these jobs included removing of

¹¹⁷ Graham, *"Gone to the Shops,"* 8; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 179, 182-84, 187-88.

¹¹⁸ Adams, *Women clerks*, 1-9; Hosgood, "Mercantile Monasteries," 322-352.

¹¹⁹ Cockayne, "Trade accounts," 1888-1970, SY492/B5, SA.

¹²⁰ Cockayne, "Insurance: Staff," SY492/B8/1, SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, RG13/4362 #3 ED 15 page 17, FindMyPast.co.uk, accessed via SA.

furniture and appliances from people's homes. The systems for removal and the technology by which it was accomplished were changing with the times. In 1899, T. & J. Roberts in Sheffield, advertised "household removals on improved system" with the introduction of "superior" removal vans. This removal work, according to the advertisement, was staffed "by experienced men only."¹²¹ Whether the men were truly experienced, or this was simply an advertising ploy matters less than the claim. If the advertisement claimed experience and superiority, then customers would come to expect it. Advertisements and other literature differentiated between people and groups and worked to teach people about those differences. Furthermore, as with delivery drivers and mourning wear hands, removal men were sent to the far reaches of a store's empire to provide services.

In Britain, men were also employed as floor walkers and shop walkers. The floor walker oversaw the sales floor, including maintaining order and ushering customers between departments. Floor-walking was originally part of the buyer's job, but as stores increased in size and scope, the two positions became differentiated.¹²² The shop walker was also known as the store detective and was concerned with preventing theft.¹²³ The continued presence of the floor walker in Britain was an often remarked upon difference between British stores compared with those in France, America, and Germany. The shop walker, however, did exist, but in Germany was frequently a woman.¹²⁴ In Margaret Böhme's *W.A.G.M.U.S.*, one of the older saleswomen is fired because of her age and looks. She is later rehired, by the owner, as a shop walker to investigate thefts. Her first success uncovers a ring of theft across the stores of the city.¹²⁵ The

¹²¹ *Sheffield Independent*, 25 September 1899, 1, SA.

¹²² Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 129-130.

¹²³ Graham, "Gone to the Shops," 16; Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 98.

¹²⁴ Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 98.

¹²⁵ Böhme, *Department Store*, 353-5, 363.

different responsibilities of the floorwalker across national contexts shows the different beliefs of how customers should engage with the shopping spaces. In British stores, shop walkers controlled the flow of traffic and retained the connections to previous retailing techniques where men steered interactions.

One of the most important men's fields was as a window dresser. In most stores, being able to dress the windows was part of other assigned tasks; only occasionally was window dresser a separate position. With the exception of Flora Tietz's work on the windows and displays of her husband's early endeavors, most window dresser advertisements in Cologne and Sheffield were given to men.¹²⁶ The requirements for decorators and window dressers were just as high, if not higher, than most other sales positions. Knowledge of the goods and the ability to construct a scene were the most important, but the dresser usually also needed experience, often in the best stores, to merit consideration for the position.¹²⁷ In 1901, Leonhard Tietz required the new decorator at his Aachen store to be able to decorate all the goods in the store.¹²⁸ Some window dressers could cross the strict gender divisions of the department store because of the significance of displays in the department store ethos. Windows, furthermore, connected the internal world of the department store to that of the street. Appropriately conveying information via the window displays placed department stores in the city center universe and exerted a store's power in the landscape.

In stores that evolved from drapers' establishments, cutting whole fabric was part of the work in the drapery and silk departments. For male assistants, some element of technical skill remained part of the job, even as other elements changed. Early on, cutting fabric would have

¹²⁶ For examples, see: *Kölner Zeitung*, 7 March 1888 Zweite Ausgabe, ZPNRW; *Kölner Zeitung*, 11 March 1888, Zweite Ausgabe, ZPNRW; *Kölner Zeitung*, 29 January 1901 Abend Ausgabe 6., ZPNRW

¹²⁷ *Kölner Zeitung*, 25 January 1901, Abend Ausgabe 2, ZPNRW.

¹²⁸ *Kölner Zeitung*, 10 January 1901, Abend Ausgabe 3, ZPNRW.

been the remit of the draper himself or a trusted journeyman, given the skill needed to accurately prepare goods.¹²⁹ Cutting fabric, as part of the draper's trade, however, had changed just as significantly as other trades across the nineteenth century. As stores increased departments that carried whole cloth, different assistants would have assumed the role of cutter within their department. In 1901, Leonhard Tietz was hiring a "capable young man" for cutting and calculating fabric in the linens department.¹³⁰ Fabric measuring, cutting, and sales required care and knowledge. However, the work also required precision. In addition to fabric for clothing or furnishings, department stores also carried wallpaper and flooring. The measuring, cutting, and installation of this all fell to men in the stores' various furnishing and cabinet departments. As with the female assistants, some men in Cologne were required to speak, read, and write in French. In March 1888, a listing for a clerk required fluency in French.¹³¹ As with female assistants, this requirement was predicated on a level of education that some people simply would not have had. The language preferences of certain stores marked changes in the field in the same way that cutting fabric marked consistencies.

As the number of men employed in retailing diminished, men retained important positions within department stores. Men continued to be sales assistants in departments concerned with furnishing, carpets, and metal goods, which were all departments that included heavy or large products that would have been difficult for female assistants to manipulate in showing and would have contravened perceptions of femininity. Men were employed in the fabrication of cabinets and furniture, as well as the removal of pieces from customers' homes. Men were central to electrical or heating departments, like those advertised by John Walsh, as

¹²⁹ Shaw, "The evolution and impact of large-scale retailing in Britain," 160.

¹³⁰ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 5 January 1901, Abend, 6, ZPNRW.

¹³¹ *Kölner Zeitung*, 12 March 1888, Erste Ausgabe 4, ZPNRW.

requiring skills that women were not trained in. Men were also more likely to be in positions of influence and power, as managers, buyers, and, always, owners. All jobs done by men within department stores were those most connected to skilled trades and power. While the majority of employees were women, and the feminization of the workforce led to conceptions of deskilling,¹³² but these women rarely had access to the cultural or financial capital necessary to improve their social positions. Fashion retailing was increasingly employing women, particularly in sales and fabrication, but the top positions in large stores were primarily reserved for men. Thus, men retained control of shopkeeping as a general endeavor.

Department stores as more than Ladies' Paradises

Department stores were understood and interpreted as ladies' paradises, largely in reference to the English translation of Emilie Zola's novel, *Au Bonheur des Dames*.¹³³ They were, in both Britain and Germany, largely women-only spaces. As outlined in other sections, men worked and shopped in the stores, but only in specific areas. Department stores and the shopping districts and high streets they occupied were women-centric and women participated in the project to make them appear so. The term "ladies' paradise" focuses attention on the leisure aspects of shopping in department stores.¹³⁴ However, behind the plate glass was a world of industrialized difficult work done largely by women, filling the coffers of bourgeois men and their families.

¹³² Adams, *Women clerks*, 3, 8-9, 142.

¹³³ Émile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, trans. Ernest Alfred Vizetelly (Hutchinson & Co., 1895). The earliest German version of the story I can find is the 1922 silent German film *Zum Paradies der Damen*.

¹³⁴ For more on shopping as a leisure activity see: Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure* and Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (The Ohio State University Press, 2006).

More than just “Ladies”

Department stores were not solely for women who could spend leisure time shopping. Men and women with means to buy goods, or at least who looked as if they had the means to make purchases, were among the visitors to department stores. Men were less involved in shopping for home décor by the end of the nineteenth century than they had been at the beginning of the century, but they continued to buy items for themselves and others.¹³⁵ It is also likely that the advertising and popular construction of the stores as women’s space plus the feminization of the workforce influenced the decline in men shopping. All of this contributed to the increased divisions between gender performances and norms. Separating department stores, and fashion and décor off into women’s leisure pursuits hid the work done to make them so, just as a pristine linen closet masked the work done to get it a bright white in the home. Furthermore, pulling away the plate glass curtain, we can see how the “ladies’ paradise” was a construct, built upon the work of women, and decreasingly men, at every level. The effects wrought by this situation rippled out to touch the businesses and lives of everyone involved in the production of anything sold at department stores.

By the turn of the twentieth century, most department stores hired primarily women to work as sales assistants, as we saw above. These women came from a variety of backgrounds, few of which provided them the cultural or financial capital to spend significant leisure time shopping in city centers. Furthermore, not every department store followed the transition to female sales assistants in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Cole Brothers, in Sheffield, was one of the last stores in this study to hire women as sales assistants. Until 1909, the store did not hire women as sales assistants or office workers.¹³⁶ Women were employed in the workrooms

¹³⁵ Cohen, *Household Gods*, 121; Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 30.

¹³⁶ Cole Brothers, “150th Anniversary 1847-1997”, 1997, MP 5045M, Miscellaneous Papers, SLSL.

and as servants. Throughout the 1890s and 1900s, Cole Brothers regularly advertised for hands in their dressmaking department. This included both skilled, experienced workers, as in November 1891, and apprentices and improvers, as was the case in January 1901.¹³⁷ Men did the visible labor and women the invisible. The gendered distinction in a single store begs numerous questions: the most significant being how this practice persisted for so long. Potentially, a non-feminized work force brought Cole Brothers social cache, allowing them a claim of standing not present in the other stores. By rejecting the feminization of the workplace, it could have been possible that Cole Brothers was rejecting the deskilling of selling and the decreased quality of goods.¹³⁸ Perhaps the policy was a result of the original brothers maintaining control for so long, whereas other stores passed to sons or nephews, at least partially, in the 1890s or early 1900s. Despite their resistance to the feminization of both sales and office work, Cole Brothers eventually bent to trends. This little remarked upon shift in policy merits further consideration.

Men worked in numerous other areas in department stores, beyond the women's clothing departments, many of which overlapped with women employees. In Sheffield, men were employed in the cabinet and furniture making workshops which made some of the most profitable goods. Men, and boys, worked in sales, in cash handling, and as porters. In January 1901, John Walsh was hiring men and women for the winter sale, in all departments, with men also specifically wanted for the clothing, furnishing, and ironmongery departments.¹³⁹ At the same time, T. & J. Roberts were hiring a "respectable young man" to be a light porter and a general "youth" to assist in the business.¹⁴⁰ Each of these were just as necessary as the work women did. Men in sales departments were also required to know their products and to read

¹³⁷ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 28 November 1891, 2, SLSL; *Sheffield Independent* 12 Jan 1901, 2, SLSL.

¹³⁸ Shaw, "The evolution and impact," 159; Clark, *Struggle*, 120.

¹³⁹ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 15 January 1901, 2, GPSBLN.

¹⁴⁰ *Sheffield Independent*, 15 January 1901, 2, SLSL.

customers' wishes and needs without being explicitly told. Men and women across the departments worked similar hours and had the same types of breaks. In Margaret Bondfield's presentation of the conditions in six stores in London, very little mention is made of gender differences in working conditions. She breaks down the types of workers and notes the different hours some departments worked but does not say which departments these were. In the exemplary list of rules she included, men's and women's behavior was equally regulated, although enforcement could have varied.¹⁴¹ Even when women buyers had some control over their departments, their over-arching projects were directed by men because, ultimately, the large department stores were owned and operated by men.

The advertising and social understandings of department stores were also, in many ways, created by men. Critiques, social, economic, and moral, of department stores frequently came from men. For example, Arthur Wilke's 1905 psychological critique about the potential for department stores to awaken *Kauflust*, which could lead women to abandon frugality in the face of sparkling window displays.¹⁴² In novels like Zola's or Gissing's *The Odd Women*, shop girls are portrayed as degraded.¹⁴³ Sometimes popular literature critiqued department stores.¹⁴⁴ Margarete Böhme's *W.A.G.M.U.S.* was both a defense of department stores and a critique of certain practices and personalities associated with them. In the book, the hard-working and serious denizens of Mühlenmeister und Sohn were rewarded but those who attempted to maximize their own profits and were disloyal ended up unhappy or unsatisfied.¹⁴⁵ For many

¹⁴¹ Margaret G. Bondfield, "Conditions Under which Shop Assistants Work," *The Economic Journal* 9, no. 34 (1899): 278-279, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2956822>.

¹⁴² Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*, 29.

¹⁴³ Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 98.

¹⁴⁴ For more on this topic, see Sanders *Consuming Fantasies*.

¹⁴⁵ Böhme, *The Department Store*. One of the sons of "und Sohn" begins as an idealist but, through his ill-fated engagement to the less virtuous Agnes and his American training, ends as a version of his father, the much-acclaimed Joshua Mühlenmeister.

people at this time the department store was both an imagined construction and a physical reality, and the distinctions between the two were fraught with slippages.

Thus, if department stores were a “ladies’ paradise,” then it was a paradise largely constructed and defined by men, despite being populated by women. In fiction and reality, men decided the overall direction of a store—which departments to include, how many staff belonged where, and the built environment—but they could never entirely control how department stores were used or interpreted. For the women who shopped in palatial stores, it could very much resemble a paradise. Furthermore, if shoppers and societies, men and women, believed them to be so, they would interpret the material reality through this lens, despite complicating factors.

Not just “Paradises”

Contrarily, working in department stores was hard work, in many of the same ways that other industrialized jobs were hard work, making department stores quite different from a paradise. Pay was often based on commissions and tied remuneration to quantity produced; in this case, the “piece” of piecework was the sale. Sales assistants had a base income but relied heavily on commissions in many stores.¹⁴⁶ For example, John Walsh hired a Miss Mathers in 1899 at a “Salary [of] 8/- [shillings] per week with dinner & tea also premiums [commissions].”¹⁴⁷ Industriousness and obedience were also prioritized, as evidenced by the

¹⁴⁶ Bondfield, “Conditions,” 280, 283-285; M.A. Belloc, “The Shop-Girl,” *The Idler: an illustrated magazine* 8, no 43 (August 1895): 13-14.

¹⁴⁷ John Walsh, “Letter of appointment,” 1899, FRAS1072 (HF 19/3/1), Records for John Walsh (c1659) House of Fraser Archive – Glasgow University Archive Services (HF-GUAS), Glasgow, UK.

It is possible that this Miss Mather is Florence Mather, listed in the store’s 1901 Census records. It does not appear as though she lived-in when she was hired, it is possible she moved into the new store when it was finished later in the year. Further, the 1901 directory lists a Mrs. Ellen Mathers living at the address in the hiring letter. (1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4360 #1 ED 9; *White’s General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 23rd edition (Kelly’s Directories Ltd., 1901), 49.)

system of rules and fines.¹⁴⁸ The system of fines in department stores resembled those of textile factories.¹⁴⁹ In both factories and department stores, fines were levied on behavior in an attempt to impose patterns of behavior to maximize profits and impose standards of morality.¹⁵⁰ In the T. B. & W. Cockayne's rules, fines were imposed on infractions related to improperly completing bills or check books and to improperly occupying spaces, like men in the kitchen, for instance.¹⁵¹ These rules were not as extensive as those collected by Margaret Bondfield in her 1899 study of the conditions in London shops.¹⁵² Bondfield noted the commission system and the number of hours worked per week in her example stores, noting that commissions, where they were used, were based on equations tilted in the owner's favor.¹⁵³ Across all of the example shops and levels of employment, employees worked an average of 68.5 hours a week.¹⁵⁴ If Miss Mathers, from John Walsh, worked this number of hours a week, her pre-commission wage was 1½ pence per hour. This was not above the regulations set out in the 1886 Shop Hours' Regulation Act, but it was much more than that allowed to women working in factories.¹⁵⁵ The 1892 *Lancet* Sanitary Commission¹⁵⁶ study on the situation in shops decried the hours that assistants, particularly women, were required to work and further cited the health concerns that arose from that work.

¹⁴⁸ Bondfield, "Conditions," 280, 282, 283, 285; T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Rules to be observed in the establishment of Messrs. T.B. & W. Cockayne," 1872, SY492/B18/1, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), SA.

¹⁴⁹ E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present*, no. 38 (1967): 81, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/649749>.

¹⁵⁰ Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender*, 298; T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Rules to be observed in the establishment of Messrs. T.B. & W. Cockayne," n.d., MP54L, Miscellaneous papers, SLSL.

¹⁵¹ Cockayne, "Rules," MP54L, SLSL.

¹⁵² Bondfield, "Conditions," 278-279.

¹⁵³ Bondfield, "Conditions," 281.

¹⁵⁴ Bondfield, "Conditions," 279-285. The average of the numbers Bondfield provides was taken to reach 68.5.

¹⁵⁵ "Report of the Lancet Sanitary Commission on Sanitation in the Shop, Part II," *The Lancet*, 12 March 1892, 601.

¹⁵⁶ The *Lancet* was, and is, a weekly, general medical journal, founded in 1823. Commissions focus on timely issues in medicine and health with the goal of providing policy recommendations. Further information can be found at <https://www.thelancet.com/lancet/commissions>.

Although these men who wrote this report believed women were more fragile than men, they still understood that the work done in shops was strenuous.

Different concerns were brought before governing bodies in Britain and Germany during the 1890s and 1900s, particularly about the exploitative and unhealthy elements of living-in. Some of the charges decried the poor air ventilation throughout the department stores. This was a product of their cobbled-together nature as interiors expanded and connected as businesses opened new departments.¹⁵⁷ Many of these critiques included evidence that the stores were potential fire hazards, in both England and Germany. The actual prevalence of fires in department stores did not match the rhetoric around the potential,¹⁵⁸ but as many stores across both countries built new premises, these concerns decreased.

Other department store practices—like mandating constant standing or more limited opening hours—remained exploitative and difficult to regulate through the first decade of the twentieth century. It was one thing for labor laws or store policies to change, but when enforcement was relegated to individual managers, who had significant control over their own domains, these top-down regulations could be implemented or ignored at an individual's discretion. Standardized hours across a city's stores were also difficult to achieve.¹⁵⁹ In Sheffield, the Early Closing movement and Association worked for almost six years to achieve closing at 2 p.m. on Thursdays and even this was not practiced across the city. In 1890, the Sheffield United Tradesman's Association brought about a Thursday 4 p.m. closing from the summer until the

¹⁵⁷ An example of this, from the previous chapter, was John Walsh's original store in Sheffield.

¹⁵⁸ Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 182.

¹⁵⁹ In E.P. Thompson's "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," he says that employees accepted the definitions of time constructed by employers: in the first generation they were taught these definitions, in the second, they worked for a ten-hour day, and in the third for overtime (86). Thompson's statement is about other trades and is earlier time, but holds some truth for department stores, although there were some differences. Work to achieve consistent and standard hours in stores included not only employers and employees, but customers, with whom employers tended to agree but who did not always follow the dictates of time.

Christmas sales season. From 1892, efforts ramped up to not only include a standard 4 p.m. closing, regardless of season, but to move earlier to 2 p.m. Their eventual success in 1895 coincided with the passage of the Shop Hours Bill, which regulated the number of hours young people could work, mandated display of the Act, and introduced fines.¹⁶⁰ Some individual stores implemented an early closing day, sometime in the mid-afternoon, but others stayed open because of the business they could do. The convenience of customers outweighed considerations of working conditions. There will be more on this topic below, but it is important to remember the conditions under which work was done and the difficulty in regulating or changing policies.

One practice unique to the continent was the practice of living mannequins, which required limited movement in particular clothing. Begun in France in the 1850s in the House of Worth, German stores, particularly in Berlin, adopted the practice by the turn of the century.¹⁶¹ At some point in the early twentieth century, Leonhard Tietz's Hohe Straße store in Cologne employed living mannequins, however, the popularity of the practice in the city is hard to quantify.¹⁶² While standing still in a display may not seem to be the same caliber of work as mining coal, there are similarities. Perfect stillness in a specific position for hours on end taxes the physical body in specific ways.¹⁶³ Mannequin-ing heightened the physical requirements of

¹⁶⁰ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 1 January 1890, 6, GPSBLN; *Sheffield Telegraph*, 24 March 1890, 6, GPSBLN; "Early Closing Movement in Sheffield," *Sheffield Telegraph*, 7 April 1892, 7, GPSBLN; "The Shop Hours Acts and The Shops (Early Closing) Bill," *Daily News* (London), 19 April 1895, 7, GPSBLN; "Letter to the Editor: Shop hours' Act," *Early Closing Record*, June 1895 (volume 1, number 1, page 8), 331.880SQ, Local Journals, SLSL. The Early Closing Bill, which would mandate early closing should two-thirds of a locality's shopkeepers favor it, was not passed until the Shop Hours Act of 1904. For the parliamentary debates on these topics, see UK Parliament, *Second Reading*, "Shop Hours Bill (no. 26)," House of Commons, 24 February 1892; UK Parliament, *House of Commons Debate*, "Factories and Workshops Bill," House of Commons, 1 March 1895; UK Parliament, *House of Commons Debate*, "Shops (Early Closing) Bill," House of Commons, 19 February 1896; UK Parliament, *House of Commons Debate*, "Shops Regulation Acts, 1892 to 1904," House of Commons, 4 August 1909.

¹⁶¹ Uwe Westphal, *Fashion Metropolis Berlin 1836-1939: The story of the rise and destruction the Jewish fashion industry*, trans. Kristine Jennings (Seemann Henschel, 2019), 55; Lerner, *Consuming Temple*, 125.

¹⁶² Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft. *50 Jahre Leonhard Tietz 1879-1929* (Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft, 1929), 86.

¹⁶³ In "The effects and measurement of working postures," Corlett and Manenica studied the effects of different postures in heavy industry and found that maintaining any posture for a workday, regardless of holding load, for a

selling, namely constant standing, already a contested practice, by imposing more restraints. Further, the mental toll maintaining that position would take, without respite, would add to the difficulty. Finally, being subject to the gaze of shoppers, hour after hour, day after day, would have had mental and psychological effects both immediately and in the long-term.¹⁶⁴

The glamor of department stores hid a significant amount of difficult work. As department stores expanded their offerings and catered to the needs of their largely female clientele, the work behind the scenes expanded. As the physical buildings grew, the need for facilities management increased—servants to clean, and electricians or engineers for the machinery. More displays, in windows and departments, necessitated more window dressers and places in which to construct new displays while others remained in view, or nightwork to turn displays over.¹⁶⁵ Many departments required workshops to create or finish products, delivery and fulfillment promises required their own operations, and refreshment rooms required the creation of their own workforces. In January 1901, while John Walsh was hiring sales assistants for the winter sale, apprentices and improvers were also hired for the costume room as well as house and kitchen maids and experienced waitresses.¹⁶⁶ Increased production and sales increased workforces or workloads to meet goals and needs.

Smaller businesses were also implicated in these developments. To stay competitive and profitable, small stores, such as drapers, haberdashers, and milliners, had to adapt some of the

workday lead to prolonged discomfort and fatigue. E.N. Corlett and I. Manenica, “The effects and measurement of working postures,” *Applied Ergonomics* 11, no. 1 (1980): 7-16.

¹⁶⁴ The theorization of “the gaze” within feminist studies originated in film critique and has spread to other areas of culture. The theory asserts that to be seen is to have power exerted over one – the act of looking is one of power – and that this power is primarily held by men. The power of surveillance has long been a discussion, for which Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* is often cited.

¹⁶⁵ For more on window display technology, see Emily M. Orr, “‘The Age of Show Windows’ in the American department store: Techniques and technologies of attraction at the turn of the twentieth century,” in *Architectures of Display: Department Stores and Modern Retail*, ed. Anca I. Lasc, Patricia Lara-Betancourt and Margaret Maile Petty (Routledge, 2018), 109-124.

¹⁶⁶ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 12 January 1901, 2, SLSL.

big stores' policies—like maintaining fixed prices and creating window displays.¹⁶⁷ Businesses that focused on production, such as dressmakers and tailors, needed to increase their workload or decrease production time, to compete with the availability of ready-made clothing or standards of department stores. Obladen & Grevemeyer, on Schildergasse in Cologne, advertised both their ability to make new garments in the current fashions and their courses in finishing home-sewn patterns.¹⁶⁸ Some of the advertisements listed both the cost of finishing and the time frame; in September 1895, costumes were promised to be remade in the newest fashion in twenty-four hours for ten marks.¹⁶⁹ Across the board, then, the industrialization of retailing prompted by department stores, trickled down to all retailers of clothing and accessories. Unlike other industries, however, the industrialization of selling was hidden behind the glamor and feminized nature of shopping. In creating palaces and paradises, department stores masked the nature and amount of work needed to make them function.

Conclusion

At the turn of the twentieth century, the labor of retailing was changing and was influenced in many ways by department store innovations. Department stores increasingly hired women as sales assistants, which feminized retailing. The large stores also encompassed a variety of positions, each in its own compartment. Although there was some crossover, servants, fabrication hands, and sales assistants occupied different spaces and remained in them. On the sales floor, men and women were divided between departments based on both the ideas of proper labor for women and men and ideas of who could occupy which space. Small shops were not as

¹⁶⁷ Shaw, "The evolution and impact," 138; Lancaster, *Department Store*, 2; Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (Harper Collins, 2016), 192. For early practices of display see, Andrew Hann and Jon Stobart, "Sites of Consumption: The Display of Goods in Provincial Shops in Eighteenth-Century England," *Cultural and Social History* 2 (2005), 165-187.

¹⁶⁸ *Kölner Local Anzeiger*, 11 June 1906, Zweite Ausgabe, 2, ZPNRW.

¹⁶⁹ *Kölner Local Anzeiger*, 17 Sept 1895, 2, ZPNRW.

beholden to these structuring ideas but were increasingly spaces owned, run, and staffed by women. As more people were employed in retailing, various efforts were undertaken to regulate policies, but many of the regulations took a long time to pass and were difficult to enforce. For example, in Britain, the provision of chairs for sales assistants was passed in 1899, but many employees continued to be required to stand in the presence of customers.¹⁷⁰ For all but the highest levels of department store management, fashion retailing at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century required a significant amount of skilled, manual labor.

Department stores and smaller fashion-related businesses adapted to industrialized society remarkably well. The “innovations” of retailing, like fixed prices and expanded offerings, were all part of this process. Furthermore, the changes to selling were also part of industrialization. Rather than relying on trained master drapers or tailors, department stores increasingly hired young women who could be paid less for specific jobs in the process of selling. Upper levels of management were composed of men hand-picked by the owners, largely from within their own families.¹⁷¹ With other changes in advertising and display, the priorities of retailing were on sales and profits—quantity over quality—much to the dismay of some observers. Women’s participation in this realm, as either consumers or workers, was subject to critique and discussions of moral panic. Small shops were also implicated in this process. The need to meet standards of mass-produced, machine-made goods and customer demands of speed entrenched small businesses in industrialized, modern society. These businesses’ ability to meet demands and adopt new strategies, like display and marketing, prevented their extinction and filled important gaps in the market.

¹⁷⁰ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 17 July 1899, 3, GPSBLN.

¹⁷¹ For more on this phenomenon, see chapter 5.

Female shop assistants produced the world of the ladies' paradise. The assistant not only had to sell goods but create an environment in which female shoppers felt compelled to buy. This type of production cannot be easily quantified by sales numbers or profit records. Furthermore, the ability to read a situation and act accordingly could not easily be taught. The ineffable nature of selling and the emotional labor required result in a separation of the different elements of shop work. Some of the physical elements of various parts of fashion store work—standing for hours on end or precise sewing—are easier to fit into ideas of productive labor. Creating a space in which customers felt comfortable, maintaining a particular persona, and the resulting effects on one's understanding of self cannot be quantified easily, if at all, and their affective nature makes them difficult to consistently define consistently. However, their importance as labor was critical and should not be overlooked. Particularly as retailing transitioned to the modes we recognize today, the creation of a specific environment was vital to the success of early department stores. This work fell to the assistants on the shop floor. In creating a paradise within a cathedral, shop girls provided the stage on which the industrialization of retailing took place.

Standards of Beauty and Behavior: Aesthetics & Comportment in Department Stores

Introduction

When George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* debuted in London 1914, audiences would have been familiar with the connections to Greek mythology and the world in which Henry Higgins could say, "I could even get her a place as a lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English."¹ Shaw Based his play on the myth of Pygmalion, with Henry Higgins, a linguist, in the role of the sculptor and Eliza Doolittle, a street flower seller, as the statue. Higgins and another character, Colonel Pickering, bet that they can pass Doolittle off as a duchess with elocution lessons, while Doolittle wants to learn to speak as well as shop ladies. Higgins says the line above in the opening scene when he first encounters Pickering and Doolittle.² Although Eliza and Henry are fictional, the claim that Shaw makes reflects the reality of the time. For sales workers in shops of all sizes, comportment was of utmost importance. In larger stores, rules and regulations about behavior were supplemented by policies and norms about aesthetics. Both behavioral and aesthetic norms were constructed and maintenance of them enforced by stated regulations and through social pressures. This chapter argues that department stores set and enforced those standards of presentation for their employees to create and perpetuate lower-middle-class identity. Furthermore, behavior and aesthetics were part of the labor of shop work; employees had to meet requirements in their dress and comportment in the same way that they had to be punctual and thorough in their manual tasks. They needed to put in effort to produce the image of the shop girl in the reality of the work of shop assistants. The work to translate the ideal to the material fell onto the shoulders of the assistants themselves. The

¹ George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion: a romance in five acts* (Constable, 1920), 210. The play was first staged in Vienna in German in 1913. The play was later adapted to be a musical, on which the film *My Fair Lady* was based.

² In *My Fair Lady*, this interaction is part of "Why Can't the English?" in which Higgins bemoans the number of English dialects and the inability of the English to "teach their children how to speak."

manifestation of the ideal shop employee, particularly for women, was a productive, collaborative process that was integral to the image of the department store. That manifestation extended to small shop owners and employees, who also fell subject to social constraints on behavior and presentation, and had to work to conform to norms.

Visual representation was vital to both department stores and small fashion businesses. Over time, displays were increasingly important and focused more on aesthetics than on mere showing. Window displays through the late nineteenth century were crowded with products: the priority given to showing the array of goods held and their prices. Displays evolved in the late nineteenth century to focus on an idea or to evoke a feeling. At the fictional Elmas store in Böhme's *W.A.G.M.U.S.* (translated to *The Department Store: A Novel of To-day*), window displays on two sides of the ground floor traced the life of an imagined customer from birth to old age, outfitted and surrounded throughout with Elmas products.³ In addition to the changes in the style in which goods were displayed were technological changes, particularly the increasing accessibility of electric lights. The new Tietz storefront in 1895 featured 265 electric lights in addition to gas lights.⁴ The increasing importance of visual elements of stores aligns with the nature of shopping, seeing and being seen, and status defined by sartorial and decorative choices. For small businesses, presentation could be just as important—a messy or unappealing environment would put off customers. For those businesses that sent workers that went to customers' homes, personal presentation and comportment could determine whether future work or contacts were provided by customers to the stores. In both Britain and Germany, class, and the

³ Margarete Böhme, *The Department Store: A Novel of To-Day*, transl. Ethel Colburn Mayne (D. Appleton and Company, 1912), 399-400.

⁴ *Kölner Local-Anzeiger*, 24 October 1895, 3, Zeitungsportal NRW (ZPNRW).

determination thereof, were significant elements of social interaction, especially in the public places in which shopping happened.

Department store sales assistants were also part of the display. Whether they were meant to assist the shopper at every point of her visit or be invisible until needed, the ability to behave correctly was a vital part of the job. Knowing when to assist was an essential skill, but assistants were also required to look like they belonged among the displays. In this chapter, I focus more on the different requirements, along aesthetic and behavioral lines, for employees at all levels both to be hired and to remain employed. These requirements help us compose ideal workers—the imagined population of the department store—to which we can compare the ways in which reality differed.

The difference between shoppers' expectations and experiences could cause problems for employees if the gap was too wide. Depending on where one worked—large or small store, which department, front of house or back—the requirements shifted. Comportment and aesthetics were most important for shop girls, even more so than those for men working the shop floor. For assistants, the ability to conform to standards required some level of emotional labor. Maintaining the proper countenance when stressed or under pressure and creating an environment where people wanted to shop were skills that had to be learned but could not be easily taught. To shape and maintain an affective setting in which customers were enticed inside, were comfortable looking at all manner of goods, and would return was hard work and ephemeral. Furthermore, although the aesthetic elements decreased in importance away from the sales floor, for fabrication hands and servants, behavior and traits were just as important. Looking and behaving the “proper” way was work in that it took time and effort to fit into standards and requirements, and these shifted as social norms changed.

This is different from the disciplining of labor for infractions for at least two reasons. First, proper behavior depended on positive actions to create an affective environment. As we will see, the intangible elements of shop work relied on assistants' ability to foster good feelings to make shopping pleasant. While some of could be controlled through regulations on behavior which could be then disciplined, much of it could not be taught easily and therefore could not be regulated in the same way. Second, although connected to the regulated behavior, aesthetics and comportment were part of the larger social world. Presenting oneself as if one belonged among the middle classes required social and cultural capital on the part of assistants. This is not to say shop work was not disciplined like factory work, but it is to say that shop work was more complicated because workers and customers also had agency in the relationships of determining proper behavior and whether those expectations had been met. The idea and ideal of the shop girl, in particular, held power and was a new part of retailing as the workforce feminized.

The visibility of young women working in department stores prompted or spurred various moral panics around the turn of the century. Regardless of actual behavior, shop girls' presence was enough to foment fears of crime and other disreputable or immoral behavior. Much of this was prominent in popular literature and music at the time. These discourses allow us another imagined shop girl against whom we can attempt to compare lived experiences. Furthermore, judgments about behavior in this realm were based on social standards that did not necessarily cross class or generational boundaries. Those claiming the moral high ground or hand wringing about the dangers of department stores held more power than those who owned or worked in the department stores. This gave weight to their complaints and made department stores a contested site. The owners and employees were not without power to define their lives and actions, but finding these places requires looking deeper than the screeds of critics.

This chapter focuses on the aesthetic and behavioral requirements of shop work to further discuss the nature of that work and the pressures of it on the people who performed it. Further, from those requirements, we can see the imagined shop worker from the perspective of the owners (or at least the managers and those in charge of hiring) and how those imaginings display certain beliefs and assumptions. Many of the behavioral requirements for sales assistants were based on middle class values and assumptions. Ultimately, we see that class presentation was simultaneously part of an individual's habitus, which required different types of capital to be deployed, and as a performance within a larger society. By conforming to some of these requirements, shop girls could try to attain increased class standing; however, there was always the possibility for failure.

The Ideal Shop Employee and Their Creation

Proper behavior for one's class and gender was incredibly important in both Victorian England and Wilhelminian Germany. The determination of "proper" was highly contested and always being redefined. Furthermore, definitions differed across class lines and some components were simply impossible for everyone to satisfy. The bourgeois middle class gained influence over norms and standards across the nineteenth century.⁵ The enforcement of these norms relied on the acceptance and reification of them. As societies changed through industrialization, it became harder to police some aspects, particularly sartorial boundaries. Despite the increased difficulty of enforcement, the religious connections to definitions of respectability and the role of religious charities in providing assistance to the needy influenced the persistence of the ideologies. Notions of respectability impacted comportment and

⁵ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, 3rd edition (Routledge, 2019), xxx; Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 55.

presentation. As an ideology, respectability undergirded the beliefs about the ideal shop employee and dictated the language used to describe those positions.

The rise of respectability as an ideology, and everything it encompassed, formed the center of late nineteenth century propriety. As a middle-class ideology and prescription, ideas of respectability influenced beliefs, behaviors, and interactions. Self-improvement, modesty, thrift, and cleanliness were major components and needed to be attended diligently.⁶ All four of these aimed to shape how people spent their time and presented themselves to the world. Modesty, thrift, and cleanliness dictated both personal image and one's residence. Women especially were called to be reserved, keep their households and children clean, and live within their means. Furthermore, they should be working to improve their standing or that of their husbands. Within German society, the *Bildungsbürgertum* shared many of the same beliefs as the middling classes in other countries, and promoted their adoption as part of belonging within the middle class, allowing for upward social mobility for those without the financial capital of the industrialist bourgeoisie or the social or symbolic capital of the historic *Bürgertum*. For middle-class reformers and commentators across both countries, such as dress reformers or charitable organizations, the primary target for the ideology of respectability was the working classes. However, for those looking to improve their standing, or to cement their difference from the working class, adoption of and adherence to respectability norms was also necessary. For shop assistants, shop employment provided access to elements of "respectability" which they could then operationalize for their own benefit.

Classified advertisements for jobs in department and fashion stores provide some of the clearest outlines of the ideal employee. These listings included information on the type of work

⁶ Caroline Oldcorn Reid, "Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield" (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1976), 66.

expected, and information on the type of applicant the employers were looking for. Experience was not enough. Different positions required different combinations of skill, behavior, and appearance. By looking at the adjectives in job listings, we can see how different traits were prioritized for both different positions and between men and women. Listings in Sheffield appeared in the local papers, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* and the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, and were categorized by type of position: domestic servants, female assistants, workmen and assistants, agents and clerks, and apprentices and boys. Listings in Cologne were not consistently split into categories but did consistently group types of positions together. Many of the positions in the Cologne papers, *Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger* and *Kölnische Zeitung*, were filled through hiring agencies, and, thus, frequently lack information about the exact store in which the applicant would work. The significance of hiring agencies in the employment landscape in Germany is a place for further study, to see how agencies affect the relationship between employer and employee. Despite some of the difficulties, it is possible to construct an ideal employee for the different general positions within stores of various size.

Women's Positions

Jobs for women in department stores were available in most areas of the business, and the position listings mirror that. Not only were women's jobs positioned against men's, but they were also positioned against each other. Within department stores, female sales assistants were the largest category of employees. Although many women were hired year-round, stores advertised positions just before sales more heavily. The language used within these ads differed from that for servants, fabrication hands, and male assistants, all discussed in subsequent sections. Unlike these other categories, female sales assistants were frequently and specifically referenced in

popular culture through the image of the shop girl. Thus, owners and management had a particular idea of what type of woman they were looking to hire.

In the Sheffield papers, the differences between listing for types of jobs under “female assistants” largely revolved around the inclusion of “respectable” and “young lady” for sales positions whereas workroom positions focused mainly on skill. Business servant listings, under “domestic servants” were rarer than assistant positions, but they, too, had buzzwords. Listings for fabrication hands included neither “young lady” or the servants’ “girl,” rather, they focused on skill. On January 12, 1901, John Walsh advertised for positions across the whole store. The house and kitchen maids were only required to be “good,” while the bodice and skirt hands needed to be “thoroughly experienced.” Meanwhile, “experienced young lady assistants” were wanted in various departments.⁷ The “good” requirement for servants was multifaceted: they needed to be good at their jobs, but also conform to the expectations of how servants should behave. Assistants also needed to behave to the expectations of a “young lady.” More of these distinctions are discussed below.

The main difference between servants and assistants was the difference between “girls” and “young ladies.” Part of this could be the difference in the age at which a girl started as a servant versus as a shop worker. However, this is not the whole story. Many girls were in their early teens when they started service; those hired for business settings were older, often in their late teens or early twenties. These young women had experience in service but continued to be “girls” to their employers. In 1901, when John Atkinson advertised for a cook and housemaid for the business, both were required to be in the early twenties.⁸ Hannah Holroyd, cook at Cole

⁷ *Sheffield Independent*, 12 January 1901, 2, microfilm, SLSL.

⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, 14 January 1901, 2, microfilm, SLSL.

Brothers in 1891, was thirty-seven—the third oldest person in the business household.⁹ Also in 1891, the employees living in at Crossley's included Emma Brennan, 40, and Elizabeth Goddard, 41, cook and housemaid respectively. These two were older than everyone else living at the site except Emily Roberts, 40, the drapers cashier.¹⁰ The average age for this set of women was 40. If they started in service as many of their peers did, they likely had over twenty years of experience.¹¹ The housekeepers or cooks needed this experience at Cole's and Crossley's since the families did not live on-site and, just as at the big country manors, would have been managers of the various maids in their domains. Contrarily, maids charged with routine tasks, which did not take a significant amount of knowledge, could be younger and more inexperienced. With the daily oversight by the Atkinson family, age and experience were less important in that store. Further, they were almost twice as old as the average age of the stores' maids, which was just twenty-one, with almost all maids between seventeen and twenty-six.¹² The maids were of a similar age to sales assistants. Even the maids would have had some experience when they entered the business setting.

A further consideration for servants would be the internal social hierarchy of the department store. Although all department store employees were ostensibly involved in service,

⁹ 1891 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, St. Peters, ED 19, RG 12/3815 pages 3-4, microfiche, SA.

¹⁰ 1891 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, St. Philips, ED 12, RG 12/3818 pages 5-6, microfiche, SA.

¹¹ Robert Lee, "Domestic service and female domestic servants: A port-city comparison of Bremen and Liverpool, 1850-1914," *The History of the Family* 10, no. 4 (2005): 443-4.

¹² 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3815 ED 20, 3-5, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3818 ED 12, 5-6, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3823 ED 9, 21-22, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG12/3828 ED 5, 1, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG13/4362 ED15, 3-4, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4360 ED 9, 3-6, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4373 ED 2, 1, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield district 510, subdistrict 1, ED 22, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield district 510, subdistrict 1, ED 23, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield district 510, subdistrict 1, ED 9, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield district 510, subdistrict 2, ED 17, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield district 510, subdistrict 5, ED 5, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield district 510, subdistrict 2, ED 17, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk at SA.

there was still a social divide between servants and assistants and everyone knew it. In domestic settings, small business, and department stores, servants were required to do much of the heavy lifting. For women at the lower margins of the middle class, having at least a day girl was an important marker of standards and laundry would have been sent out regardless. What this amounted to was invisible labor: the work was mandatory but needed to either look effortless or take place out of sight.¹³ For the small businesses, having servants separated the workload, but also marked their success. Sheffield's Derby & Shollick had two live-in servants.¹⁴ Employing servants was also a marker of status for men in department stores. Not only did the families of the owners of T. & J. Roberts employ servants, but some of their managers also employed servants.¹⁵ Abel Priestley was a draper at the store from around 1900 to at least 1913.¹⁶ In 1906,

¹³ Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation*, 40.

¹⁴ 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4362 #1 ED 11, accessed at SA.

¹⁵ Within the families of Thomas and John Roberts, the owners, virtually every independent household employed live-in servants from the 1871 census to the 1911 census.

1871 Census of England and Wales, RG 10/4672 ED 33 page 1, 5; 1871 Census of England and Wales, RG 10/4674 ED 46 page 20; 1871 Census of England and Wales, RG 10/4668 ED 1 page 36; 1881 Census of England and Wales, RG 11/4638 ED 53 page 15; 1881 Census of England and Wales, RG 11/4636 ED 39 page 3; 1881 Census of England and Wales, RG 11/4638 ED 49 page 10; 1881 Census of England and Wales, RG 11/4637 ED 45 page 6; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3811 ED 57 page 31; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3808 ED 41 page 27; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3811 ED 56 page 8; 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3811 ED 56 page 19; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4358 ED 72 page 6; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4358 ED 74 page 14; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4358 ED 74 page 22; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4052 ED 8 page 8; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4357 ED 68 page 2; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4357 ED 71 page 21; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4358 ED 71 page 22; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/3536 ED 9 page 15; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, Ecclesall South, ED 18, piece 27796; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, Ecclesall South, ED 7, piece 27785; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, Norton, ED 15, piece 27778; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, Sharrow, ED 18, piece 27829; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, Sharrow, ED 19, piece 27830; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, Ecclesall North, ED 1, piece 27701; 1911 Census of England and Wales, Registration district 509, Registration district 512, Doncaster, ED 4, piece 28193; all via AncestryLibrary.com.

¹⁶ *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 22nd edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1900), 549; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 23rd edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1901), 593; *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 25th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1903), 640; *White's Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield*, 27th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1905), 603; *White's Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield*, 28th edition (Kelly's Directories

his wife advertised for a good general servant in the *Telegraph*. The only characteristic required was to be “respectable.”¹⁷ Mrs. Priestley would be able to tell whether a woman was respectable enough through a single meeting. Any applicant would presume she met at least some of the social requirements for respectability. People who worked in department store management or in fashion *hired* people to do heavy domestic labor—they did not do such labor themselves. This was a distinction between types of work and the people who did them. In addition to the way in which work was done and by whom, women raised in these households carried expectations about their place in the world. Women, and men, who lived-in would have expected servants to do certain tasks and maintain social distinctions while doing them. The manual labor of cleaning would have particularly been seen as below that of sales assistants and the women who did the cleaning work were not of the same sphere as the ladies working on the shop floors. Some of this can be seen in the discussions of living-in conditions. While workers and turnoff the century activists, like Maragret Bondfield and Hallsworth and Davies, who were active in organizing shop assistants into unions and whose works have been cited throughout this study, frequently commented on the poor living conditions in business-provided accommodation, they never mentioned the people who cooked and cleaned in those spaces. In publicizing the ills of the practices and advocating for its abolition, they did not overtly consider servants.¹⁸

Ltd., 1906), 624; *White's Directory of Sheffield Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield*, 29th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1907), 585; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield* (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1911), 632; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield*, 35th edition (Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1913), 661.

¹⁷ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 11 June 1906, 2, Sheffield Local Studies Library (SLSL), Sheffield, UK.

¹⁸ Joseph Hallsworth and Rhys J. Davies, *The Working Life of Shop Assistants: A Study of Conditions of Labour in the Distributive Trades* (The National Labour Press, 1910); Margaret G Bondfield, “Conditions Under which Shop Assistants Work,” *The Economic Journal* 9, no. 34 (1899): 278-279, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2956822>. This elision is also part of the historiography in which department store servants are rarely, if ever, mentioned, and have yet to be considered at length.

Unlike the servants' managers, department managers were unlikely to live-in. For women working in department stores, the distinction between lady and girl was one of class and standing, both in their present and future. Assistants had different backgrounds, which often included family in the trade or a longer commitment to schooling.¹⁹ In Cologne, the commitment to schooling was partially evidenced by the requirements for knowledge of a second language, either French or English. Furthermore, young ladies could expect to leave work and run their own households whereas girls and women would not. We saw examples of this in the first chapter. These distinctions are particularly clear in the Sheffield case because living-in was recorded in the censuses, so individuals can be traced across time.

Female sales assistant positions advertised for "young ladies." For example, in November 1899, John Walsh advertised for young ladies, with good experience, in his stationery and leather goods, book, and perfumery and patent medicine departments.²⁰ In Cologne, if the advertisements used a word in addition to *Verkäuferin* for assistants, they used *Damen* whereas for servants and fabrication hand, they used *Mädchen*. In January 1901, Nicholas Joseph Baum advertised for a sales assistant, noting that only experienced ladies should apply.²¹ A listing for an apprentice to fully train as a ladies' tailor specified "a good girl" with a seamstresses' qualification, which implied some years of training.²² This marked the same slippage between

¹⁹ Adams, *Women clerks*, 11-12; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 141; Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (The Ohio State University Press, 2006), 21; Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain, "The world of the department store: distribution, culture and social change," in *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Ashgate, 1999), 17.

²⁰ *Sheffield Independent* 7 November 1899, 2, SLSL.

²¹ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 15 January 1901, Abend, 3, ZPNRW. The full text read, "Ich suche per 1. März eine tüchtige Verläuferin für die Abteilung Manufacturwaren. Es wollen sich nur routinierte Damen melden, welche erste Posten in großen Häusern bekleidet haben, Nic. Jos. Baum, Köln, Altermarkt."

²² *Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 9 February 1901, 2, ZPNRW. The full text read, "Robes. Zum baldigen Eintritt ein braves Mädchen, kath., welches schon Begriffe vom Näherin hat, zur vollständ., an Führl. Erlernung er Damenschneiderei, verb. Mit Jackett anertigung, gesucht. Gefl. Offerten unter Nr. 214 an die Geschäftsstelle d. Bl."

descriptive noun and an individual's age that we saw in the English examples. The differentiation of these women as young ladies imposes both age restrictions and etiquette requirements. Calling for "ladies" imposed a set of understood characteristics which were implicit but important for applicants to decipher.²³ These ideas represented middle-class ideas about proper behavior and upbringing. We see more of the implicit judgments of background in the Cologne listings as well.

There were no stated age limitations for female assistants or fabrication hands. Based on census records, the majority of female assistants and fabrication hands were between twenty and thirty.²⁴ This aligns with anecdotal evidence that virtually all shop girls were under thirty.²⁵ There is very little information on the ages at which women obtained these positions, nor for how long they retained them. The job advertisements did not include age specifications; rather, businesses relied on the assumptions of both job seekers and managers to determine the range of "young lady." Some apprentice or learner positions specified teenagers, but even that was uncommon for girls. Without explicit statements, interpretation of the acceptable type of applicant who would fit the image of a shop girl were most important. Decisions of who to hire were often left to managers and buyers for specific departments, employees who, themselves, had been hired and trained in the department store culture. The four managers or buyers listed as living-in in the 1911 Walsh census were between twenty-seven and thirty-nine. Buyers and managers, when positions were advertised, were not required to be "young" in the same way as assistants. They would need experience to manage departments and to have had training in the customs and culture of business. Women were managers of departments specifically targeted toward women,

²³ Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Croom Helm, 1982).

²⁴ This is based on analysis of the census records for 1891, 1901, and 1911 at R. Proctor, T. B. & W. Cockayne, John Walsh, G.H. Crossley, G.H. Hovey, and Cole Brothers. The average age was 26.34 and the mode was 22.

²⁵ Hallsworth and Davies, *Working Life*, 114.

but the general gender composition of the managerial staff depended on individual stores, location, and year.

“Girl,” then, was less an accurate age descriptor and more of a way of keeping women separate and lesser. For servants, the distinction was kept throughout the hiring process and into the position. For sales assistants, the position itself came with some status and capital. Despite this, society referred to them as “shop girls.” Thus, once assistants were at work on the sales floor, they entered a lower social position and were serving customers. This was reflected in popular culture, for example, in one of the first musical comedies *The Shop Girl*. This production featured a rags-to-riches moment for a shop girl, but that was the not reality for the vast majority of sales assistants. Many came from upper-working or lower-middle class backgrounds, a status they retained with work in shops, and, if they married, after marriage. Shop work provided a level of stability for people who could maintain their positions. For those who lost work, however, the outlook could be bleak. As we saw in chapter one, working in a department store led to the ability to maintain social position for women like Dorothy Tindall, but for others, like Ethel Johnson and Mary Ann Greyson, who worked in fabrication and service, shop employment had no guaranteed long term benefits.

Men's Positions

Men's positions, under “clerks & assistants” or “apprentices & boys” had a further vocabulary but focused more on experience than any other description. Experience was also a factor of age. For men, boyhood ended with experience rather than being a perpetual marker of status. Men were forged through experience; by gaining skills and authority they became men. Experience provided increased income, with which they expected, or were expected to, establish a household and marry. Men's social standing was based on their work and their ability to

maintain their family in the proscribed style.²⁶ Boyhood, then, was temporary. Teenaged youths (or boys or lads) could have found positions as apprentices or porters under “apprentices & boys.”²⁷ One draper in Sheffield listed the age for apprentices as about fifteen and used “youths” rather than “boys” or “young men.”²⁸ For neither apprentices nor assistants would “gentlemen” be used in a similar manner to that of “ladies” for female assistants. Listings for apprentices maintained a tradition of training for boys that lead to a career path and advancement that girls and women simply did not have.²⁹ This is reflected in the census records of those living-in; the vast majority of apprentices were young men, often teenagers. Some went on to have careers in retailing, even if the specific field changed. In the same way that the Cole brothers trained at T. B. & W. Cockayne and John Atkinson trained at Cole Brothers, apprentices in the 1890s were able work their way to higher standing in the draper’s trade.³⁰ For example, Algernon Megnell Appelson was an apprentice living-in at G. H. Crossley’s during the 1891 census. He emigrated to the United States in 1892 and continued his career as a dry goods retailer.³¹ In the same census at Crossley’s was Arthur Samuel Webb, who was a draper’s assistant in Hull in 1901 and sometime in the early decades of the twentieth century gained full status as a draper, which was his occupation in the 1939 Register.³² The third apprentice living-in at Crossley’s in 1891 was

²⁶ Hosgood, ““Mercantile Monasteries,”” 331.

²⁷ Some listings were for more general work within the department store universe. For example, the Walsh Restaurant was looking for a “sharp lad... about 16, to make himself generally useful” in October 1899. The work likely resembled that of kitchen maids in the establishment. *Sheffield Independent*, October 5, 1899, 2, GPSBLN.

²⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, 8 January 1901, 2, microfilm, SLSL.

²⁹ As Griffin discusses in *Breadwinner*, lack of opportunity was a feature of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. For men, there were career paths and opportunities for advancement; for women, there was only work. Emma Griffin, *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (Yale University Press, 2020), 79.

³⁰ Reid, “Middle Class Values,” 132; “Atkinsons: Independent Sheffield Department Store Celebrates 150 Years,” March 7, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-60647715>.

³¹ 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3818 ED 12 page 6, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1910 United States Federal Census, district 8, ED 228, sheet 9B, accessed via Ancestry.com.

³² 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3818 ED 12 page 6, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/4497 ED 8 page 2, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; 1939 England and Wales Register, Kingston-Upon-Hull ED J.A.C.L. district 522-1, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

Joseph Johnston, who rose to the position of shop walker at a store in Southampton by 1901.³³

Owning one's own store, even a modestly sized one, was one of the potential outcomes for men given early training in business. Being clever and quick set young men on a path toward success which was not provided to women.

Older men would have found job opportunities under “clerks & assistants.” After experience, “smart” was the most common descriptor for both boys and men. “Smart” could mean either in intelligence or in appearance, and likely implied both. A tidy appearance, though, was not an aesthetic requirement, rather, it was a behavioral one. Presenting and maintaining a neat person contributed to being thought of as respectable. Both men and women were expected to be tidy, but fewer listings for women included “smart” as a qualification (rather, a different adjective would be used). Smart, in terms of cleverness or intellectual ability, would have been mandatory for men looking to climb the ladder. For owners who prided themselves on their business savvy and innovative ideas, any man accepted into the higher ranks without the benefit of familial connections would have needed some extraordinary personal skill. Infrequently other attributes were listed. For example, Walsh’s advertised for a leading salesman “of good middle-class experience” for dresses in September 1895.³⁴ The type of previous employment needed to be in middle-class trade, rather than in a store whose customers were members of the working class. Other listings in the autumn included those for a Correspondence and General Clerk who was “quick at figures” and “accustomed to [a] Draper’s Office.”³⁵ The experience required here was both in trade and educational—although primary education was required at this point,

³³ 1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12/3818 ED 12 page 6, accessed FindMyPast.co.uk at SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13/1059 ED 41 page 30, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com.

³⁴ *Sheffield Telegraph*, September 17, 1895, 2, SLSL.

³⁵ *Sheffield Independent* 16 October 1899, 2 SLSL.

numeracy in business figures was not guaranteed.³⁶ Experience in business records would have to have been acquired at a previous position. In the 1900s, a London published produced a series of handbooks called *The Accountants' Library* “to supply the student with that specialised information he may require” and that “the series will also be found of material assistance to bookkeepers of all classes.”³⁷

Ultimately, many of the requirements for men to gain and retain work in a department store were based more on ability than for women. Part of this was the connection between appearance and behavior and morality, especially for women. A hardworking young woman with a tidy appearance, who prioritized her family’s well-being was morally good.³⁸ As retailing industrialized, especially in department stores, their workforces feminized and, to people at the time, deskilled. Between the turn of the century and the First World War, some attempts were made to train sales assistants in selling, but many of the skills relied on interpersonal factors which were difficult to teach. Standardized training programs and efforts to rationalize movements gained popularity in the interwar period, but, even then, were at best ambiguously successful.³⁹ Department store sales positions were part of an industrializing sector; thus, they were subject to the same trends of correlated feminization and deskilling as other arenas.

The Adherence of Classified Advertisement Language to Social Definitions

Job listings in Britain and Germany used certain adjectives to convey information about the type of applicant they sought. Listings often appeared in different sections of newspaper classifieds and the language within listings differentiated between servants, fabricators, and sales

³⁶ Pam Inder, *Busks, Basques and Brush-Braid: British dressmaking in the 18th and 19th centuries* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 3, 120.

³⁷ George H. Richardson, *Drapers', Dressmakers' and Milliners' Accounts* 2nd ed. (Gee & Co., 1908), v.

³⁸ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 294.

³⁹ Adams, *Women clerks*, 108; Susan Porter Benson, “The Cinderella of Occupations: Managing the Work of Department Store Saleswomen, 1900-1940,” in *The Business History Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1981): 1-25.

assistants. These listings implied beliefs about upbringing, behavior, and presentation. The implied meanings were clear to both sides of the employment arrangement and were broadly consistent between Sheffield and Cologne. The same general terms were used for assistants and servants – particularly the distinction between the two as ladies and girls – and between men and women. Therefore, the bourgeoisie in the two societies were in synch regarding standards and their enforcement. We can see this in a customer’s parcel-wrapping complaint in the *Early Closing Record* and Tietz’s method of greeting latecomers.

The people writing the advertisements were enmeshed in societies where respectability was the norm. Respectability ideology was part of their doxa, as Bourdieu calls the beliefs and norms that are taken for granted.⁴⁰ This determined the language they used, for example “well-behaved girls” (*braves Mädchen*) as different from “smart young ladies” but both needing to be respectable. One needed to know one’s place in the social hierarchy, and to act in accordance with that position even before applying for that position. Social rules came from many places, but religion played a significant role in their construction and emphasized a connection between worldly actions and spiritual salvation. We can see part of this in British Protestant conceptions of cleanliness and order. Conceptions of cleanliness and order shaped belief about the proper use of time, how one ought to present oneself, and the state of one’s soul. John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, included the phrase “cleanliness is, indeed, next to godliness” in his sermon “On Dress” from the late eighteenth century.⁴¹ The sermon, at large, discussed the problems with dressing in “costly apparel,” even if this did not impoverish one’s family. Primarily, the result was an increase in pride, vanity, anger, lust, and diverting resources from

⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 164.

⁴¹ John Wesley, “On dress: a sermon on I Peter III.3,4” 15-26 <https://archive.org/details/on-dress-john-wesley/page/16/mode/2up>.

good works. Although Wesley called for Methodists to dress similarly to Quakers, it is not difficult to see how this sermon, and teachings based on it, could be adapted to a norm of dressing for one's station and not trying to adopt the dress and fashions of those above you. The connection of Methodism to this study is more than a rising tide in the religious landscape of Britain. Both the Cole and Cockayne families in Sheffield were Methodist, and the Coles were particularly involved in their parish. Furthermore, the Cole brothers apprenticed with T. B. & W. Cockayne's before opening their store.⁴² The families shared social connections despite competing business interests. Methodism was not the only strain of Protestantism to prioritize adherence to thrift and modesty. Across various Christian traditions, the connections between appearance, conduct, and salvation were strong and deeply embedded in people's consciousness and beliefs.⁴³ "Well-behaved girls" conducted themselves in an orderly manner. "Smart young ladies" were clean and well put together for their jobs amongst new and beautiful goods.

There were some instances of job listings including more explicit or detailed requirements for applicants. In Cologne, religion was frequently specified in job postings. There were three main categories: Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. Although religious affiliation was most often noted for servants, there were positions listed for sales assistants with religious requirements. For example, in an advertisement for a manufactured and ladies' goods store, saleswomen were required to have experience in window dressing, provide certificates, have a good figure, and needed to be Catholic.⁴⁴ Experience in window dressing was rare for women, but most positions in Cologne required applicants to provide certifications. The notation and

⁴² Reid, "Middle-Class Values," 131-132.

⁴³ Gorham, *The Victorian Girl*, 76, 111.

⁴⁴ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 23 January 1901, Erste Morgen, 3, ZPNRW. A similar advertisement from March 1888, required merely a "Christian confession" (*Kölnische Zeitung*, 7 March 1888, Drittes Blatt zweite Abend, 2, ZPNRW).

prioritization of a specific religious background generally, however, speaks to the significant of religion to social grouping. Religious affiliation indicated ties to a specific outlook and behaviors. In Sheffield, the owners were all members of Christian denominations. The Coles and Cockaynes were Methodist and John Walsh and his wife were Catholic (their son, Walter John was baptized at the Church of England cathedral in the city).⁴⁵ This reflected the general composition of the city at the end of the nineteenth century. There were many Anglicans, but Unitarians, Methodists, and Catholics were significant elements of the city's population.⁴⁶ Despite theological differences, they were all Christian. In Cologne, the largest store was owned by Leonhard Tietz, who was Jewish, but the other stores' owners were likely part of some Christian denomination.⁴⁷ In 1910, the total population of Cologne was 78% Catholic, although the density varied across the city, and roughly 2.5% of the population was Jewish.⁴⁸ Religious requirements, or preferences, were another marker of acceptability. Similarity to or difference to the store owners and the surrounding society could be seen positively or negatively depending on the circumstances. The specific contexts of each hiring at every store are unknowable, but the practice of specifying religion was widespread enough that it marks a significant difference in mode of business between the two cities.

Some listings in Cologne included other requirements to respectability of their employees. One advertisement for journeywomen or apprentices at Müller & Rosenstein,

⁴⁵ Reid, "Middle-Class Values," 131-2; "John Walsh," Find a Grave, accessed 20 December 2024, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182054859/john-walsh?_gl=1*_1cqgw5c*_gcl_au*NzA4ODI5MTUyLjE3MzI1NDgyNzc (found via AncestryLibrary.com).

⁴⁶ David Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, (Carnegie Publishing, 2012), 140, 208-9.

According to David Hey, at the end of the nineteenth century, Methodists dominated commercial life and Unitarians civic life (as mayors, aldermen, Masters Cutler, and magistrates), and Irish immigration boosted the number of Catholics in the city (208-9).

⁴⁷ I currently have little definitive information on the families of most other owners, so this is based on the general statistics of the city.

⁴⁸ Thomas Mergel, *Köln im Kaiserreich* (Greven, 2018), 317, 330.

Ludwigstraße, included only the requirement that the applicant came from a good family.⁴⁹ Much like appearance preferences, “good family” backgrounds were subjective. The exact specifics of “good” in each case might have varied. Generally, however, “good” would have some elements that were static. These characteristics were determined by the German middle classes.⁵⁰ For applicants, meeting these standards was vital to obtaining and keeping a job. Showing the proper background, and verifying it, provided employers evidence of an individual’s social qualifications for shop work. In a similar way to religious requirements, family background stood in for social preconceptions. Religious affiliation and relative goodness would have separated out those who could rise above their stations and access the opportunities, precarious as they were, offered by department and fashion stores. In many ways, relative goodness and behaving respectably were more important in both settings than religious affiliation when it came to store employment. Some stores, particularly those in England where living-in was required, mandated church attendance or did not allow employees to be in their accommodations on Sunday mornings in an effort to compel church attendance.⁵¹ However, this rarely worked in the way owners intended. Furthermore, in the event that religious restrictions conflicted with business needs, owners opted for creative solutions to the conflicts or simply acted in favor of the business. For example, stores being open and people working on Sundays was a point of

⁴⁹ *Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger* 1 March 1888, 2, ZPNRW.

⁵⁰ There has been much written about the German middle classes and the differences among and between them. By referring generally to the “middle classes” I am encompassing most of the people who could claim a middle-class identity through various means. For more, see David Blackburn and Richard J. Evans, eds., *The German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the social history of the German middle class from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century* (Routledge, 1991); Pamela M. Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe 1789-1914: France, Germany, Italy and Russia* (Lyceum Books, 1990); Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*; Eric Yonke, “The Problem of the Middle Class in German Catholic History: The Nineteenth-Century Rhineland Revisited,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 88, no. 2 (2002): 263-280.

⁵¹ Wilfred B. Whitaker, *Victorian and Edwardian Shopworkers: The Struggle to Obtain Better Conditions and a Half-Holiday* (David & Charles, 1973), 9.

conflict for much of the period.⁵² Despite the social disapprobation and governmental efforts to restrict working and opening hours, most German businesses found a way to stay open.⁵³

Listings for shop assistants in Cologne almost always required applicants to send documents proving their suitability. References, certificates, and salary requirements/expectations would have been used to ensure a potential hire had a history of performing the requirements of the job and fit expectations. The exact use of the requested photographs in some listings likely varied across circumstances. For example, in March 1888, Julius Fabian on Hohe Straße placed a listing reading, “Men’s ready-made clothing. Looking for an efficient salesman for my superior men’s ready-made clothing store including made to measure goods, immediately, who is also a skilled decorator. Apply with photography and salary requirements.”⁵⁴ The photographs requested here might have referred to the applicant’s skill at creating displays. The hired man would need to know how to make appealing displays, including those in windows, that met both sales and aesthetic needs. Where decorating and dressing skills were required, supplying photographic evidence of ability does not appear onerous.⁵⁵

In other cases, requesting photographs can sound odd, but aligns with business goals. Also in March 1888, Wind & Sußmann advertised for a saleswoman for their silks store: “For our silk-wares specialty store, we are looking for a saleswoman with detailed knowledge of the industry, stately appearance, and dealings with the finest customers. Position with a high salary, to start immediately or April 1st. Apply with first class references and photographs.”⁵⁶ First-class

⁵² Whitaker, *Victorian and Edwardian Shopworkers*, 60; Mueller, *Kaiser*, 73, 82; Hallsworth and Davies, *Working Life*, 152; Adams, *Women clerks*, 58.

⁵³ Mueller, *Kaiser*, 82.

⁵⁴ “Herren-Confection. Suche für mein besseres Herren-Confections-Geschäft mit Anfertigung nach Maß per sofort einen tüchtigen Verkäufer, welcher gleichzeitig Decorateur sein muß. Offerten mit Photographie und Gehaltsanprüchen.“ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 7 March 1888 Zweites Blatt, 3, ZPNRW.

⁵⁵ For an example, see *Kölnische Zeitung* 10 January 1901 Abend, 3, ad for Leonhard Tietz, Aachen.

⁵⁶ “Für unser Seidenwaren-Specialgeschäft suchen wir bei hohem Salär pr. Sofort oder 1. April or eine 1. Verkäuferin mit genauer Branchenkenntnis Stattliche Erscheinung und Verkehr mit feinsten Kundschaft Bedingung.

references for a specialty shop follow with their focus on a higher-class clientele. In this case, however, the only thing on display was the woman's "*Stattliche Erscheinung*"—the only way to winnow applicants based on this without interviewing them all necessitated visual evidence of appearance. Preference for "stately" appearances over "pretty" or "fair" reflects societal beauty standards based on ideas of beauty in ancient Greece and Rome.⁵⁷ Explicit calls for a certain look were uncommon in Sheffield. Unspoken assumptions or implicit understandings common to managers have been lost. This marks a difference in priorities between the two sets of owners. Sales assistants needed to look like they belonged in the store: attractive but not too attractive, serious but not dour, and never outshining the goods or customers.

At the turn of the twentieth century, to be hired in a shop, women needed skills and knowledge of selling and products and the proper behavior and look. Physical appearance was not as important for those working behind the scenes, so meeting other requirements was even more important. Contrarily, requirements for men focused on skill and ability. Comportment was important for men too but did not feature in listings in the same ways as for women. Once on the job, men's behaviors and actions would have been judged similarly to women's: assistants had to show deference to customers, be industrious, and maintain the visual standards of the store. As the retailing industry feminized, at least at the lower levels, male assistants' conceptualization of their own masculinity was threatened.⁵⁸ Despite these threats, men continued to have successful careers in retailing, especially in offices and management.

Offerten mit 1a-Referenzen und Photographie erbeten an.“ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 13 March 1888 Zweites Blatt Erste Abend, 4, ZPNRW.

⁵⁷ Hau, *Cult of Health*, 33.

⁵⁸ Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries,'" 322-352.

The loss of standing and threat to masculinity was also present for male servants. Domestic service had also experienced feminization. Further, servants were separated from the rest of the working class because of perceptions about their work and loyalties. A fairly similar division separated shop workers from their working-class peers, although for shop workers the distinction was self-created because of the claims they could make to middle-class identities.

The ideal shop girl, as the most visible employee, was not only present in the advertisements and regulations for stores, but she was also present in the cultural imaginations of European society. Whether in the works of literature or in music halls shows, “shop girl” was an identity that could be molded to fit narrative requirements. In Böhme’s *W.A.G.M.U.S.*, no fewer than five central characters work as sales assistants, *Verkäuferin*, in the department store, with many others populating the narrative. Through these characters, some of the complexities of assistants’ lives come through. However, despite the varying experiences and opinions of the characters, they do not exist outside their cultural context. It is never explicitly stated, but the reader is given to understand the preferability of Karen’s character rather than Agnes’ – the former is industrious, humble, and healthy whereas the latter, although beautiful, prefers leisure, enjoys the significance of being engaged to the Chief’s son, and is often ill.⁵⁹

The creation of an ideal employee was effected through the deployment of social norms and beliefs. Assumptions about appropriate behavior and presentation for occupants of roles and positions in the social order formed the common sense of these societies. They both shaped behavior and were shaped by it. For aspiring store employees, expectations and norms contributed to the decision to pursue shop work and to which position one applied. Meeting some level of these expectations determined one’s ability to gain shop employment. Whether one could continue to meet expectations and hold the job was another matter.

⁵⁹ Böhme, *The Department Store*. The comparisons Joshua Müllenmeister makes between his first, Mimi, and second, Henny, wives mirror this point: Mimi supported Joshua in his endeavors, did not prioritize leisure pursuits and would help in the store; Henny barely listened to Joshua, only cared about leisure, and did not care to even visit the store. Mimi, helpfully, has died before the start of the novel. Although Joshua’s elder son, Friedrich, spends much of the book engaged to Agnes, at the end he has moved on and seems to favor Karen, in something of a reflection of his father.

Policies and Regulations

Department stores operated with posted rules and regulations for employees, where violations resulted in fines or dismissal. These policies regulated where one could go within the store (including which staircases or lifts/elevators one could use) and when one had to be there.⁶⁰ Other policies regulated behavior off the shop floor. In one of Bondfield's example stores, one of the ninety-eight rules read, "Conversation at meal times must be conducted as quietly as possible; shouting and loud laughing at table does not indicate good breeding and cannot be allowed."⁶¹ The sobriety of the shop floor and the higher classes was mandated in the back-of-house spaces to form model employees and subjects. Unsurprisingly, there were ways of conducting business relating to sales that were rigid. Part of this rigidity was a result of necessities of analog accounting. As technology changed, these policies could have been relaxed but the policies and standards for service remained rigorous. Some of the general policies of the sector were challenged by social reformers during the 1890s and 1900s, and some changes were achieved. In particular, standardized hours and the eventual end of living-in were the most notable achievements. Both of these changes, however, were contested and caused situations in which employees' behavior could be further regulated. Official regulations were supplemented by unspoken or assumed standards of behavior. Surveillance of employees by managers and customers was important in establishing and maintaining adherence to store rules and social expectations, but employees were an active part in the strengthening and imposing comportment rules. The following section uses the store policies of T. B. & W. Cockayne in Sheffield to illustrate the ways in which posted rules relayed owner and management beliefs about work and

⁶⁰ T. B. & W. Cockayne, "Rules to be observed in the establishment of Messrs. T. B. and W. Cockayne", n.d., MP54L, miscellaneous papers, SLSL; Bondfield, "Conditions Under which Shop Assistants Work," 277-286.

⁶¹ Bondfield, "Conditions," 285.

their workers and how they attempted to regulate employee behavior. Posted rules, however, were not the only method of control. Thus, the second part of this section looks at the unofficial influences on employee behavior. These influences included voluntary associations and the trade press and customer expectations and interactions. These groups and forces exerted some pressure on assistants and employees, including peer pressure, but individuals had agency in accepting that pressure and in whether or when to acquiesce. Thus, despite social pressures and weight of norms, there were always ways around full adoption of policies and regulations, regardless of the presence of records to that effect. Policies and regulations, I shall show, were part of the social construction of department stores as sites of leisure.

Posted Store Policies and Behavioral Expectations: T.B. & W. Cockayne, a case study

Posted or printed store regulations provide the clearest pictures of acceptable behavior within department stores according to their owners. Where these are available, they provide us with an idea to the structures of shop assistants' days. By posting rules, and providing rule books, owners and managers attempted to create ideal workers, both on and off the shop floor. The two most overt paths to correct behavior were through proper time management and clear record keeping. First, in the pursuit of time management, sales assistants had strict schedules for preparing the floor, opening, and meals. T. B. & W. Cockayne's rule book from the 1870s included the store's general morning shift system: The first group of assistants, mainly young men and apprentices,⁶² needed to be down to the salesfloor by 7:30 (or 7:45 in the booklet) a.m. to "dust, clean windows, remove blinds" as well as any other initial tasks. They were relieved at 8:30 a.m. to breakfast and dress by the second group, who were already dressed for the day (and presumably had eaten). The first group was to be back on the floor by 9:15, according to the

⁶² In both sources, young men and apprentices are listed as this first group. As more women were hired, it is likely that women were also part of the first group to work in the women's departments.

posted bill (9:30 in the booklet). The time on the bill was printed as 9:30, but, at some point, was stricken out in favor of 9:15.⁶³ This timing ensured the sales floor was properly arranged for that day's business, all workers were correct and present, and the staff dining room could accommodate everyone. As more women were hired, these shifts also constrained men and women from mingling during their breaks. The end of the day was similarly restricted: "No assistant, male or female, will be allowed to leave the shop at night until every department is straight and the blinds up."⁶⁴ For sales assistants, work was not finished until their areas were tidy—cleanliness being next to godliness here as everywhere—regardless of how long this took and based on the managers' standards.

Employees living-in followed even more rules, including those about when they could or must be in their rooms and could have them lit. Rule five, for example, regulated the off-hours of the employees living-in: "The hour for being in at night is Eleven o'Clock, after which time no person will be admitted under any circumstances. The gas will be turned off in the bedrooms at 11.15. Any one remaining out all night, the penalty, for the first time, will be 2s. 6d.; for the second, 5s.; for the third, dismissal."⁶⁵ The penalty remained the same regardless of how late one was. There was no grace period, except, perhaps, in enforcement, which could be mercurial. Unlike the regulations for work time, these regulations sought to maintain standards of comportment by limiting the scope employees' leisure time. Following the rules, fitting the pattern, showed one's character.⁶⁶ Department store owners sought respectability for themselves,

⁶³ Cockayne, "Rules to be observed," MP54L, SLSL.

⁶⁴ Cockayne, "Rules to be observed," SY492/B18/1, SA.

⁶⁵ Cockayne, "Rules to be observed," MP54L, SLSL. In today's currency, 2s. 6d. is roughly £10 and 5s. roughly £20, but this does not accurately reflect the percentage of one's income the fine was and does not account for any other fines incurred during a pay period.

⁶⁶ Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 294.

their families, and their businesses. Their employees needed to support this endeavor through their behavior at work and at play.

The second focus of Cockayne's rules was on proper record keeping. Correctly entering information in the check books and sales slips promoted streamlined business before computerized record-keeping and single (or connected) points of sale. Transactions in individual departments were marked on a sales slip or check book and taken to a cash desk. Errors on the slips or in the check books were the fault of the sales assistant.⁶⁷ Thus, assistants not only had to be trained in a store's record-keeping system, they also needed legible handwriting. Legible handwriting need not be completely standardized, but given the priority of "pattern" girls, who fit the prescribed "pattern," social pressure to conform to a specific style is likely.

Posted rules established standards for both work tasks and interactions. They were provided as posters and in booklets, often supplemented by readings at key times.⁶⁸ Written rules provided the basis for fines, with many fines explicitly stated. Posted, explicit rules, the reading of them, and an integrated fine system created a regulatory structure within department stores that resembled those within factories.⁶⁹ Control of employee behavior, in addition to regulating the actual completion of tasks, marks department stores as similar to other parts of industrial production. While the tracking of industrial output was different between factories and stores, workers in both were required to remain at work until given leave by a superior and infractions of quality and behavior were met with fines. Therefore, the markers of an industrialized workplace are not so much concerned with type of product, but rather in the methods through

⁶⁷ Cockayne, MP54L, SLSL; Margaret Bondfield, *A Life's Work* (Hutchinson & Co. Limited, 1948), 64-5.

⁶⁸ Böhme, *The Department Store*, 256.

⁶⁹ Jutta Schwarzkopf, *Unpicking Gender: The Social Construction of Gender in the Lancashire Cotton Weaving Industry, 1880-1914* (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004) 94; Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850-1914* (Cornell University Press, 1996), 297-299; E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present* December, no. 38 (1967): 90.

which the work is controlled and the relationship between owner, employee, and product. As Marx showed in *Capital*, industrial production under capitalism alienates workers from the goods they produce and prevents their owning the means of that production.⁷⁰ Department stores as an industrialized form of retailing concentrate the profits of a business in an owner or family that prevents the majority of their employees from accessing control in the business. Further, many employees have no connection to the goods they sell or the people to whom they sell the goods. The anonymity of the city and the rise of a cash economy (as part of a switch to waged labor) additionally contributed to the industrialization of retailing. The final effect of this is a similarity in policies and regulations for workers across industrialized workplaces.

Unofficial Influences on Employee Behavior

In addition to the written and posted regulations within stores, employees were subject to other controlling influences on their behavior. The most obvious influences were the presence of the owners and managers within workplaces, who could surveil employees. Managers could enforce standards of behavior based on individual preference or beliefs. Other people or groups also imposed their understandings of how employees should act, particularly through published materials. These groups include voluntary associations, trade presses, and customers.

Employees were subject to observation whenever they were on store grounds, and often when they were not. Their movements and interactions were parts of their work, so could be judged by management. Interactions between managers/owners and employees were more ambiguous than rules governing behavior. Some interactions can be interpreted as benevolent or as malevolent. These interactions leave no written records and rely on affective responses, so reading records of situations or actions requires us to shift focus. According to a biography of

⁷⁰ Karl Marx, "Capital, Volume One," in *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd ed., ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Company, 1978).

Leonhard Tietz, the store's board conducted morning meetings in the courtyard by the personnel entrance. They, including Tietz, would greet late employees, often by name. The author who relates this story calls this "ironic" and having a "pedagogical value."⁷¹ While the targeted "good morning" could have been simply ironic – along the lines of "nice of you to join us" – the power differential between the owner and an employee cannot be ignored. The presence of the owner imposed both timeliness as defined by the owner and enforced his power to determine the meaning of time.⁷² Thus, the owner or board members knowing who was late and how often exerted control and authority. Managers of departments would also keep track of who was stationed where and when they were supposed there and could use that information to control behavior and conditions of employment. It is different, however, when the owner of a multinational business commented on it. This use of soft power, supplementing official policy, was the pedagogical value mentioned by the biographer. The value was in showing power and making the hierarchy clear and teaching all employees a lesson. Furthermore, Tietz delegated the dispersal of bad news to employees to Max Baumann, his brother-in-law and manager at the Cologne flagship store, but would deliver good news himself.⁷³ These examples remind us to consider the ways in which different policies and behaviors could be interpreted and to consider power differentials and how they were leveraged on a day-to-day basis.

Voluntary Associations and the Trade Press

In addition to employer-instituted policies, other groups influenced shop worker behavior. These groups included efforts to influence how assistants spent their time off and their income. One of these was the Shop Assistants Association which worked to achieve a single, unified day

⁷¹ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 43. In the original: "ironischen" and "erzieherischen Wert".

⁷² Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," 83, 86.

⁷³ Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 43-44.

on which all of the retailing stores in Sheffield would close early.⁷⁴ By June 1892, they achieved a two o'clock closing on Thursdays.⁷⁵ According to the 1894 Red Book, the achievement of the half-holiday was a combined effort of the Shop Assistants' Association and the Sheffield Tradesmen's Association. In addition to the early closing campaign, the groups also offered days out, sport clubs, and general information. In 1894, the leadership committee had six men but only two were directly involved in the trade: T.C. Blyton and J.H. Richardson.⁷⁶ Richardson was respected in as a shop employee, but, as someone with power and standing, he would have had a different positionality than the general pool of assistants.

The Shop Assistants Association and the editors of the *Early Closing Record* influenced their members and readers in proper behavior for shop employees. The Shop Assistants Association had stated goals of promoting early shopping and the early closing movement and aiding members in distress. However, they were also interested promoting "the principle of thrift amongst Shop Assistants" and providing "social and rational enjoyment for the Shop Assistants of the city by the formation of a Cricket League and the gathering together for social enjoyment and intercourse."⁷⁷ These ideas focus on assistants in their off-work lives, how they spent their pay and time. In spending money and time, assistants should be rational and thrifty. Thrift was

⁷⁴ *The Sheffield and Rotherham Red Book and Almanack* (Pawson and Brailsford, 1893), 46; Sheffield Shop Assistants Association, "Rules of the Sheffield Shop Assistants Approved Society for Men and Women," (Chas. Knight & Co., 1912), 1. It remains unclear why, if they were successful in 1892, the *Early Closing Record* was still advocating for early closing in 1895. Potentially, shop owners acquiesced to the half-holiday, but later eliminated it since it was not legally mandated and not closing early could be justified through the demands of customers.

⁷⁵ *The Sheffield and Rotherham Red Book and Almanack* (Pawson and Brailsford, 1894), 50. For more on this topic, refer back to chapter 2.

⁷⁶ Blyton was trained in London, living-in at 151 Tottenham Court Road in 1861, which was James Shoolbred & Co. Sometime between 1875 and 1881, he and his family moved to Sheffield. For more on Richardson, see chapter 2 fn. 90. 1861 Census of England and Wales, RG 9/102, ED 10, 13, accessed via AncestryLibrary.com; "Shoolbred, James & Co. (1814-1934), British and Irish Furniture Makers Online, The Furniture History Society, last updated October 20, 2023, <https://bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org/entry/shoolbred-james-co-1814-1934>.

⁷⁷ Sheffield Shop Assistants Association, "Shop Assistants Rule book," 1.

one component of respectability, often accompanied by temperance.⁷⁸ Thus, the provision of alternatives to public houses or music halls provided standing to these organizations within the larger society.

In the July 1895 edition of the *Sheffield and Rotherham Early Closing Record*, the editors included a note that read, “Shop Assistants, when enjoying a Thursday afternoon holiday, should exercise a little caution when riding on conveyances, &c. Nothing can be more provoking to an employer than to find on Friday morning one-half of his assistants ‘damaged.’”⁷⁹ The *Record*’s leadership included employers as well as assistants, and the list of friendly employers included most of the department store owners. The exhortation for care among employees institutes a level of influence on behavior. What this “damage” could be is unclear and could include everything from a physical injury to a hangover. The use of “&c.” (a variation of etcetera common at the time) is open to interpretation, which employers would have used to their advantage and “provoking” behaviors could result in dismissal.

In line with their goals, the *Record*, a month later, decried the “foolishness” which led to assistants shopping at stores that remained open on Thursday afternoons.⁸⁰ These shop assistants were released from their own employment by stores which observed the Thursday early closing and then proceeded to patronize stores that did not. The article names no names but claims shop assistants form the majority of shoppers during this time. Further, the writers say, “Let us hope no more excuses will be made under this plea” and that “Much remains to be done in educating the public not to shop, and we regret the necessity exists for us to educate those who close

⁷⁸ Reid, “Middle-Class Values,” 557; Wilfred B. Whitaker, *Victorian and Edwardian Shopworkers: The Struggle to Obtain Better Conditions and a Half-Holiday* (David & Charles, 1973), 90-1; Dolores L. Augustine, “Arriving in the Upper Class: the Wealthy Business Elite of Wilhelmine Germany,” in the *German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*, eds. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (Routledge, 1991), 46; Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home*, 120-1, 170.

⁷⁹ *Early Closing Record*, July 1895 (volume 1, number 2, page 3), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

⁸⁰ *Early Closing Record*, August 1895 (volume 1, number 3, page 1), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

early.”⁸¹ The editors of the *Record*, and likely the organization as a whole, saw educating the public to the benefits of early closing as a prime vehicle for obtaining a permanent, legally-mandated weekday half-holiday. Their goal was the creation of a new norm, and spreading awareness and compliance with it within the department store environment; that shop assistants were not exempt from the *Record’s* efforts is no surprise. Despite this call, the next month featured a letter from a shop assistant on the same topic.⁸² The writer asserts his personal experience with shop assistants who frequent stores that do not close Thursday afternoons. At best, Thursday afternoon shopping “is done thoughtlessly” and “certainly seems an illogical and selfish action on the part of the assistants.”⁸³ As with the previous story, if the assistants *knew* better, they would behave better. This is further reiterated on the following page in the Notes: “A most regrettable fact has recently come to light. One large establishment in Sheffield, which refuses to close at 2 o’clock on Thursdays, had the satisfaction of being patronised by eighteen drapers’ assistants who do enjoy the half-holiday. A word to the wise should be sufficient.”⁸⁴ Regrettably, indeed, on the verge of success, the *Record* continued to have to issue words to the wise, the implication being that the eighteen assistants identified in the note were not wise, and, so, failing in the expectations of their peers. These expectations included solidarity with other assistants in the pursuit of early closing and maintaining the respectability of shop work generally.

Customers’ Expectations

In addition to managers policing behavior and enforcing regulations, shop assistants’ behavior was evaluated by customers. These evaluations were of both how a task was completed

⁸¹ *Early Closing Record*, August 1895 (volume 1, number 3, page 1), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

⁸² *Early Closing Record*, September 1895 (volume 1, number 4, page 2), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

⁸³ *Early Closing Record*, September 1895 (volume 1, number 4, page 2), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

⁸⁴ *Early Closing Record*, September 1895 (volume 1, number 4, page 3), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

and the manner in which it was done. A letter sent to the *Early Closing Record* complained of local shop assistants' inability to tie a parcel. The *Record's* introduction to part of the letter called said writer a "faddist" who had "commenced a crusade" which hardly puts this customer in a good light. Regardless, this customer had complaints about both the task at hand and the manner in which the assistant interacted with them:

"Hardly one Shop Assistant in a dozen knows how to tie up a parcel? This has been a constant source of annoyance to me while engaged in shopping. It is, I find, the custom to pass the string round every package in the most gingerly manner, and secure it—if it can be said to be secured at all—by a single knot. The other day I taught a young person a lesson in this art. I went into a shop to buy some toys, and the young lady who served me put them up in the usual careless manner. 'Pardon me,' I said, 'that is not the proper way to do up a parcel.' 'It is the proper way,' calmly retorted the girl. 'I think,' I observed, 'I could teach you a better one.' 'I don't want to be taught,' was the haughty reply. 'Very well, then,' I said; 'I don't want your toys;' and so, not having yet paid for them, I turned and left the goods on the counter. I went upstairs and related the little incident to the manager or proprietor of the shop, but whether it has effected a reform in his establishment I do not know. Anyhow, I will never complete the purchase of any article till it is properly and safely packed."⁸⁵

The writer presumes to know better than the assistant, becomes upset when the offer of advice is rejected, and then lodges a complaint with the manager. Further, they refuse to complete their purchase and declare that future purchases are dependent on proper handling. Proper handling of goods, according to store practices, would be part of satisfactory job performance and we cannot know whether the assistant was breaching best practices; the only voice she is afforded is through the biased lens of the writer. However, this interaction has two parts: first, the actual packing task, and second, the conversation between shopper and employee. The shopper presumes to have better knowledge than the employee and when that claim is disputed, the shopper changes modes. From this point, the interaction was no longer about package-wrapping but about the correct way to serve someone. By daring to refuse to bend to the customer, the

⁸⁵ *Early Closing Record*, August 1895 (volume 1, number 3, page 2), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

assistant was rejecting the socially prescribed relationship. As retaliation, the customer reports this interaction to the store's management. The worst-case scenario would be the assistant's dismissal. Perpetual observation was not just the purview of managers, but also conducted by shoppers. It was these types of interactions, real, imagined, or fictional, that transmitted knowledge of proper behavior and expectations to shop workers.

Assistants' Agency in accepting norms and expectations

Assumptions and expectations about how employees ought to behave were not accepted wholesale by assistants. In Britain this is best highlighted by the critiques assistants and their allies made of living-in. Living-in was primarily popular in England once stores grew and industrialization expanded. Department stores that housed employees were not the norm in Germany. In both countries, owners, like their industrialist bourgeois peers, claimed special interest in their employees lives and behavior. This interest could manifest itself in a rhetoric of paternal care, which likened the business to the family, as it had been in earlier times. In German industry this translated to paternalist social welfare policies.⁸⁶ In Britain, paternalist mindsets and welfare also existed, but in department stores, owners made their strongest claims to paternal care with the (often fictional) positive aspects of living-in. Many people rejected these claims with stories of poor accommodation, rotten food, and harsh control of movement.⁸⁷ Living-in kept adults perpetually confined to some aspects of adolescence.⁸⁸ Living-in was waning in the

⁸⁶ Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender*, 11, 14; Dick Geary, "The industrial bourgeoisie and labour relations in Germany 1871-1933," in the *German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the social history of the German idle class from the late eighteenth to the early Twentieth century*, eds. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (Routledge, 1991), 141-2. A second influence in the establishment of these policies was the priority given to preventing socialists from gaining power with the working classes or within the government.

⁸⁷ Hallsworth and Davies, *The Working Life*, 120-127; Bondfield, *A Life's Work*, 62-74; Bill Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (Leicester University Press, 1995), 126; Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies*, 35-7.

⁸⁸ Christopher P. Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries': Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (1999): 322-252.

early twentieth century, in part through employee efforts to end the practice, but continued in some places.⁸⁹ Despite limited success in changing circumstances, some employees rejected the owners' logic of living-in and the power over them that it gave to owners. Thus, sales assistants had agency in the process of establishing and continuing behavioral norms for their positions.

Policies, rules, and regulations pre-dated the coalescing of department stores. As we saw with the Cockayne rule books, policies regarding sales floor presence dated to the 1870s but remained remarkably similar through the beginning of the twentieth century. Store growth and shifts in employee demographics did not fundamentally change some structures of store policy. Furthermore, assistants and employees participated in the reification and enforcement of norms and standards. It is not so much that assistants were constantly under actual or perceived surveillance, from managers, customers, and their peers, but more that assistants as a group accepted many of the unspoken norms as proper and the adherence to them as a marker of class and belonging. Sobriety in recreation and proper deference to one's superiors allowed shop assistants of every level to claim difference from the working classes, as we saw in chapter one.

As in every other industrializing sector, department stores implemented regulations and policies for their employees with infractions punished by fines or dismissal. Unlike some industries, where rules were largely concerned with the quality or quantity of work done, department stores included rules about conduct as part of the work. An assistant's behavior on and off the job impacted their ability to keep their position which was directly connected to their social position. Therefore, comportment factored into the successful execution of one's duties and was part of the labor of sales. In addition to the printed or official regulations, shop assistants were also constantly under observation and were held to behavioral and service standards subject

⁸⁹ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 129.

to the discretion of their managers, their peers, and their customers. Shop employees were also called to exhibit sober, responsible behavior during their leisure time. They did not, however, lack agency in the adoption and adherence to regulations and norms. Although many regulations were followed unquestioningly as part of their jobs, assistants challenged some policies or norms. Therefore, creating the ideal shop girl was a collective project across social groups.

Gauging Whether to Assist and the Importance of Context

Part of the equation of comportment and the successful deployment of different behaviors and actions was knowing when to act. Even as some elements of shopping culture were crystallizing, many remained in flux. Norms and standards of service varied across geography and size of establishment, rather than the standardized practices and expectations of the mid-twentieth century. Thus, different understandings about the role of the assistant across Europe and North America influenced which behaviors were acceptable when.

Visible and Physical Components

One of the most important skills any sales employee needed to cultivate was the proper demeanor. This was especially important for a shop girl, whose livelihood depended on her ability to make sales. She had to know exactly what type of customer she was dealing with before that customer opened her mouth. The shop girl had to quickly assess what the customer said she wanted, identify elements unsaid, and produce an item from the department store's stock. She had to do all of this with a smile and pleasant attitude. According to M.A. Belloc in *The Idler*, "The average manager would rather engage a beginner possessed of a pretty figure and good address, than a thoroughly experienced hand less gifted by nature; and anything like an unpleasant manner or rudeness to a customer is visited with instant dismissal."⁹⁰ While Belloc

⁹⁰ Belloc, "The Shop-Girl," *The Idler: an illustrated magazine* 8, no 43 (August 1895): 12-17. Belloc is more widely known as the novelist Marie Belloc Lowndes.

does not include a specific example and records for the stores in this study do not have examples, habitually improper or disrespectful behavior would not have been tolerated. Contrarily, a 1900 court case in Peckham (greater London), involved an assistant who sued her employer for instant dismissal “for smiling at a colleague’s remark.” She was awarded £1.⁹¹ There was no report of what the colleague said, but, in this case, an improperly placed smile had immediate consequences. An assistant would have spent most of her day standing, with limited time for meals or breaks, and constantly assisting or being ready to assist customers.⁹² This type of work is what Hochschild calls emotional labor, which “requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others.”⁹³ The shop girl could not give in to feelings of frustration or exhaustion. She could not show frustration with indecisive or querulous customers, as the assistant did when offered unprompted parcel-wrapping advice. Nor could she outright spurn “unpleasant attentions” made by men for fear of the floorwalker or buyer blaming the situation on the assistant or be labeled a troublemaker.⁹⁴ The department store was a world unto itself, selling products and experiences, into which the shop assistant needed to fit. She represented not only the store, but also the lifestyle the store sold. Any cracks in this façade were unacceptable.

Increasingly in France and the United States, sales floor assistants were required to melt into the background, to be present only when the customer needed assistance but otherwise to allow customers to peruse wares at their leisure. The walk-around shop, where browsing

⁹¹ “Shop Assistants may Sit but not Smile,” in *Fun*, 6 March 1900, 71.

⁹² Belloc, “The Shop-Girl,” 14; *Early Closing Record*, October 1895 (volume 1, number 5, page 3), 331.889SQ, Local journals, SLSL.

⁹³ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 7.

⁹⁴ “What it Means to be a Department-Store Girl: As Told by the Girl Herself,” *Ladies Home Journal*, volume 30, no. 6, June 1913, 8.

unassisted reigned, changed the nature of service.⁹⁵ In the same way that open spaces and uncluttered displays shifted the nature of retailing into a new mode this hands-off form of service necessitated that assistants be invisible until they were needed or until when they were required to provide guidance. Guidance, of any type, needed to be conveyed in the proper manner—calmly, simply, and as matter-of-fact—but, ultimately, the decision to buy was up to the customer.⁹⁶ Despite this, department store service needed to be equal to that of a specialty store to attract middle and upper class customers.⁹⁷ Knowing the correct moment to approach a customer was a vital part of the service process. Further, approaching with the correct demeanor and addressing them properly were important elements of the interactions. As we saw above with parcel wrapping, improperly addressing a customer could lead to a complaint to management.

Contrarily, British stores maintained hands-on service much longer than industry observers thought prudent. These observers included the *Draper's Record*, the leading English-language trade journal, and its readers. In addition to the hands-on style of service, English stores were critiqued for continuing living-in when it was rarely if ever a practice in France, America, and Scotland.⁹⁸ This was epitomized by the continued presence of the floorwalker.⁹⁹ One of the criticisms of the floorwalkers was their persistent attentions to customers simply looking to browse.¹⁰⁰ This shows the tensions between the expectations placed on workers by owners and managers and the expectations of customers about the nature of department stores.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Harry Gordon Selfridge's influence on the British market in the realm of customer service influenced practices which separated them from

⁹⁵ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 69, 137.

⁹⁶ Mueller, *Kaiser*, 53-54.

⁹⁷ Mueller, *Kaiser*, 53.

⁹⁸ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 69.

⁹⁹ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 69.

¹⁰⁰ Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 69.

those on the continent.¹⁰¹ Selfridge's American training shaped policies at his London store. London's influence in establishing practices and customs – not just in retailing – means that these ideas spread across Britain but not to the continent. The difference between American retailing was enough different from continental European practices that Böhme included it in her novel. It is precisely this training that transforms one of the owner's sons into the type of businessman his father wants him to be, as opposed to the other son and managers who did not have that training and did not undergo that transformation.¹⁰² This transmission is different from the ways in which Parisian fashions and customs were increasingly traveling across western Europe and North America.

Despite some changes instigated by Selfridge, particularly in London, constant service continued to be necessary in many stores since many goods were held behind counters. Counter service work was tiring and confining. Even on early closing days counter assistants were required to continue working as long as people were requesting to be shown goods. This was especially bad on Saturday nights where, “as long as the shop doors are open the shop will be full, and the weary worn-out assistants are expected smilingly to take down package after package, as if they liked it.”¹⁰³ Counter service was common enough that was the subject of a song in *The Shop Girl: Musical Farce*, “The Song of the Shop (I Stand at My Counter).”¹⁰⁴ Bessie, the eponymous shop girl, mentions that men and women come to the counter to see ribbons, laces, and fabrics. The reality of this is immediately countered by the second verse, in which the men who approach the counter “don't seem to care if the prices are high” and “help

¹⁰¹ Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming*, 62; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 4-5, 58-84.

¹⁰² Böhme, *The Department Store*, 333.

¹⁰³ *Early Closing Record* 1895 vol 1 no 5 page 3

¹⁰⁴ H.J.W. Dam, *The Shop Girl: Musical Farce* (London: Hopwood & Crew, 1895), 38, accessed via <https://archive.org/details/shopgirlmusicalf00cary/mode/2up>.

[Bessie] to put the things tidy” and “frequently dare to wink at the girl in the shop.”¹⁰⁵ In the novel *W.A.G.M.U.S.*, counter service was also present in the silk and blouse departments.¹⁰⁶ In both fictional examples, counters are hectic places, where sales could mean mistakes, theft, or camaraderie. The verisimilitude of these situations is unclear but had some resonance with audiences. This was the case particularly in *The Shop Girl*, where audiences were not just department store customers seeing their expectations reflected on stage, but also “shop girls” with their own experiences and expectations. Owners balanced the needs of the business with the expectations of various constituencies, and there was not always a clear winner.

Just as hands-off interactions necessitated that sales assistants use the correct demeanor and address, so too were these important in stores with a more hands-on approach. In some stores, knowing specific customers by name, and addressing them appropriately, was part of the culture.¹⁰⁷ The focus on personalized service impacted all floor staff, whether one was a new hire or a department’s buyer. The expectation of personalized service included beliefs about how one should act toward the customer, who occupied, at least during the interactions, a higher social position. Class hierarchies were inescapable, even, or especially, in the department store paradise. The stringency with which the class rules were applied depended solely on the customer and could change at a moment’s notice. The strict upholding of class rank occurred in Germany as well, and upholding social divisions was good for business there, too.¹⁰⁸ Proper service, including deference, retained customers. Despite the democratization of space that department stores claimed to offer, and the open sales floors, the importance placed on proper

¹⁰⁵ Dam, et. Al, *The Shop Girl*, 38-39, 44, <https://archive.org/details/shopgirlmusical/f00cary/page/38/mode/2up>. The bulk of this song is missing from this source as pages 40-43 are missing.

¹⁰⁶ Böhme, *The Department Store*, 189, 230.

¹⁰⁷ Mueller, *Kaiser*, 54.

¹⁰⁸ Mueller, *Kaiser*, 65-66.

comportment based on one's position in society stresses the ways in which comportment was vital to successful employment in these stores.

At the smaller fashion stores, particularly tailors and dressmakers, the nature of customer service would have been much different. These businesses relied on personal relationships between owner and customer.¹⁰⁹ Cultivating the appropriate persona and maintaining it was an important part of the business. Although advertising was relatively cheap, many small businesses still relied on word of mouth.¹¹⁰ For those women who traveled to customers' homes to produce wardrobes, proper behavior was even more important. Not part of the household and an independent, skilled tradeswoman, dressmakers would have existed in tension while at a customers' home. The significance of interpersonal relationships to business success was part of the equation when skilled tradespeople opted for department store fabrication jobs over operating their own businesses.

Intangible Labor

One of the most significant differences between shop work, in stores of all sizes, and other industrialized labor is the element of emotional labor. If one had a storm cloud over one's head at a textile factory, it did not much matter. Failing to have the appropriate type of smile with a specific customer could end a shop girl's employment (and see her homeless). The customer annoyed about parcel wrapping made a complaint to the manager based on the employee's attitude. Despite the employee following store protocols for wrapping, this exchange could result in disciplinary action, including the potential of dismissal. The ability to play by the correct "feelings rules" dictated a shop assistant's life.¹¹¹ The different work experiences between Karen

¹⁰⁹ Inder, *Busks*, 227.

¹¹⁰ Inder, *Busks*, 119-120.

¹¹¹ Hochschild, *Managed Heart*, 56-75.

and Trude in *W.A.G.M.U.S* were, to Karen, caused by their different dispositions: where Trude was “like a gay little lizard” and “almost too happy” at the store, Karen was in “acute misery” at her situation.¹¹² Karen’s refusal to show her misery and unhappiness—her “tranquil endurance”—earned her the respect of the superintendent, but was only partially solved when she moved departments.¹¹³ The alienation of self caused by this practice is difficult to quantify, especially because records of shop workers’ internal lives, including after they leave the shop, are difficult to find.¹¹⁴

Despite the differences of work between factory and shop workers, they both experienced alienation. From Marx on, theorists have written about the ways in which capitalist, industrial production separates the worker from what they produce. However, less attention has been given to those producing and facilitating consumption (at least in terms of alienation). Included in the production of consumption are advertisers and window dressers.¹¹⁵ These people help normalize consumption, especially mass consumption, and create markets for products. Facilitating consumption, on the other hand, involves the transfer of products from creators to consumers. People who provided facilitation services were an essential part of the market, and a role played

¹¹² Böhme, *The Department Store*, 231.

¹¹³ Böhme, *The Department Store*, 231. Part of Karen’s misery was unrelated to either the work or her manager, rather it was caused by knowing Agnes, who was her new manager in the antiques department, was having an affair while engaged to one of the sons of the store owner—the same son whose fondness for both women was the basis for their presence in antiques to begin with.

¹¹⁴ Mullin looks at the “Working Girl” (as opposed to the New Woman), particularly through fiction, in terms of sexualization and “bumptious heterosexuality” (3). In her discussion of shop girls, she includes the idea that, “to social reformers, philanthropists, medical authorities, trade unionists, and legislators, shop-girls were abject personifications of the degradations of commerce. Shop work demanded, it was alleged, a peculiarly personal process of commodification, where young women’s looks, emotions, fertility, and future were sacrificed to their employers’ material interests. Shop work required an erosion of the self, the often fatal compromise of self in pursuit of sales” (14). These assumptions were often made without talking to sales assistants, so cannot fully support my discussion of alienation and affect, but show that other people have been thinking along similar lines. Katherine Mullin, *Working Girls: Fiction, Sexuality, and Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹¹⁵ Emily M. Orr, “‘The Age of Show Windows’ in the American Department Store: Techniques and Technologies of Attraction at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in *Architectures of Display: Department Stores and Modern Retail*, eds. Anca I. Lasc, Patricia Lara-Betancourt and Margaret Maile Petty (Routledge, 2018), 109-110; Miller, *Bon Marché*, 165-189.

by people at every level discussed here—from department stores owner through day maid in a front room shop. Mass produced goods did not just appear in homes nor did customers go to factories to buy goods. The reorganization of the marketplace into stores, particularly department stores, shifted *how* goods were consumed. Thus, retailing was not simply about selling but about linking sites of mass production with consumers, producing environments in which goods were consumed (including leisure), and even the goods themselves. Shop assistants, fabrication hands, and small business operators held the middle of this spectrum and were the reason stores succeeded. Shop assistants, however, were most at risk of alienation. Owners had started as tradesmen—skilled in their craft (the craft of selling)—but as workforces increased, they lost the day-to-day control of selling. Training for new employees shifted modes.¹¹⁶ Sales assistants at the turn of the century had very little connection to their customers or the products. The competition for sales and the nature of the workplace separated assistants from each other and, occasionally, their families and peers. Long working hours narrowed the scope of leisure pursuits, and little pay narrowed them further. For employees living-in there were even more constraints.

Emotional labor, and its related efforts, has mental and physical effects. Shop work included demanding physical regimes, but there were also physical effects of emotional labor. For the people living-in, the difficulty in maintaining a division between sales persona and non-work self would have been even greater than for those who returned to their homes and families at the end of the day. Alienation of the self as a result of emotional labor cannot be easily undone. Furthermore, it is not an easily identifiable process. When Marx described how skilled

¹¹⁶ Susan Porter Benson, “The Cinderella of Occupations: Managing the Work of Department Store Saleswomen, 1900-1940,” in *The Business History Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1981): 1-25; Busch-Petersen, *Leonhard Tietz*, 34; Paul Göhre, *Das Warenhaus* (Rütten & Loening, 1907), 67; Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 73; Mueller, *The Kaiser*, 54.

workers were being alienated from their products as a result of industrialization and mechanization, there was a tangible product which could be positively measured. The outcomes of emotional labor and increasingly deskilled retailing were, and are, intangible and often negatively measured. Quantitative sales numbers could show profits or inventory. In terms of measuring output, for retailing, profits and incomes are often the main measure and are positive (in that there is some *thing* to count above the previous total). Although inventories, also prevalent in retailing, are counts too, they ought to be lower (provided the count is taken before reordering or at the end of a year). Emotional labor, and the act of selling, are affective labors—they are difficult to name, measure, and describe. Creating an environment in which a customer is catered to or that lacks conflict, cannot solely be measured by sales or profits. Again, think of the parcel wrapping example: we know about the lost sale, the unhappy customer, and, perhaps, part of the assistant's response to the situation. We do not know, however, the long-term effects of this situation on the assistant or the number of times this type of situation happened.

Leveraging Aesthetics and Comportment to Assistants' Benefit

The reverse side of the onus of meeting standards and requirements is the way in which they helped the aspirations of employees. One of the main draws to shop work, for both sales assistants and fabrication hands, was the potential to increase one's social position. The pathway to a middle-class life opened by shop work did not require the same skills as the other occupational pathways. Those who could meet the standards had an advantage: women from lower-middle-class homes would have been better able to conform to requirements, including those of conduct and speech. Along with literacy and numeracy, these would have been a product of compulsory schooling where children were socialized to social norms.¹¹⁷ For working-class

¹¹⁷ In Britain, in 1876, schooling was compulsory to age ten, and from 1893 to age eleven (F. M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (Harvard University Press, 1988), 81).

women, presenting the correct image required more work but also helped those who wanted to enter the middle class to do so. Thus, there are two ways of looking at class presentation (which is what “proper” aesthetics and comportment were): as part of an individual’s habitus, requiring different types of capital, and their deployment or as a performance.

To climb the class ladder required individuals to leverage different types of capital.¹¹⁸ Financial capital was important to maintain some level of respectability, but for this endeavor, social capital could be more important; individuals had to have the skills and knowledge of how to belong in middle-class environments. For those born into the middle class, whether as part of the traditional middle class or as part of the newer lower middle class, these skills, behaviors, and attitudes would have been learned as children. In Sheffield, Dorothy Tindall needed to find employment when her father decided to leave the city. There was some family history of working in the distributive trades that evolved to department stores. Thus, she found work at T. B. & W. Cockayne, where she lived-in. Dorothy had the skills to work successfully in the store until 1912, when she married a dentist, which was a successful outcome.¹¹⁹ They would have been socialized to particular worldviews, expectations, and manners.

For those of the upper working class, hoping to enter the middle class through work in a new field, the ability to learn and deploy those same skills, behaviors, and attitudes determined success. Of course, all of this was easier with economic capital. Dressing to fit middle-class

In Germany, schooling remained largely the remit of local communities until the early twentieth century. Therefore, most children attended religious school (Marjorie Lamberti, *State, Society, and the Elementary School in Imperial Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1989), 3-12). For more on the role of schools in socializing children see: Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, trans. G.M. Goshgarian (Verso, 2014).

¹¹⁸ This discussion relies on Bourdieu’s theory of habitus and capital. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

¹¹⁹ Alison Darby, conversation with author, SA, September 10, 2022; Census of England and Wales 1901, RG 13/4376 ED 25 page 14, accessed at SA; Census of England and Wales 1911, Registration district 510, Subdistrict 1, ED 22, “Messrs. T.B. & W. Cockayne Limited, accessed at SA.

fashions and living respectably were not available to those living in penury, nor were they thinkable. If we recall Miss Mathers from the previous chapter—hired at John Walsh at a salary of eight shillings per week, excluding commissions—and consider the prices listed in the sale advertisements around the same time, we can see how financial capital needed to be supplemented by other types of capital. For a new spring outfit, including just the blouse, jacket, and skirt, she would have needed to spend roughly 40s.¹²⁰ One leisure outfit could easily cost five weeks of pay, but likely more as Miss Mathers needed to pay for accommodation, food, and other, more vital, necessities. While it was uncommon for women to replace whole wardrobes at one time, it is not unreasonable to suppose the outer parts of a wardrobe could all need to be replaced simultaneously. Many women, however, remade pieces, especially jackets, where they could, and other pieces, like skirts, could function across many years. Shop assistants had access to information about fashions before women working in other fields and could strategically deploy this knowledge to their benefit. However, dressing the part was only part of the story. For those who could make some claims to middle-class standing, cementing those claims was a matter of acting like one belonged where one was.

If we think about class as a performance, we can think about the slippages between class for those at the margins. Part of the correct performance of class required the correct performance of gender according to that class. To be intelligible as part of the middle class, regardless of position within it, aspirants had to be perceived as viable members of that class. They had to dress, act, and speak as though they belonged. For married women, work outside of the home could make or break class standing. Marriage ended the possibility of department store

¹²⁰ *Sheffield Independent*, 27 January 1900, 1, GPSBLN. This total is based on adding the costs of lower end options, including the jacket and skirt sold as a set and a ready-made blouse. None of this includes accessories or underclothing, both of which needed to be replaced more frequently.

work for many women, but some continued to need the income. The most successful marriages resulted in women no longer needing paid work (the continuation of domestic labor is another discussion). Some women became employed in their husband's businesses, whether they had worked in shops before their marriage or at an earlier time in it. For example, in the 1911 census, Sarah Turner was officially listed as "assisting in the business" alongside her two sons. The business in question was the draper shop of her husband, Charles A. Turner, on Attercliffe Road.¹²¹ Family-run shops provided the cultural capital of the old middle class even as the world changed around them. For other British women, true middle-class status only came through the loss of paid employment. This was potentially different in Germany, where many women whose husbands were skilled tradesmen or part of the new class of secretarial and office workers. For these women, who could work from or near the home, including in small wares shops, the documentation of paid work in directories shows the material benefits of work and claiming an occupation. While some women likely faced disapprobation for engaging in paid work, the significant number of women listed undermines many aspects of this. Christine Böhle, Eleonor Brandt, Maria Breitgoff, Frau Jakob Cöllen, Ida Depenheuer, and Julie Dick were employed in various elements of clothing and accessory fabrication or retailing in Cologne in 1901. All six were listed at the same address as their husbands, who worked as a railway driver, railway master, company manager, postal clerk, locksmith, and shoemaker, respectively.¹²² The last two were occupations with long histories, but the others were relatively new additions to the middle classes. Whether married women worked was a component of determining the class position of

¹²¹ 1911 Census of England and Wales, s.v. "Charles Albert Turner," District 510 sub-district 7 ED 11, FindMyPast.co.uk (accessed at SA). There are few records of Sarah before her marriage to Charles.

¹²² Ant. Carl Greven, *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk* (Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1901), II Theil, 47, 56, 59, 80, 95, 96.

an individual and a family, but it was not the only, or even most significant, factor. A final element of class performance was home address, and the ways in which domicile conveyed social position.

For fashion retailing workers on the margins or borders between classes and industries, fitting in to one world or another was harder. Knowing when to deploy which tactics, behaviors, or knowledges required an individual to be savvy. For a young woman working in a department store, being able to don the trappings of middle-class respectability was important to maintain employment but is not the end of her life. Class presentation becomes a method for survival regardless of aspirations for advancement. Trickle-down fashions or aping the look of one's "betters" blocks out the agency of many individuals. Fashions and norms needed to be accepted to have power over people and groups. For some people, adopting middle-class affectations helped them cement or improve their own positions. In *W.A.G.M.U.S.*, Agnes Matrei disdains her family's low social position and seeks to separate herself from them and improve her own station. Her relationship with Frederich Müllenmeister provides her this elevation, and access to the resources to perform it. However, Frederich, at least initially, likes her family and generally approves of their outlook. As time passes, neither is happy with the other and their relationship ends. Agnes ends up married to a shop owner with some of the trappings of a class higher than she started, but her health has been ruined.¹²³ This fictional representation of class aspirations and the fraught process of making them a reality provides an understanding of how success was measured by larger communities. Agnes' fate could have also served as a warning for those who might have dreamed of increasing their status. For many of the women in the real world, it was more important to claim lower middle-class status than to aspire to the upper middle class or

¹²³ Böhme, *The Department Store*, 444-445.

attain the levels of success achieved by owners. Distinctions from the working classes had tangible social benefits and were worth the labor that shop employment demanded.

Conclusion

Department stores and the shopping districts they anchored were central parts of the late nineteenth century environment for seeing and being seen. Their focus on display and, frequently, selling the middle-class lifestyle prioritized the visual elements of life. Between behavior and appearance, how one looked and acted in the world of the department store, determined whether one could claim to be part of respectable society. This was true not only for customers but also for employees. Female shop assistants were the most subject to these norms and beliefs. Either part of the lower middle class already or seeking to become part of that class, female shop assistants worked on the borders between different sartorial and behavioral regimes. Whether they had class aspirations or were simply trying to avoid slipping down the class ladder, shop girls had to avoid customers who felt that they were making pretensions to a higher status than they could claim. However, too far in the other direction could lead to condemnation as part of the working class or as vulgar or disreputable. General public opinion was ambivalent about department stores, but a great deal of concern was proclaimed for the morals of women employed in them, particularly about sex and sexuality. Whether these concerns, and others, were backed by a majority of public opinion is less clear. Like the organizations of German small business owners railing against department stores, detractors were loud. This did not stop people from shopping in department stores, or looking at their windows, or attending events they put on. Nor did the clamoring dissuade women from being employed in department stores and seeing this employment positively.

Calling for specific traits or aesthetics shows owners' efforts to promote a specific look to their stores. Taste, style, and fashion were all important considerations to middle-class values by the end of the nineteenth century. Surroundings should be clean, orderly, and beautiful. Belongings had moral qualities and reflected not only the class of the owner but also their respectability.¹²⁴ It is only logical that this would encompass workers in department stores. For example, the new apprentice at G. H. Hovey in the autumn of 1899 was required to be "tall," with a "good figure" and "of good address."¹²⁵ She needed to be a pleasant addition to her surroundings, for lacking a good figure or mode of address would disrupt the environment owners wanted to present. Employment advertisements were written with an ideal employee in mind. How that employee was described in the advertisements shows us the ways in which priorities of managers and owners shifted depending on the job to be filled.

Department store employees lived and were socialized to the norms of a highly classed society. These norms made demands on both behavior and beauty. Particularly for women working as sales assistants, proper comportment was vital to keeping one's job. Behavior was regulated through rules, the ever-watchful eye of management, peer pressure, and customers' expectations. Posted and orated rules within shops regularly reminded employees of various requirements, both in the physical tasks of retailing and in the creation of an affective environment. Pressure from management, peers, and customers to conform to expectations imposed an unwritten set of rules on shop employees, but these were the social rules of which virtually everyone was aware and participated in the enforcement. Failure to meet requirements was punished by fines, dismissal, or ostracization. The importance of aesthetics to department stores and their claims to middle-class identity were a central part of the whole business

¹²⁴ Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: the British and Their Possessions* (Yale University Press, 2006), xi.

¹²⁵ *Sheffield Independent*, 2 October 1899, 2, GPSBLN.

endeavor. Female assistants were subject to the beauty standards of their societies just as they were to the behavioral standards. Not conforming to these could prevent a woman from getting a job in the first place. Performing the proper shop girl was an essential part of department store work.

Adhering to aesthetic and comportment standards was part of shop assistants' paid employment. Meeting, maintaining, and enforcing standards took effort in addition to that described in the previous chapter. Moreover, adherence beyond the confines of work provided shop employees of all types access to cultural and social capital to make larger social claims to status and position. The type of labor assistants and fabrication hands were employed to do, including its location in the modern department store, plus the access to refinement and respectability, was highly valued, despite the potentially poor pay, limited social landscape, and possibility of ruin. This all combined to provide shop assistants the ability to successfully claim and promote a lower-middle-class identity.

Epilogue

In the summer and autumn of 2022, only three of the businesses discussed in this study were still operating. In Cologne, the department stores Galeria Kaufhof stands where Leonhard Tietz had its flagship Hohe Straße store and Galeria Karstadt trades on Breite Straße where Carl Peter's once was. The current businesses evolved over the second half of the twentieth century and are now owned by the same corporation, although their origins, amalgamations, and experiences under National Socialism varied. None of the other businesses in this study are recognizable in the present. In Sheffield, only one of the businesses central to this study remains open. Atkinsons, on the Moor, has been in the same location since its opening in the 1870s. The current building dates from after the Second World War, but the business remains independently owned and run by the Atkinson family. Every other independent department store in Sheffield was bought by a larger corporation during the twentieth century, and, by 2022, all had closed. The largest were bought as the result of the economic situation facing Britain after the First World War or the hardships brought on by the destruction of the Second World War, during which almost all were destroyed in the Blitz. Finally, while some closed before 2019, the last, John Lewis (formerly, and in this study, Cole Brothers) closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The city also has a Marks & Spencer, which is not part of this study and its status as a department store has been debated. Both Cologne and Sheffield have lively city centers, with many shops and shoppers, all employing seas of assistants. This study focused our attention to the turn of the twentieth century and the people living and shopping in fashion retailing businesses as they were coalescing and before the changes wrought by other modernizing forces.

At the turn of the twentieth century, customer service was at its very beginning. What would become the service industry over time, particularly after the Second World War, was just

beginning and the shape it would take was under contention. Through changes in scale and scope, fashion retailing included everything from front room dressmakers to giant stores with a dozen departments. Alongside the industrialization of the creation of the consumer goods sold in these stores was the industrialization of their very selling and consumption. Fashion retailing featured industrialized workplaces within industrialized economies. Workers in stores of all sizes needed to make sales and meet deadlines whether the products were mass-produced or finished or completely bespoke.

The very spaces of fashion retailing changed alongside its practices. While some businesses continued to operate in modest settings, such as front rooms, larger businesses expanded into neighboring properties, absorbing local trades into the department stores. Consolidating multiple departments under one roof resembled markets, but their enclosure and concentration under a single owner or company created businesses of scale. Within the large stores, divisions of space reciprocally created and were created by social understandings of who belonged in which spaces. Interiors were divided between genders and classes. The people most subject to these metaphorical, and sometimes literal, walls were store employees. In English stores, which continued housing employees into the twentieth century, the division of space and how those spaces were built is more concrete. Sales floors and show rooms were increasingly open, airy, and well-lit, while back-of-house, staff quarters remained walled-in, claustrophobic, and dim. Despite being at the top of the building, as were those in John Walsh's 1899 store, staff spaces were in the shadows of the brilliantly lit customer spaces.

Women were vital to the successful operations of stores of every size. Women worked in all aspects of those businesses. While they were prevented from owning the largest stores, scores of women owned and operated small businesses in Sheffield and Cologne. They also worked as

sales assistants, fabrication hands, and servants in department stores. As employees, women's work not only made goods and put them into the hands of shoppers but made an environment in which shopping was pleasant. The manual tasks of cleaning, creating, and selling all involved various levels of skill and had physical ramifications for the people doing the work. The intangible tasks, like presenting the ideal shop girl and creating the affective mood of leisured shopping, were just as important to successful retailing and entailed labor in and of themselves. Thus, fashion retailing involved working women in multiple fields as more than simply "shop girls."

Shop employment found a place in the public imagination almost exclusively as work done by sales assistants. The nature of this work was assumed by the general public to be non-manual, ignoring the difficulty of standing and serving for a whole day and the likelihood that most assistants had to lift and carry goods. In the years before World War One, there were some efforts at systematic training of selling skills, despite the recognition that teaching selling was difficult. These programs were especially popular in the interwar period. Furthermore, the limited understanding of shop work as only sales erases the work of fabrication hands, who created, altered, and finished goods sold in the stores and delivered to customers' homes. Both sales and fabrication jobs were held by women and men. The feminization of sale, which took place over the course of the final decades of the nineteenth century, particularly had wide-reaching consequences for the social understanding of customer service and for the men who were employed as sales assistants at the time. Both fabrication and sales held aspects of social and cultural capital that appealed to potential workers and had benefits for the women who increasingly sought employment in them. It was this social and cultural capital that allowed workers to claim lower-middle-class status regardless of their financial situation.

Finally, social understanding of shop work as only sales and fabrication erases from view the work done by servants. Every store needed physical spaces to be cleaned, stores where employees lived-in needed back-of-house spaces cleaned and meals cooked, and front-room businesses required all of the above. Servants did this work. Servants and their work exist in the shadows of the bright lights of department stores. Servants' work was overlooked at the time, especially in the advocacy by English organizations for the elimination of living-in, and has been overlooked in the historiography. Further study of servants, particularly in businesses, is required for a better understanding of servants and their lives and the role that women played in doing this work.

We must recognize the industrialized nature of these women's work to expand our knowledge of the origins of customer service and the nature of borderland class identity. First, extending the history of customer service to the nineteenth century when it was coalescing into a solid form allows us to see which elements were innovations of a new method of retailing and which were the continuation of earlier types of retailing. This period saw the feminization of the retailing workforce, which continued into the twentieth century. Interrogating how this happened destabilizes the commonsense nature of feminized customer service. Second, shop work provided women on the borderlands of the middle and working classes access to social and cultural capital that they could leverage to improve or stabilize their social position. Shop work was considered respectable employment, but did not have the barriers to access, caused by education, found in nursing, teaching, or clerking.

We all think we know what department stores and fashion shops are. These days, going into a department store conjures memories of the stores of our youths. Fashion retailing is yet again changing. Feeling the impacts of fast fashion, online shopping, just-in-time delivery, and

the COVID-19 pandemic, many fashion retailing stores across Europe and North America are struggling. A new generation of skilled craftspeople continue to make ends meet through online shops and social media, just as their predecessors worked out of front rooms and marketplaces. The major conglomerates of the twentieth century struggle alongside the independently owned stores, and no one seems to know how to combat or embrace the shift to online. As shoppers, we visit stores with wide open spaces—strategically made to cover the lack of goods rather than to showcase the amount of space designated for shopping—in city centers and shopping malls that feature empty storefronts, where small businesses once traded.

This is not to bemoan the loss of some “traditional way of life.” Rather, it is to raise questions about the invisibility of retailing labor as it becomes ever easier to shop, and we become further removed from the workers fulfilling our desires. Sales assistants still work in department stores, many of whom continue to be women. They continue to work to create an affective environment for shoppers to enjoy. They are supported by masses of anonymous workers, fulfilling and packing orders, unloading and stocking shelves, and facilitating the transportation of mass-produced goods from the point of production into our homes. The physicality and location of shopping have changed, and, for many, the bright lights of window displays now emanate from computers not buildings. Regardless, masses of laborers remain in the shadows.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

1841 Census of England.

1851 Census of England and Wales, HO 10.

1861 Census of England and Wales, RG 9.

1871 Census of England and Wales, RG 10.

1881 Census of England and Wales, RG 11.

1891 Census of England and Wales, RG 12.

1901 Census of England and Wales, RG 13.

1911 Census of England and Wales.

The Bookman

Early Closing Record (Sheffield)

Kölner Lokal-Anzeiger.

Kölnische Zeitung.

Sheffield Independent.

Sheffield Telegraph.

Billing, Hermann. *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 1. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911,
<http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201266>. mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische
Universität München.

Billing, Hermann. *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 2. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911,
<http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201267>. mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische
Universität München.

Billing, Hermann. *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 3. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911,
<http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201268>. mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische
Universität München.

- Billing, Hermann. *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss 4. OG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201269>. mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität München.
- Billing, Hermann. *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss EG*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201263>. mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität München.
- Billing, Hermann. *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Keller*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201265>. mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität München.
- Billing, Hermann. *Warenhaus L. Tietz - Grundriss Souterrain*. Kaufhäuser & Handel, 1911, <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1201264>. mediaTUM Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität München.
- Bondfield, Margaret. *A life's work*. Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1948.
- Bondfield, Margaret G. "Conditions Under which Shop Assistants Work," *The Economic Journal* 9, no. 34 (1899): 278-279, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2956822>.
- Böhme, Margarete. *The Department Store: A Novel of To-Day [W.A.G.M.U.S.]*. Translated by Ethel Colburn Mayne. D. Appleton and Company, 1912.
- Cassau, Theodor Otto. *The Consumers' Co-operative Movement in Germany*. Translated by J.F. Mills. Macmillan Company, 1925.
- Champaneri, Sangeeta. "Cole Brothers 1847-1997," 1997, 6080M, local studies miscellaneous papers, Sheffield Local Studies Library, Sheffield, UK.
- Cockayne, "Insurance: Staff," SY492/B8/1, SA; 1901 Census of England and Wales, Sheffield, UK, RG13/4362 #3 ED 15 page 17, FindMyPast.co.uk, accessed via Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.
- Cole Brothers, "150th Anniversary 1847-1997", 1997, MP 5045M, Miscellaneous Papers, Sheffield Local Studies Library, Sheffield, UK.
- Dam, H. J. W., Ivan Caryll, Adrian Ross, and Lionel Monckton. *The Shop Girl: Musical Farce*. Hopwood & Crew, 1895. <https://archive.org/details/shopgirlmusicalf00cary/page/n5/mode/2up>.
- Evans, Daniel. "Daniel Evans, milliner, of George Street, Sheffield," 1907, MD1393 page 48, MD1392-1399 – Daniel Evans, Milliner, of George Street, Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

“The Fiftieth Milestone - John Walsh Ltd., High Street, Sheffield”, 1925, SY492/B22/3, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield City Archives, Sheffield, UK.

Flockton & Son, “Angel Street, Sheffield plans,” 1896, CA206/2144b-f, Sheffield City Council, Planning Department, Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

Flockton, Gibbs & Flockton, “High Street, Sheffield – J Walsh – Plans”, 1896, CA206/2649, CA 206 Sheffield City Council, Planning Department, Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

Göhre, Paul. *Das Warenhaus*. Rütten & Loening, 1907.

Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk*. Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1896.

Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend köln u.d. eingemeindeten Vororte, sowie für die Umgebung, besonders Mülhem am Rhein und Kalk*. Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1897.

Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Kiehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mu4lheim am Rhein und Kalk*. Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1898.

Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk*. Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1899.

Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk*. Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1900.

Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend: Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk*. Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1901.

Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk*. Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1902.

- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für die Stadtgemeinde Köln, umfassend Köln und die Vororte Bayenthal, Deutz, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Nippes, Riehl, Sülz, Zollstock u.s.w. sowie für die Umgebung, besonders: Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1903.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1904.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1905.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1906.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1907.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1908.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1909.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1910.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1911.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1912.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgebung insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein und Kalk.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag Ant. Carl Greven, 1913.
- Greven, Ant. Carl. *Greven's Adreßbuch für Köln und Umgegend, insbesondere auch Mülheim am Rhein.* Greven's Kölner Adreßbuch-Verlag, 1914.
- Hallsworth, Joseph and Rhys J. Davies. *The Working Life of Shop Assistants: A Study of Conditions of Labour in the Distributive Trades.* The National Labour Press, 1910.
- Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood.* Kelly & Co, Limited, 1893.
- Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood.* Kelly's Directories, Ltd., 1883.

Kelly's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham and Neighbourhood. London: Kelly & Co, Limited, 1893.

Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft. *50 Jahre Leonhard Tietz 1879-1929*. Leonhard Tietz Aktiengesellschaft, 1929.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. "The Communist Manifesto." In *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Edited by Robert C. Tucker. W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.

Marx, Karl. "Capital, Volume One." In *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd edition. Edited by Robert C. Tucker. W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.

The Post Office London Directory for 1890. Comprising, amongst other information official, street, commercial, trades, law, court, parliamentary, postal, city & clerical conveyance & banking directories, 91st edition (Kelly & Company, 1890).

Praga, Mrs. Alfred. *Appearances: How to Keep them up on a Limited Income*. John Long, 1899.

"Report of the Lancet Sanitary Commission on Sanitation in the Shop, Part II," *The Lancet*, 12 March 1892, 601.

Stephens & Mackintosh, "Business street map of Sheffield," c. 1900, S41L, Map cabinet, Sheffield Local Studies Library, Sheffield, UK.

T. B. & W. Cockayne, "Insurance: Staff (list of numbers of employees in each department with total salaries (compiled for insurance purposes))," ca. 1900, SY492/B8/1, SY492 – Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (formerly T. B. & W. Cockayne), Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

T. B. & W. Cockayne, "Trade accounts, profit and loss accounts and balance sheets (half-yearly)," August 12, 1898, SY 492/B5/51, SY492 – Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (formerly T. B. & W. Cockayne), Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Incorporation", 1957, SY492/B1/1a, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Insurance: Staff (list of numbers of employees in each department with total salaries (compiled for insurance purposes))," 1900, SY492/B8/1, Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (Formerly T.B. and W. Cockayne, Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Rules to be observed in the establishment of Messrs. T.B. & W. Cockayne," n.d., MP54L, Miscellaneous papers, Sheffield Local Studies Library, Sheffield, UK.

T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Trade accounts, profit and loss accounts and balance sheets (half-yearly)," SY492/B5/67-82, SY492 – Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (formerly T. B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

T.B. & W. Cockayne, "Trade accounts, profit and loss accounts and balance sheets (half-yearly)," SY492/B5/50-82, SY492 – Schofields (Yorkshire) Ltd., Department Store, Angel Street, Sheffield (formerly T. B. and W. Cockayne), Sheffield Archives, Sheffield, UK.

The Milliner and Dressmaker and Warehouseman's Gazette. Adolphe Goubaud and Son, 1870.

The Sheffield and Rotherham Red Book and Almanack. Pawson and Brailsford, 1893.

The Sheffield and Rotherham Red Book and Almanack. Pawson and Brailsford, 1902.

UK Parliament, *Second Reading*, "Shop Hours Bill (no. 26)," House of Commons, 24 February 1892, London, UK, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1892/feb/24/shop-hours-bill-no-26>.

UK Parliament, *Second Reading*, "Shops Bill," House of Commons, 31 March 1911, London, UK, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1911/mar/31/shops-bill>.

Warman, C.R. "City of Sheffield Historical Growth", ca. 1963, X615/9, X615 – South Yorkshire County, SA.

White's 1911, 653; *White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield*, 34th edition. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1912.

White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield, 32nd edition. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1910.

White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1911).

White's Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham and the parishes, townships, villages and hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield, 35th edition. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1913.

White's Directory of Sheffield Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield, 29th edition. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1907.

White's Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield, 25th edition. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1903.

White's Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield, 27th edition. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1905.

White's Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham and the Parishes, Townships, Villages and Hamlets within a Radius of Seven Miles from Sheffield, 28th edition. Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1906.

White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, and all the Parishes, Townships, Villages, and Hamlets within a radius of seven miles from Sheffield, for 1895-1896, 19th edition. William White, Limited, 1895.

William White, *White's General and Commercial Directory of Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, Chesterfield, and Worksop, and all the Parishes, Townships, and Villages within a Distance of Twelve miles from Sheffield as a Centre*. William White, 1897.

Zola, Émile. *The Ladies' Paradise*. Translated by Ernest Alfred Vizetelly. Hutchingson & Company, 1895.

Secondary Sources

Abrams, Lynn. *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia*. Routledge, 1992.

Adams, Carole Elizabeth. *Women Clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of Class and Gender*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Allen, Ann Taylor. *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800-1914*. Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Anderson, Margaret Lavinia. *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

"Atkinsons: Independent Sheffield Department Store Celebrates 150 years," *BBC News*, March 7, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-60647715>.

Auslander, Leora. *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France*. University of California Press, 1996.

Ayçoberry, Pierre. "Der Strukturwandel im Köner Mittelstand 1820-1850." In *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 1, no. 1 (1975): 78-98. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40185006>.

Baudrillard, Jean. "Modernity." In *Canadian Journal of Political Social Theory/ Revue canadienne de théorie politique et sociale* 11, no. 3 (1987): 63-72.

Beaujot, Ariel. *Victorian Fashion Accessories*. Berg, 2012.

Beckert, Sven. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. Vintage Books, 2014.

Beckett, John. "City Status in the United Kingdom." *History Today* 51, no. 11 (2001): 18-19.

- Benson, John and Gareth Shaw, eds. *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c. 1800-1914*. Leicester University Press, 1992.
- Berghahn, Volker. "Growth, Industrialization and Social Change." In *Nineteenth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1780-1918*, edited by John Breuilly. Arnold, 2001.
- Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Duke University Press, 2011.
- Biernacki, Richard. *The Fabrication of Labor: Germany and Britain, 1640-1914*. University of California Press, 1995.
- Blackbourn, David. "The German Bourgeoisie: an Introduction." In *The German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the social history of the German middle class from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century*, edited by David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans. Routledge, 1991.
- Blackbourn, David and Geoff Eley. *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany*. Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." Translated by Richard Nice. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by J. Richardson (Greenwood), 241-258, accessed via <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Brunn, Gerhard. "Die SPD im politischen Leben der Stadt Köln im Kaiserreich." *Geschichte in Köln* 35, no. 1 (1994): 105-115.
- Busch-Petersen, Nils. *Leonhard Tietz: Fuhrmannssohn und Warenhauskönig von der Warthe an den Rhein*. Hentrich & Hentrich, 2014.
- Canning, Kathleen. *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in German, 1850-1914*. University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Clark, Anna. *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class*. University of California Press, 1995.
- Cohen, Deborah. *Household Gods: The British and their Possessions*. Yale University Press, 2009.
- Confino, Alon. *The Nation As a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=0b95647e-af6d-39bf-8365-240db73ac649>.

Crossick, Geoffrey and Serge Jaumain, eds., *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850-1939*. Ashgate, 1999.

Crossick, Geoffrey ed. *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914*. Croom Helm, 1977.

Dallman, Pat. *The Story of Sheffield High Street from 16th Century to Modern Times*. ALD Design & Print, 2003.

Davidoff, Leonore and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, 3rd edition. Routledge, 2019.

Degen, John A. "The Evolution of 'The Shop Girl' and the Birth of 'Musical Comedy'," *Theatre History Studies* 7 (1987): 40-50.

Dickinson, Edward Ross. "The German Empire: An Empire?" *History Workshop Journal* Autumn, no. 66 (2008): 129-162. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbn028>.

Eley, Geoff. *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Vans, Richard J. *The German Working Class, 1888-1933: The Politics of Everyday Life*. (Crron Helm, 1982).

Eyben, Rosalind. "'The Thin Edge of the Wedge'? Tea-shop Waitresses, the British Press and the Women's Suffrage Movement," *Women's History Review* July 2023, 1-20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2023.2230407>.

Flanders, Judith. *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.

Fletcher, I.C., Laura Mayhall, and Philippa Levine, eds. *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation and Race*. Routledge, 2000.

Gorham, Deborah. *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*. Croom Helm, 1982.

Graham, Kelley. "Gone to the Shops": *Shopping in Victorian England*. Praeger, 2008.

Griffin, Emma. *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy*. Yale University Press, 2020.

Haggerty, Sherllyne. "Women, work, and the Consumer Revolution: Liverpool in the Late Eighteenth Century." In *A Nation of Shopkeepers: Five Centuries of British Retailing*, edited by John Benson & Laura Ugolini. I.B. Tauris, 2003.

- Harrison, Barbara. *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914*. Taylor & Francis, 1995.
- Harvey, Charles and John Press. "William Morris – Art and Idealism." *History Today* 46, no. 5 (May 1996): 15-21.
- Heblich, Stephan, Stephen J. Redding, and Hans-Joachim Voth. "The Story of Britain's Industrial Revolution: How Slavery Wealth Propelled Economic Growth," accessed March 8, 2025, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/research/centres/cage/news/02-02-24-the_story_of_britains_industrial_revolution_how_slavery_wealth_propelled_economic_growth/.
- Hey, David. *A History of Sheffield*. Carnegie Publishing, 1998.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, 20th Anniversary edition. University of California Press, 2003.
- Hosgood, Christopher P. "'Mercantile Monasteries': Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain." *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (July 1999): 322-352.
- Hosgood, Christopher P. "The 'Pigmies of Commerce' and the Working-Class Community: Small Shopkeepers in England, 1870-1914." In *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 439-460.
- Huffman, Joseph P. *The Imperial City of Cologne: From Roman Colony to Medieval Metropolis (19 B.C.-1125 A.D.)*. Amsterdam University Press, 2018.
- Hull, Isabel V. *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*. Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Humphries, Jane. *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Inder, Pam. *Busks, Basques and Brush-Braid: British Dressmaking in the 18th and 19th centuries*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020.
- Jackson, Alexander. "Football Coverage in the Papers of the *Sheffield Telegraph*, c.1890-1915." *International Journal of Regional & Local Studies* 5, no. 1(2009): 63-84.
- Lancaster, Bill. *The Department Store: A Social History*. Leicester University Press, 1995.
- Landes, David. *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*. Cambridge University Press, 1969.

- Lee, Robert. "'Relative Backwardness' and Long-run Development: Economic, Demographic and Social Changes." In *Nineteenth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1780-1918*, edited by John Breuilly. Arnold, 2001.
- Lerner, Paul. *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880-1940*. Cornell University Press, 2015.
- Lethbridge, Lucy. *Servants: A Downstairs View of Twentieth-century Britain*. Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Lidtke, Vernon L. *The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany 1878-1890*. Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Mayfield, Frank M. *The Department Store Story*. Fairchild Publications, Inc., 1949.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. Routledge, 1995.
- Mergel, Thomas. *Köln im Kaiserreich 1871-1918*. Greven, 2018.
- Miller, Michael. *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920*. Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Mueller, John F. *The Kaiser, Hitler and the Jewish Department Store*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.
- Pasdermajian, H. *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution and Economics*. Newman Books, 1954.
- Peiss, Kathy. "Charity Girls and City Pleasures." *OAH Magazine of History* July (2004): 14-16.
- Perry, David. *Victorian Sheffield in Advertisements*. Moss Valley Heritage, 1984.
- Pilbeam, Pamela M. *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789-191: France, Germany, Italy and Russia*. Lyceum Books, 1990.
- Porter Benson, Susan. "The Cinderella of Occupations: Managing the Work of Department Store Saleswomen, 1900-1940." *The Business History Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 1-25. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3114439>.
- Porter Benson, Susan. *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940*. University of Illinois Press, 1986.
- van Rahden, Till. *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925*. Translated by Marcus Brainard. University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

- Rappaport, Erika Diane. *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End*. Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Reagin, Nancy R. *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Reid, Caroline Oldcorn. "Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield." PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1976.
- Retallack, James. *Red Saxony: Election Battles and the Spectre of Social Democracy in Germany, 1860-1918*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Sandford, Mark. "What Makes a City?," November 14, 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/what-makes-a-city/>.
- Schmiechen, James A. *Sweated Industries and Sweated Labor: The London Clothing Trades, 1860-1914*. University of Illinois Press, 1984. <https://archive.org/details/sweatedindustrie0000schm/page/4/mode/2up>.
- Shapiro Sanders, Lise. *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920*. The Ohio State University Press, 2006.
- Steinbach, Susie L. *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 2nd ed. Routledge, 2017.
- Steinmetz, George. *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*. University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Shaw, Gareth. "The Content and Reliability of Nineteenth-Century Trade Directories." *Local Historian* 13, no. 4 (1978): 205-209.
- Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Vintage Books, 1966.
- van Eyll, Klara, "Stadtadressbücher als Quelle für Wirtschafts- und Sozialhistorische Forschung – Das Beispiel Köln." *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte/ Journal of Business History* 24, no. 3 (1979): 12-26. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40694674>.
- Walker, Richard A. "Is There a Service Economy? The Changing Capitalist Division of Labor." *Science & Society* 49, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 75-78. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402626>.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*. Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
- Weiss, Hadas. *We Have Never Been Middle Class*. Verso, 2019.

- Wertheimer, Jack. *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany*. Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Westphal, Uwe *Fashion Metropolis Berlin 1836-1939: The Story of the Rise and Destruction the Jewish Fashion Industry*. translated by Kristine Jennings. Seemann Henschel, 2019.
- Whitaker, Jan. *Service and Style: How the American Department Store Fashioned the Middle Class*. St. Martin's Press, 2006.
- Whitaker, Wilfred B. *Victorian and Edwardian Shopworkers: The Struggle to Obtain Better Conditions and a Half-Holiday*. Newton Abbot, UK: David & Charles, 1973.
- Wildenthal, Lora. *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*. Duke University Press, 2001).
- Wright Mills, C. *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*, 50th Anniversary edition. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Yonke, Eric. "The Problem of the Middle Class in German Catholic History: The Nineteenth-Century Rhineland Revisited." *The Catholic Historical Review* 88, no. 2 (2002): 263-280

APPENDIX A: Margarete Böhme's *W.A.G.M.U.S.* synopsis and characters

Margarete Böhme published *W.A.G.M.U.S.* in 1911, with the English translation published in 1912. The narrative follows the people associated with the fictional Müllenmeister department store and was set in Berlin. With dozens of characters and a complex narrative, this novel is similar to Émile Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* (*The Ladies' Paradise*). The thirty-year difference between the two novels is only remarkable in some details. A further comparison of the two narratives could discuss differences in national context and their salience to the experience of early department stores. This appendix introduces some of the main characters and their plotlines. There is also a general list of characters and their main attributes or decisions.

The story opens with Rita Nickelsen's death. Her artist husband, Thor, leaves their daughter, Karen, in the hands of family friend Mieze Meier. Thor soon dies as well. Karen is officially the ward of Ingwer Lynegaard. Mieze places Karen in the hands of Tina and Tobias Ribbeck, family of her business partner. When Lynegaard marries Erica von Reeren, Karen moves to their household and is desperately unhappy. She gains employment at Müllenmeister with the help of Mieze and continues to be unhappy. She is transferred to the new antiques department at the behest of Friedrich Müllenmeister, and she is happier there except for her connection to Agnes. At the end of the novel, Karen is nineteen and an object of interest for Friedrich. Throughout, she is a counterpoint to Agnes, and is presented as hard-working, honest, and modest.

Joshua Müllenmeister enlarges the business he inherited from his father and, on the occasion of his first marriage, changes his name to Müllenmeister (it had been Manasse) and converts to Christianity. Throughout the novel, he expands his store from the original premises and builds a new store (Elmas – Emporium Limited, Müllenmeister and Sons – is the translated

version of W.A.G.M.U.S.), in the contemporary architectural style. He has three children, Friedrich, Hermann, and Mimi. Friedrich starts the novel as a journeyman with romanticized notions of retailing and the world. He embarks on training in America, after which he returns to the business, and assumes more control over the new store. For much of the book he is engaged to Agnes Matrei, and after that relationship ends, his character comes to resemble his father's. Hermann begins the story during his military service and meets the Schillers and Ribbecks, two families of tradesmen. Hermann rejoins his father's business early in the novel, and becomes allies with Rosen, a manager at the store. Hermann is often at odds with his father, particularly once he begins his dalliance with Trude Schiller, including his financial support of her acting aspirations. Mimi, Joshua's daughter, reminds Joshua of his first wife. She spends much of the novel as a young socialite who dislikes that position. The general company assumes she will accept Rosen's marriage proposal when she turns eighteen, a plot favored by Hermann. She refuses Rosen and petitions her father to be involved with the business. He allows her to be, and during the opening of Elmas becomes acquainted with Arfst, the architect, and they end the novel engaged.

The Ribbeck family were neighbors of the original Manasse business. Tobias Ribbeck is a shoemaker who inherited the trade from his father in 1877. The Ribbecks took in Karen Nickelsen when her mother died, and her care was placed in the hands of Mieke Meier. Mieke's business partner was Frau Ribbeck's sister. Tobias dislikes department stores and often utilizes antisemitic rhetoric in his critic of Müllenmeister's business practices. He rejects multiple offers from Müllenmeister for compensation for buying the Ribbeck residence and for contracts for work. The Ribbeck family suffers immiseration, but whether that is due to the department store and mass production or to Tobias' rejection of change is unclear.

Mieze Meier, as mentioned, was friends with Rita and Thor Nickelsen and is engaged to Thor when Rita dies. She assumes care for Karen. She is a dressmaker and in business with Lisa Drinkmann, Tina Ribbeck's sister. When Lisa leaves the business, Mieze has to confront Lynegaard about Erica's debts; Lynegaard dies soon after. When Lynegaard dies, Karen goes to live with Mieze. Mieze is hired by Müllenmeister as a head in the ladies' dressmaking department. In the second half of the book, Mieze moves to an apartment to house the Matrei siblings, Tobias Ribbeck, Irmgard Presser (Agnes' niece), and Karen. Mieze later married Eduard Feldbergen.

The Schiller family are led by Ignaz Schiller, a fringe-maker, and friends of the Ribbecks. Ignaz has three children: Felix, Johannes, and Trude (Trudchen). Felix works at Müllenmeister in the silks department and is in a position to work his way up to management. Felix has pretensions to a modern, classy life rather than the modest life of his father. He begins a relationship with Ella Von Reeren. In trying to impress Ella, Felix gets involved with Frau Klebel's theft ring. He lodges with Klebel but his health deteriorates. When the ring is discovered, Felix kills himself. He is presented as a promising young man who was taken advantage of by a young woman obsessed with status and appearance.

Frau Klebel is introduced as a recurring shopper at Müllenmeister who takes an interest in the young assistants. She theft ring is discovered by Fräulein Henrietta Iversen. Iversen is first introduced as the head saleswoman in the ready-made department who was fired for her age. After speaking at a meeting about the conditions of sales assistants, she is rehired by Müllenmeister, who had attended the meeting. Her new position is as the shopwalker. Her first success is the Klebel ring, which, after Felix's suicide, shakes her. Friedrich amends the nature of the position, and she enjoys it more. The Klebel ring depended on the work of sales assistants

and goods packagers. The assistants would write only some of the items to be purchased on the bill and the unmarked goods would be packaged. Klebel had assistants in nearly all departments at Müllenmeister and at other stores in the city. She had a stockpile of stolen goods which she shipped to other cities and towns at a profit.

Characters & their relationships

- Rita Nickelsen: Karen's mother, dies in chapter 1
- Mieze (Marie) Meier: one of Karen's foster mothers; engaged to Thor Nickelsen; from Berlin; performed on a variety stage when she was young; owns a dressmaking shop, eventually employed by Müllenmeister; marries Eduard Feldbergen
- Thor Nickelsen: artist, from Denmark; dies in chapter 1
- Lisa Drinkmann: Mieze's business partner, ladies' tailor; eventually leaves the business
- Frau Tina Ribbeck: Karen's foster mother; Lisa's sister; has nervous depression after 3 daughters died
- Ingwer Lynegaard: artist; Karen's godfather & guardian; marries Erica von Reeren but doesn't really like her; dies in chapter 11
- Tobias Ribbeck: shoemaker, took over the business from his father in 1877; Karen's foster father; doesn't like department stores
- Israel Manasse: neighbor of Ribbeck; draper; bought the house he rented in and enlarged his business
- Joshua Müllenmeister: son of Israel Manasse; changes his name six months after marrying Mimi (Wilhelmina) Müllenmeister; children are Friedrich, Hermann, and Mimi; marries Henny and is unhappy with that
- Karen Nickelsen: Rita & Thor's daughter; foster daughter of the Ribbecks, Mieze, and Lynegaard; disliked by von Reerens when she lives with Lynegaard; starts work at Müllenmeister's; works in the antiques department with Agnes and knows about her affair; is 19 at the end of the book
- Tom Ribbeck: Tobias' son; has training as an architect
- Ignaz Schiller: a fringe-maker; father of Felix, Johannes, and Trude

- Felix Schiller: Ignaz's son, works at Müllenmeister; is 18 in chapter 4; is involved with Ella von Reeren; gets involved in the Klebel theft/shoplifting ring; kills himself upon the ring's discovery
- Johannes Schiller: Ignaz's son, in the military, Ribbeck's godson
- Trude [Trudchen] Schiller: Ignaz's daughter; employed in Müllenmeister and enjoys it; wants to be an actress; has a relationship with Hermann Müllenmeister who financially supports her acting aspirations
- Rosen: Managing Head of Departments at Müllenmeister, 31 in chapter 6; started at the store 6 years earlier as a salesman; allies with Hermann; wants to marry Mimi the younger; leaves the business after she rejects him
- Eduard Feldbergen: a manager at Müllenmeister, at post for 19 years in chapter 6; cousin to Mimi the elder, around 50; wants the antiques department, allies with Friedrich; later marries Mieke
- Mimi Müllenmeister: daughter of Joshua and Mimi; reminds Joshua of her mother; gets involved in the shop after she turns 18
- Ella von Reeren: daughter of Erica; has a romantic entanglement with Felix Schiller
- Erica von Reeren: rich but bad with money, marries Lynegaard, has an affair with Van Hoolten, leaves town; 38 in chapter 3
- Hermann Müllenmeister: meets the Schillers during his military service; has some sort of entanglement with Trude Schiller
- Henny Müllenmeister: Joshua's second wife, Erica von Reeren's sister, has an affair with Eduard Van Hoolten, separates from Joshua and leaves town
- Friedrich Müllenmeister: eldest son of Joshua and Mimi, 23 in chapter 6 (28 at the end); some law training; entered father's businesses as a volunteer/journeyman 6 months before events of chapter 5; infatuated with & engaged to Agnes Matrei for most of the book; goes to America for training; takes over Elmas; infatuated with Karen
- Agnes Matrei: first appears at the end of chapter 6, in the toy department; slender, pale, dark hair and eyes, smiles and blushes at Friedrich
- Eduard (Eddie) Van Hoolten: friend of Hermann Müllenmeister, son of Dr. Van Hoolten; has an affair with Henny Müllenmeister; 25 in chapter 7
- Dr. Van Hoolten: director & chief shareholder of X--- Bank; father of Eduard; friend of Erica Von Reeren/Lynegaard

- Irmgard Presser: Agnes' niece, Lotte's daughter; works at Müllenmeister's
- Lotte Presser: Irmgard's mother, Agnes and Hans' sister; embroideress from home, takes work from Müllenmeister; ill health; talks to Joshua about Agnes, starts some trouble
- Hans Matrei: Agnes and Lotte's brother; writer/editor; some kind of socialist
- Emanuel Tük: first buyer in Müllenmeister's linen department; loved Agnes from afar; well-to-do parents, owned property/could be independent, 8,000 marks/year, friend of Rosen
- Elias Bielefeldt: works in Müllenmeister's tailoring department; tried to woo Agnes; has an affair with Agnes; leaves Müllenmeister for Berolina, a small cooperative store; marries Agnes out of duty
- Fräulein Henrietta Iversen: head saleswoman in the ready-made department at Müllenmeister; fired for her age, speaks at a meeting about the conditions of sales assistants, rehired by Joshua to be a store-walker, uncovers theft ring, is shaken, Friedrich amends the work of the position and she enjoys it more.
- Frau Kelbel: an older woman of means, runs a city-wide/regional theft/shoplifting ring; is eventually caught by Frau Iversen
- Cornelius Arfst: architect of Elmas building; sees Agnes with Bielefeldt at the opening and sees Tük see them, later tells this to Friedrich and Joshua; becomes engaged to Mimi Müllenmeister
- Frau Ludwig: superintendent of the blouse department, a long-standing employee, hates Karen, is fired in chapter 20

APPENDIX B: Visualizations of Family Trees & Maps

All family trees were made with information from Censuses of England and Wales, accessed via FindMyPast.co.uk and AncestryLibrary.com. In the images, shapes with borders indicate individuals involved with the business. All maps were made with information from *White's Directories of Sheffield*, 1883-1914, and Censuses of England and Wales. The maps are available at <https://public.flourish.studio/story/3011683/>.

John Atkinson Family Tree

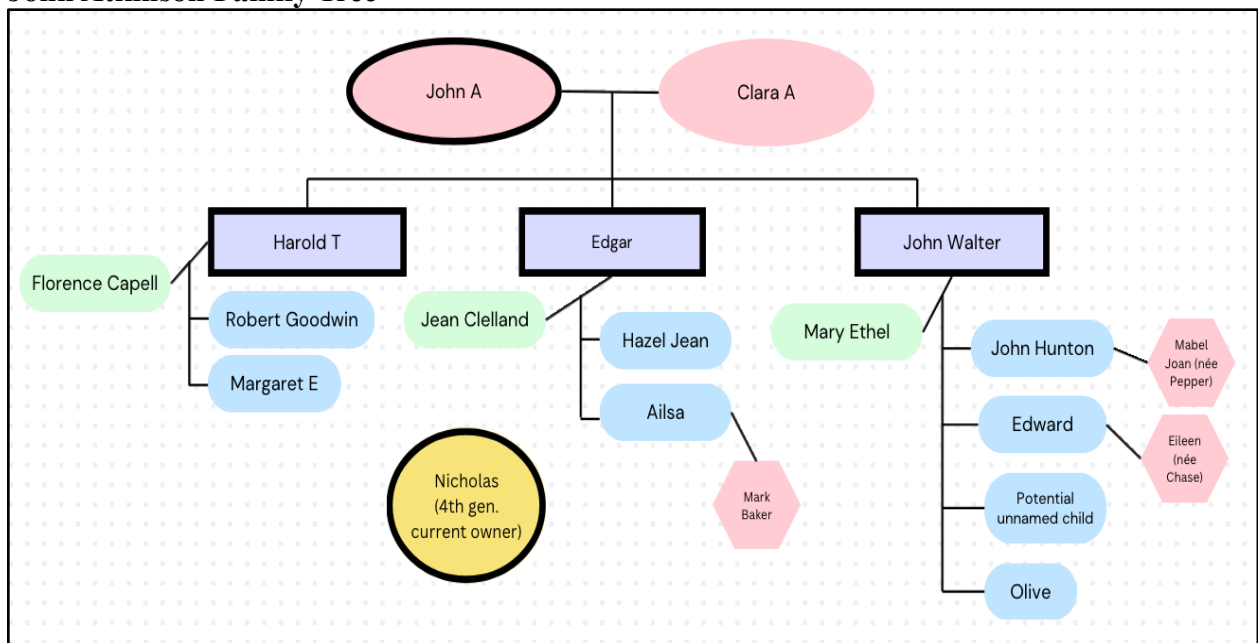


Figure 10: The family tree for the Atkinson family.

Cockayne Family Tree

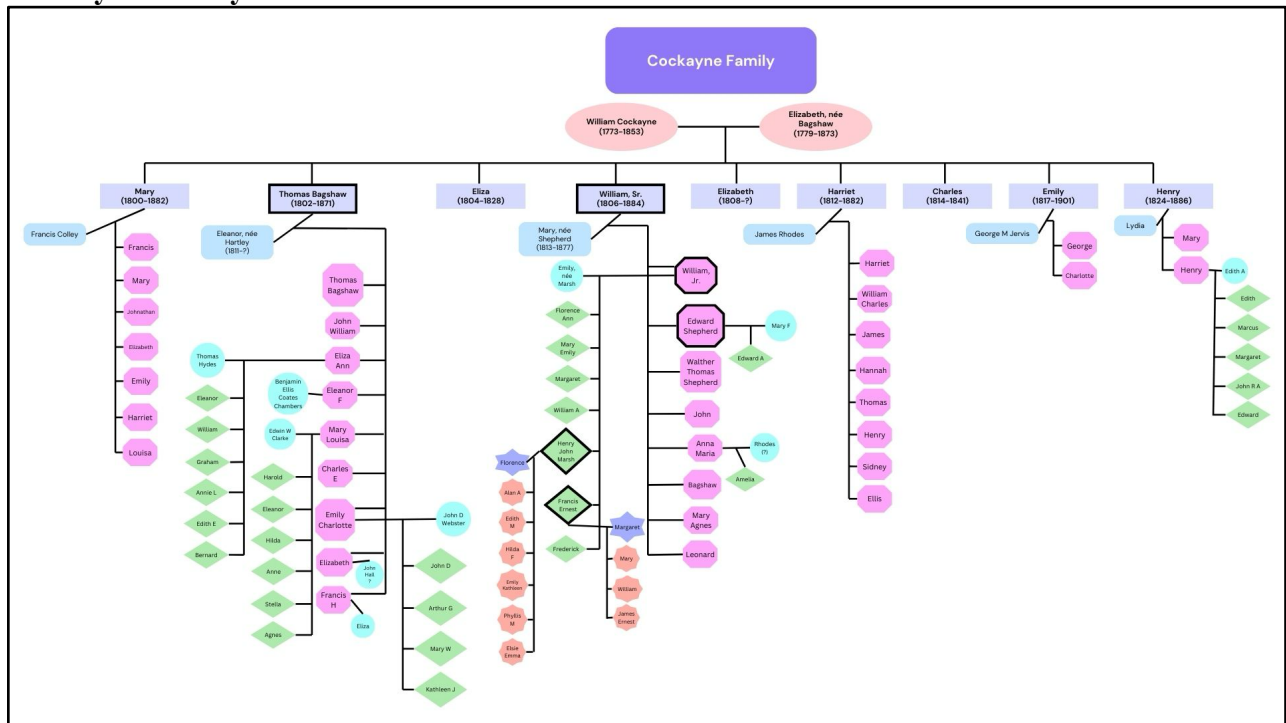


Figure 11: Cockayne Family tree.

Cole Family Tree

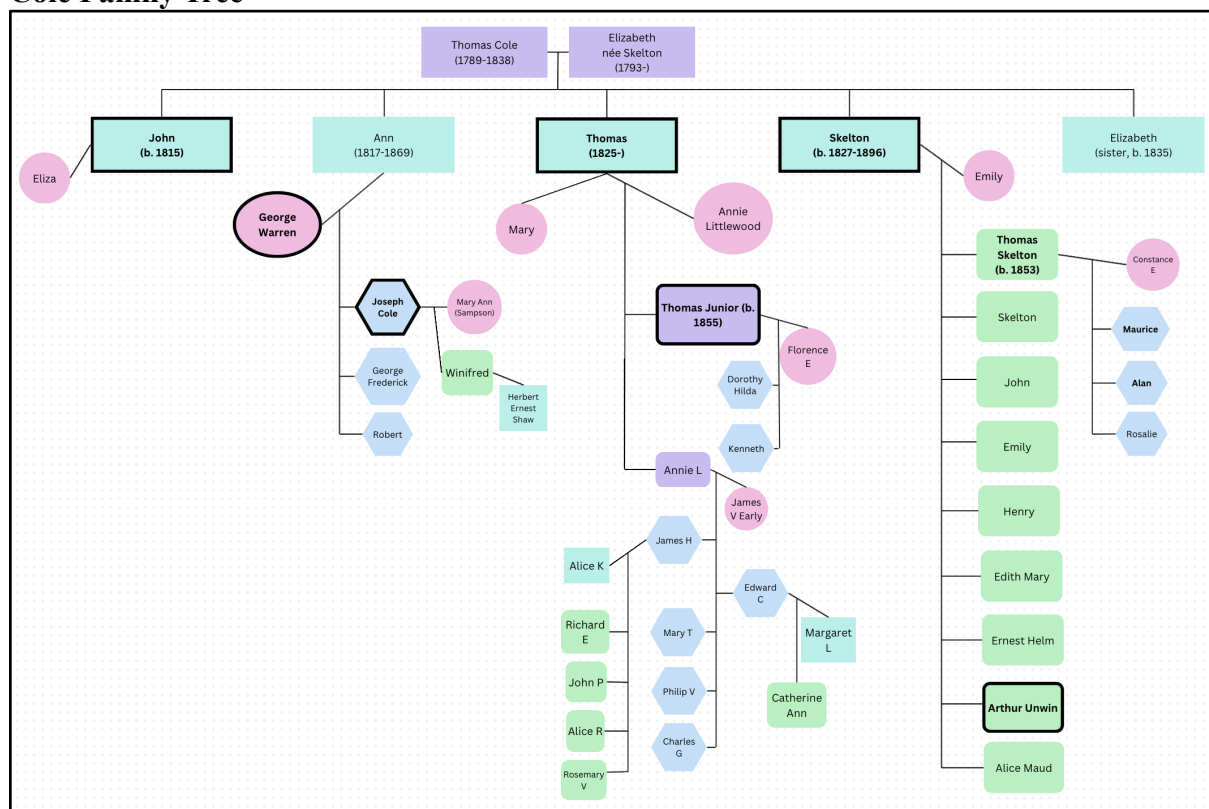


Figure 12: Cole Family Tree

Mansfield Family Tree

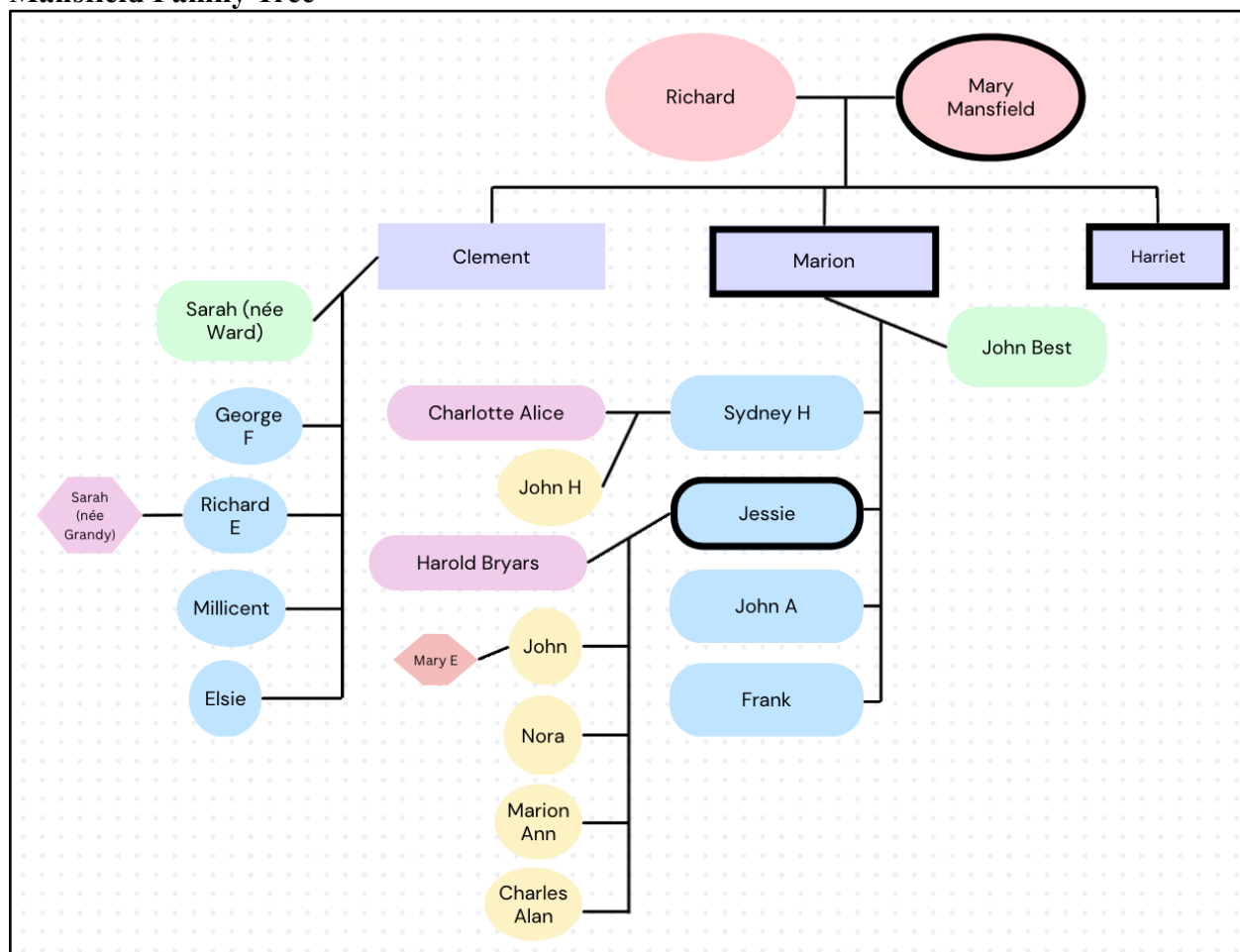


Figure 13: Mansfield family tree

Turner Family Tree

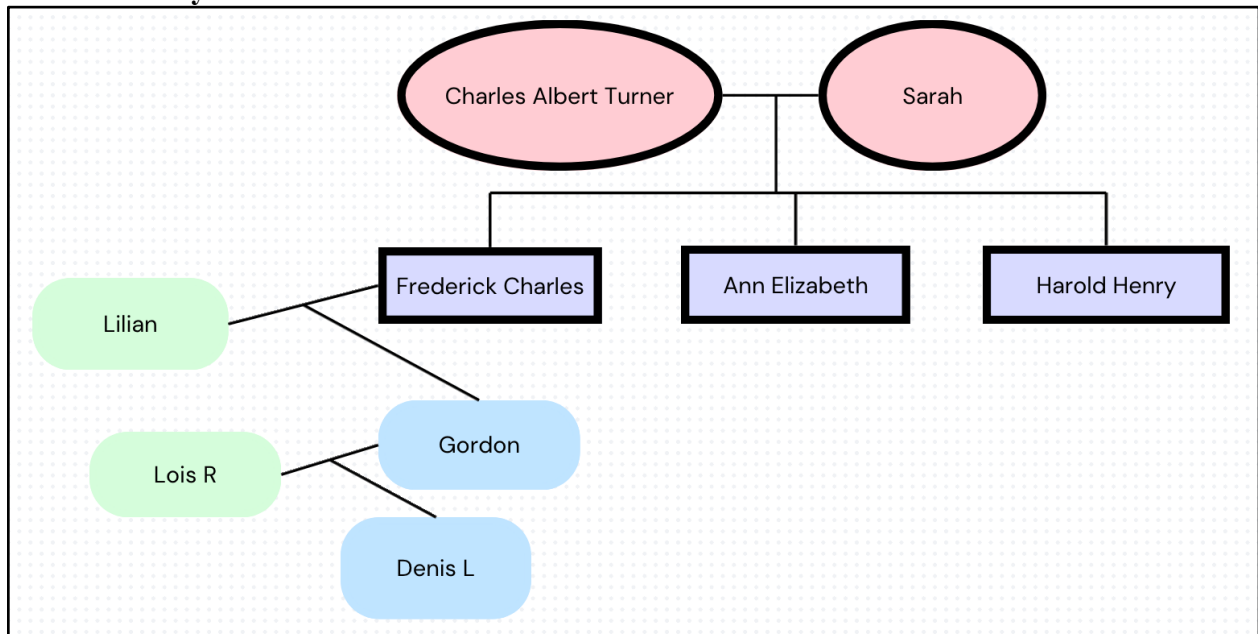


Figure 14: Turner family tree

Walsh Family Tree

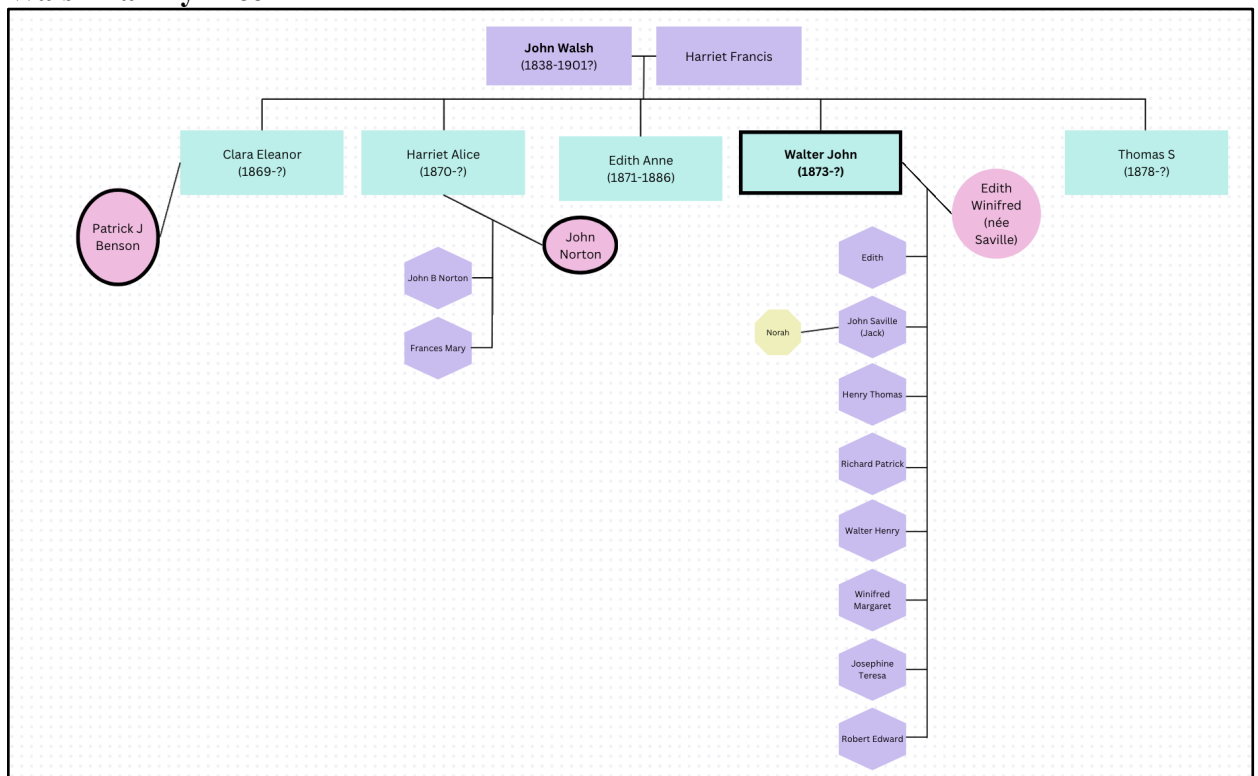


Figure 15: Walsh family tree

Cockayne Family Addresses, 1851-1911

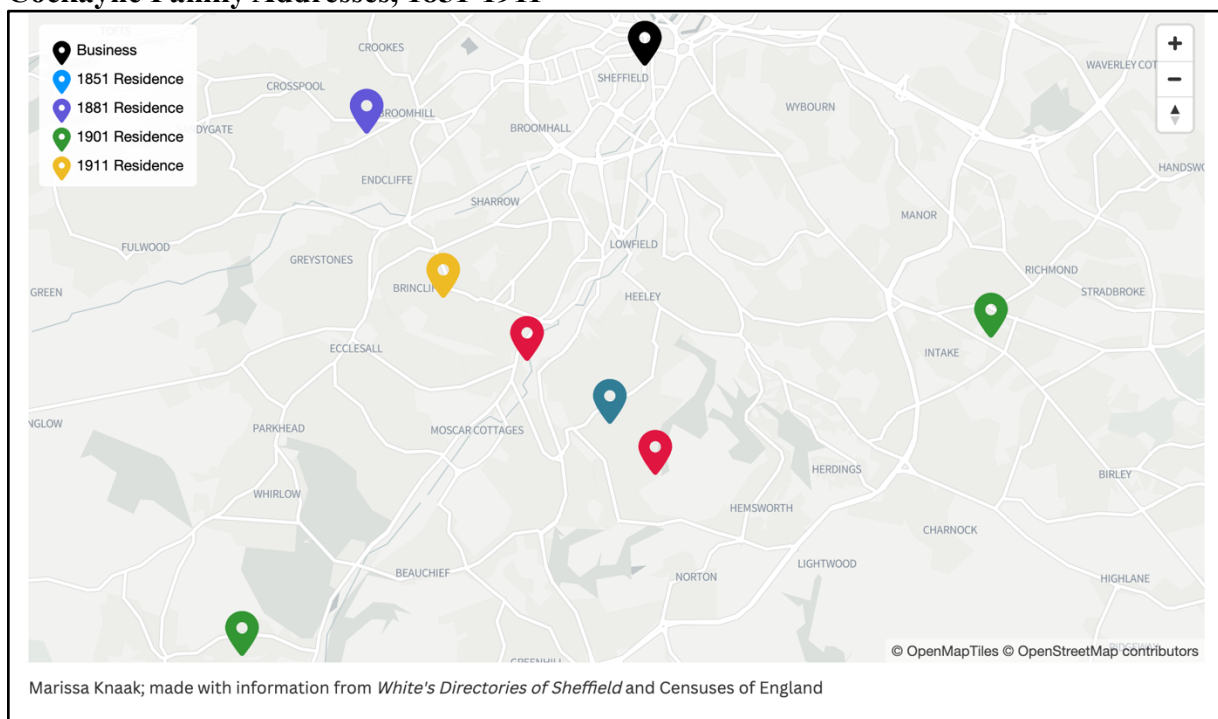


Figure 16: Cockayne family addresses

Cole Family Addresses, 1881-1911

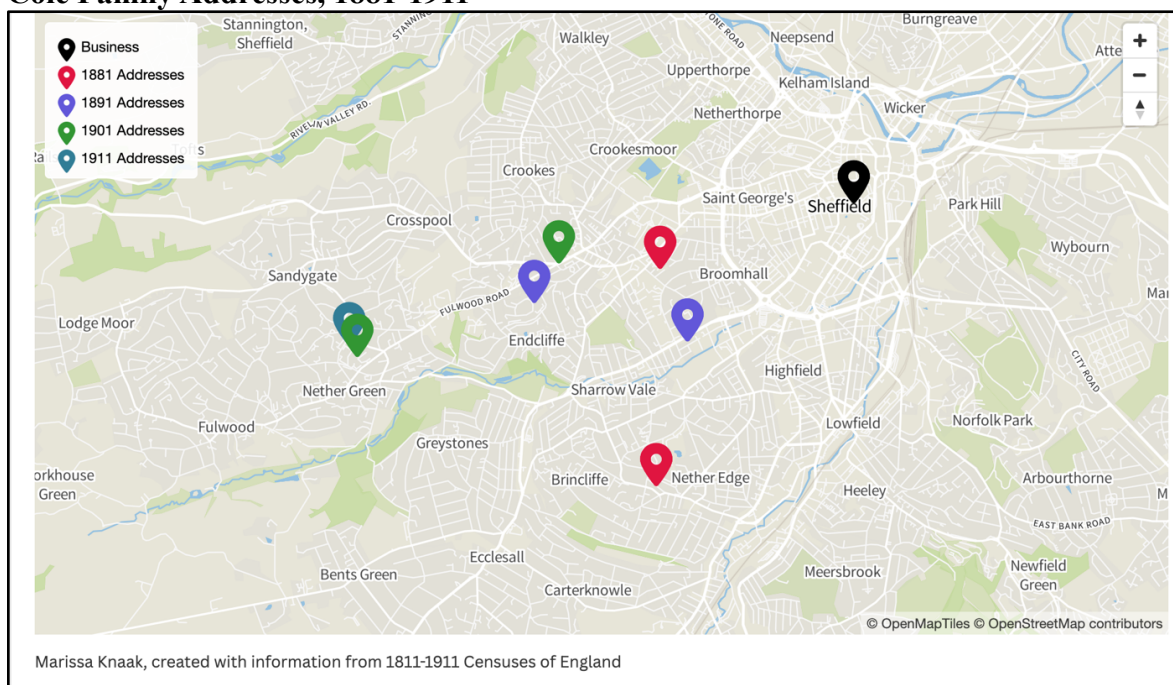


Figure 17: Cole family addresses

Walsh Family Addresses, 1871-1911

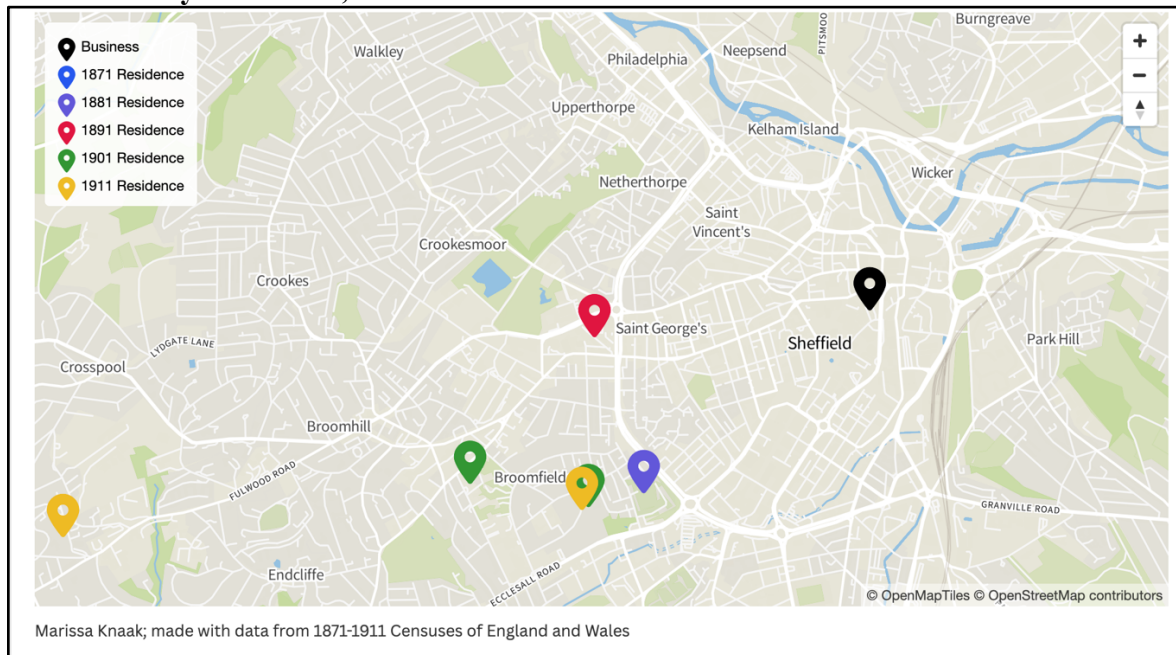


Figure 18: Walsh family addresses

Cologne Department Stores, 1900

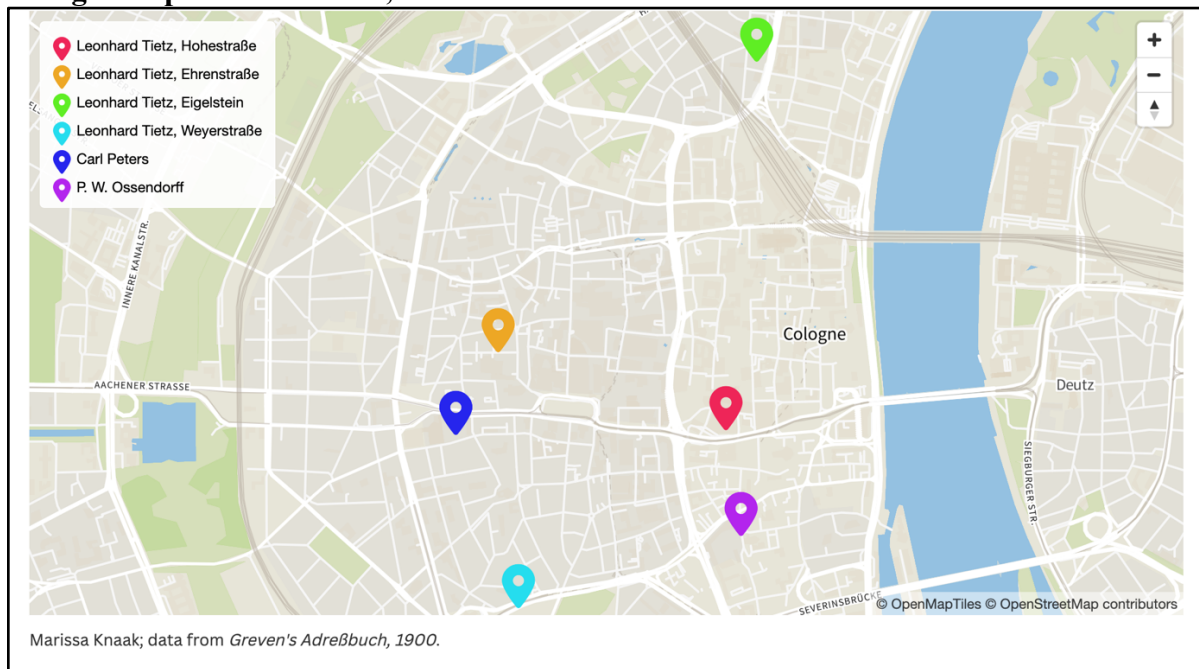


Figure 19: Cologne Department store map

Mansfield Family Addresses, 1861-1921



Figure 20: Mansfield family addresses

Tietz Addresses, 1896-1909

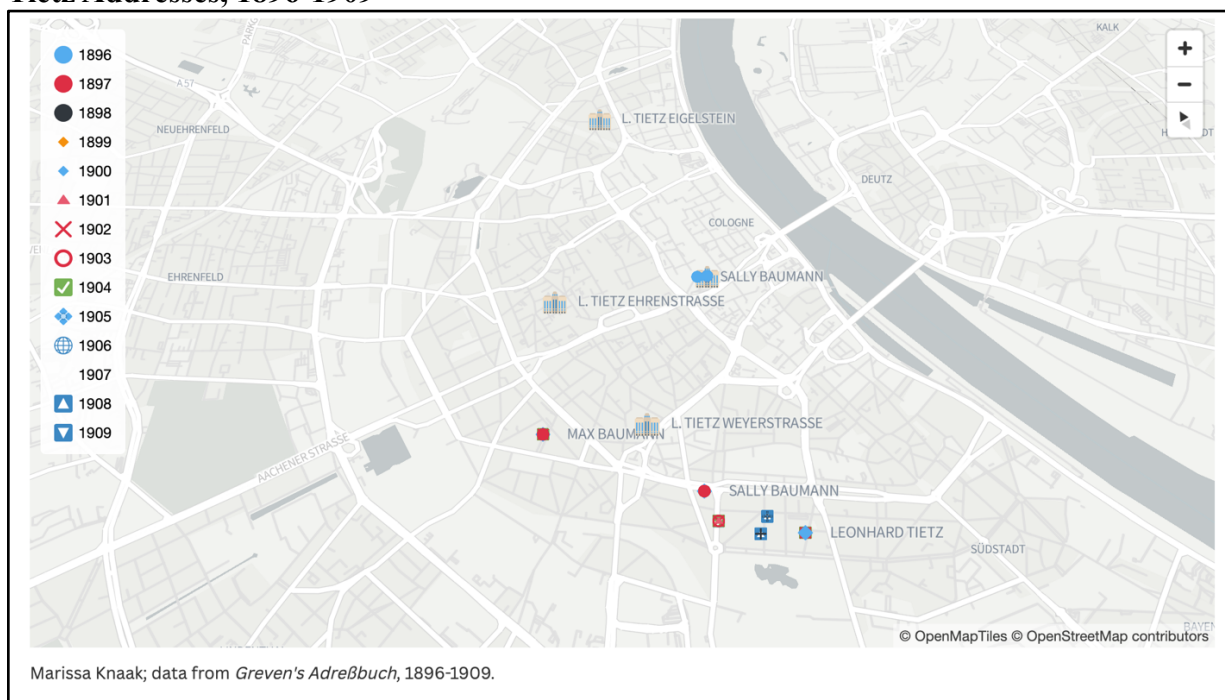


Figure 21: Tietz family addresses in Cologne

APPENDIX C: John Walsh 1899 Store 3D Model

This appendix contains images of a 3D model of John Walsh's 1899 store. The model is currently in progress, and I am using SketchUp, an online vector drawing platform, to build it from plans found in the Sheffield Archives collection. The plans were drawn by Flockton, Gibbs & Flockton, and can be found in the archives under ID CA206/2649/a1-d4. This project is part of my completion of the Cultural Heritage Informatics Graduate Fellowship, 2024-25.

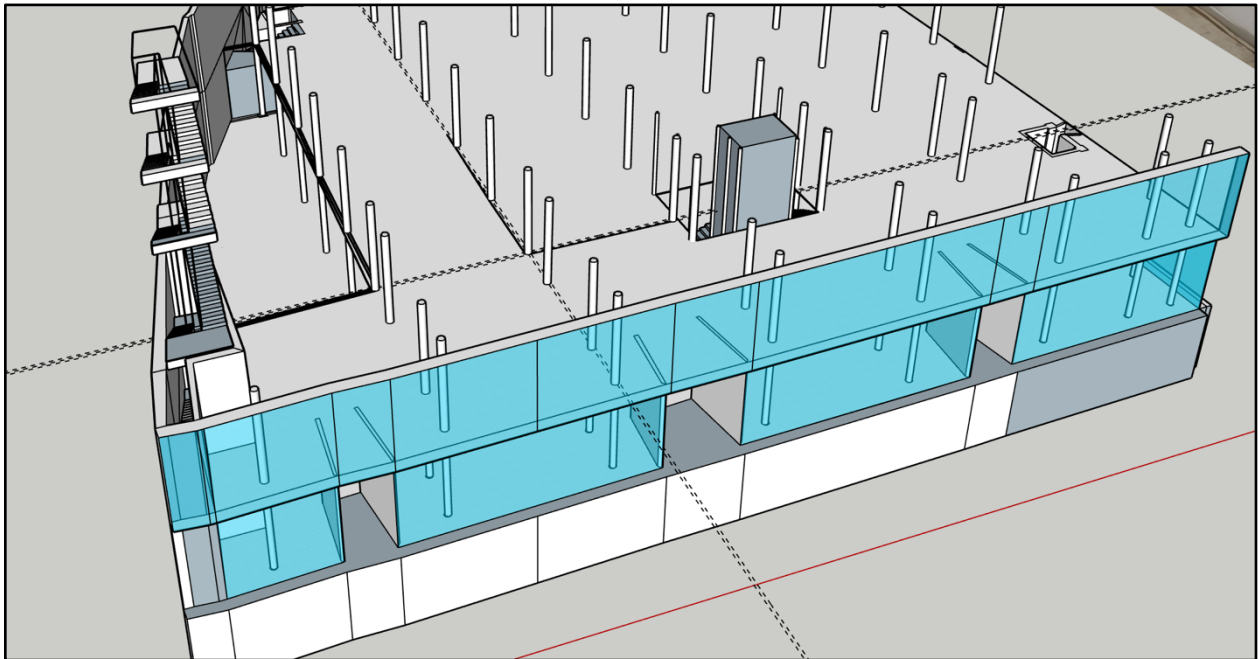


Figure 22: The basement, ground, and first floors of the new Walsh building, facing High Street. The front of the building featured large plate glass windows on the ground and first floors. This model has one light well placed, on the left, with the employee staircase next to it. You can also see the main customer elevator and staircase at the center.

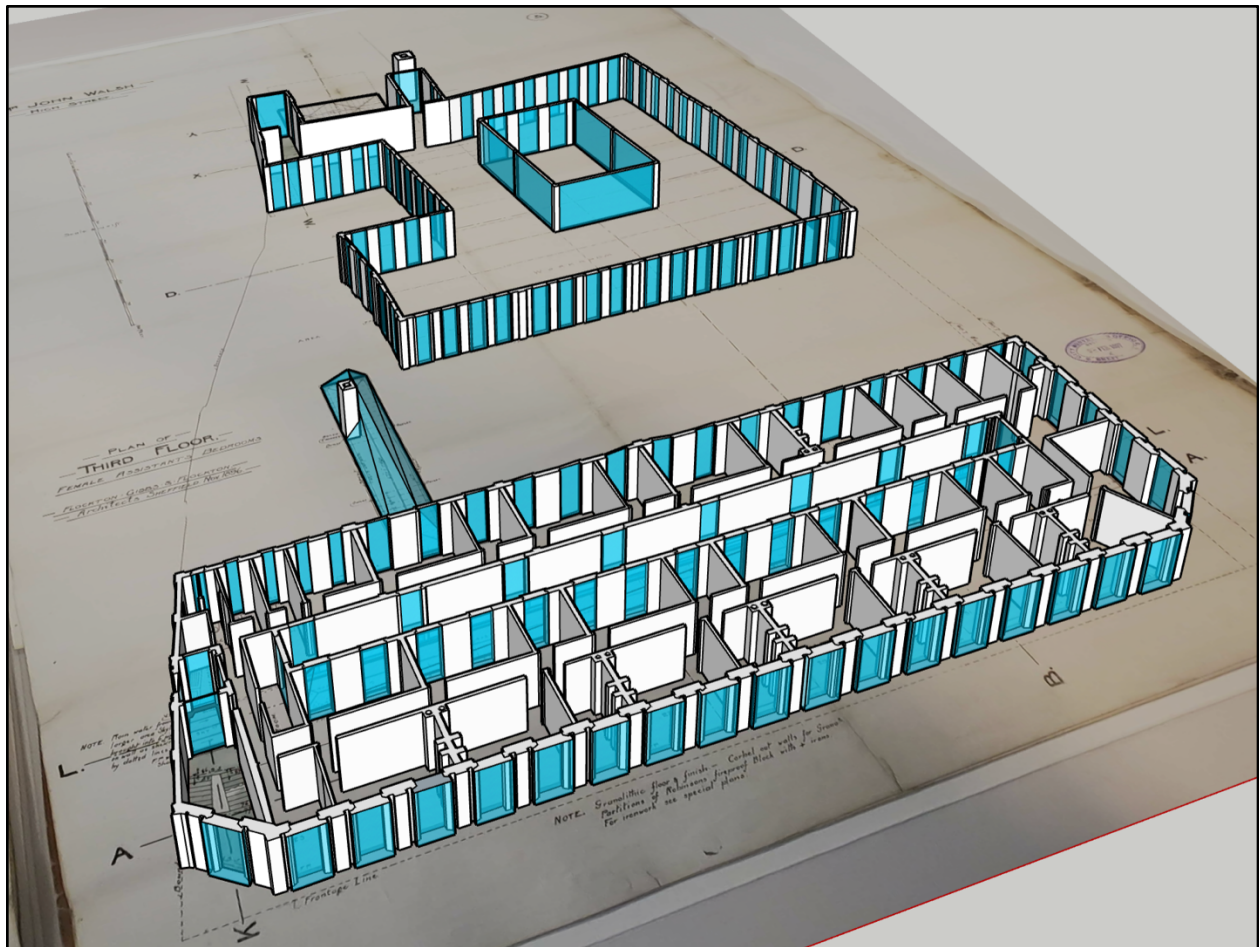


Figure 23: This is a separate floor-by-floor model of the third floor, which was female assistant bedrooms at the front and workrooms at the back. Each room at the front could have house somewhere between one and three people, depending on demands. At the far right, the large front room was reserved for the manageress. At the back, the middle of the workroom featured large windows and a skylight to filter light to the lower floor.

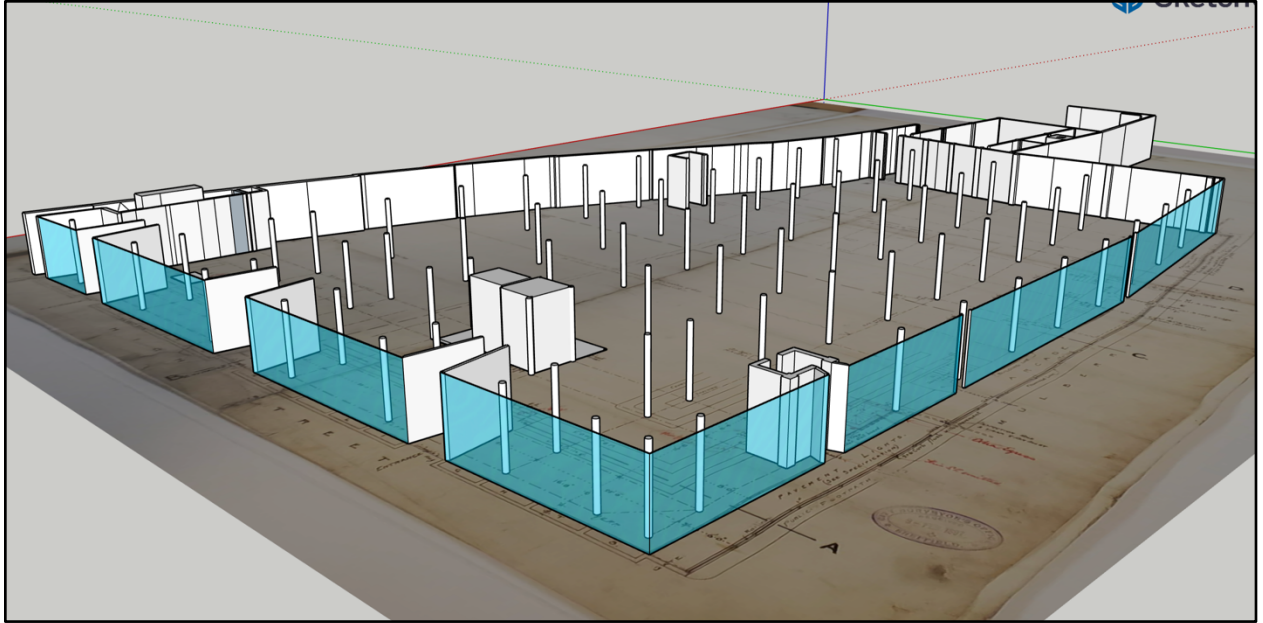


Figure 24: An early version of the floor-by-floor model of the ground floor. In this version, the staircases are works in progress.

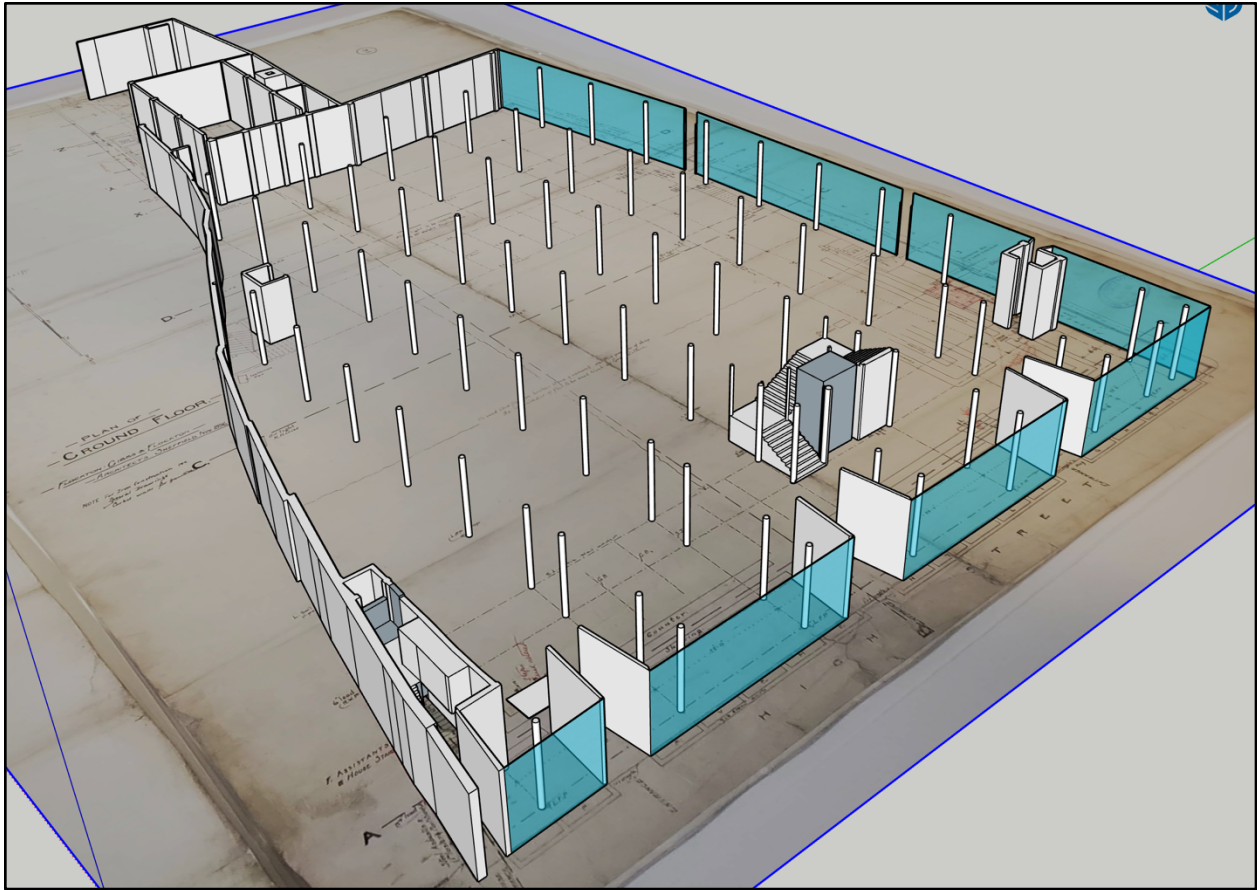


Figure 25: An overhead view of the floor-by-floor ground floor model. At the center, the main customer staircase and elevator are mostly finished, but the other two customer staircases are missing. At the front left, you can see the employee entrance and partial staircase.

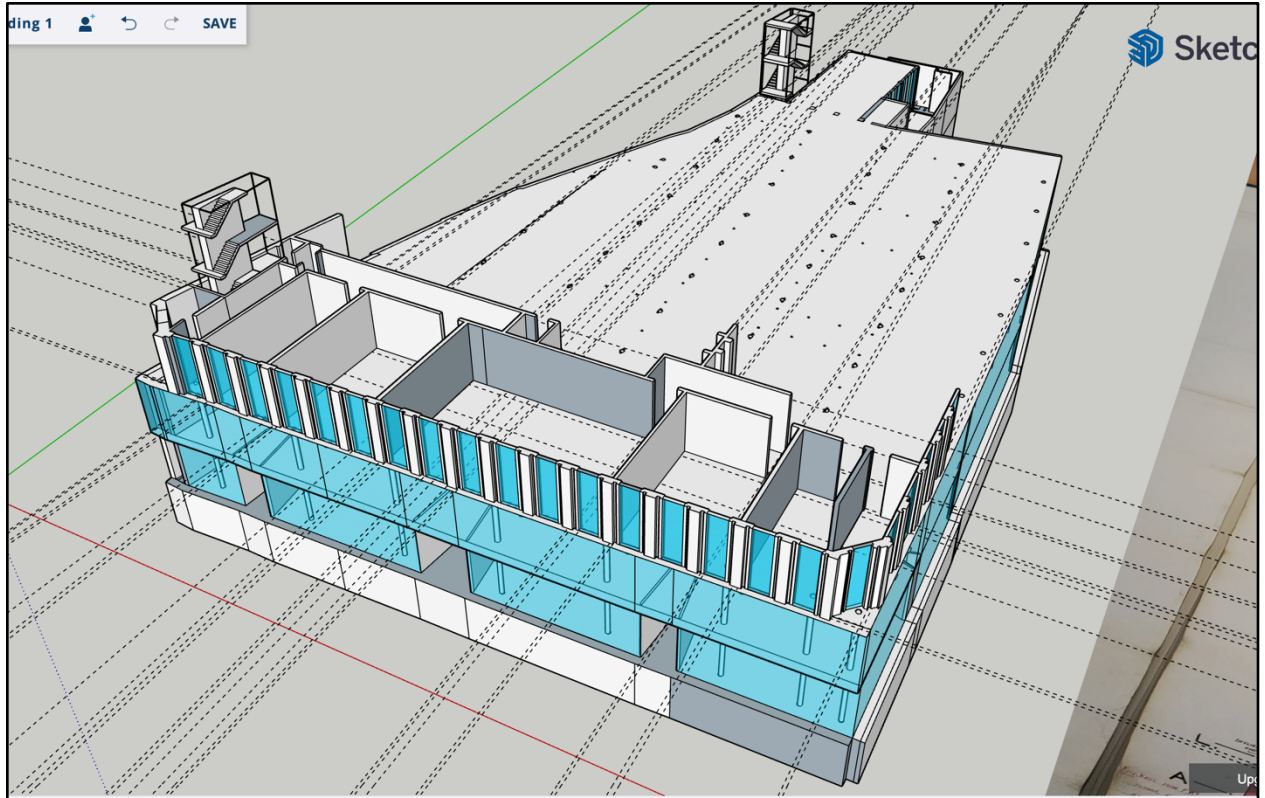


Figure 26: An overhead view of the model in progress. This is the front of the second floor, which contained the employee staircase at far left, the lavatories, female assistants' reading room and parlor, the staff dining room, the male assistants' reading room, and the manager and manageresses offices. The dotted lines are measuring tools to align the model with the plans (part of which lie at the far right). At the back of the model, you can see an employee staircase leading to the workrooms.

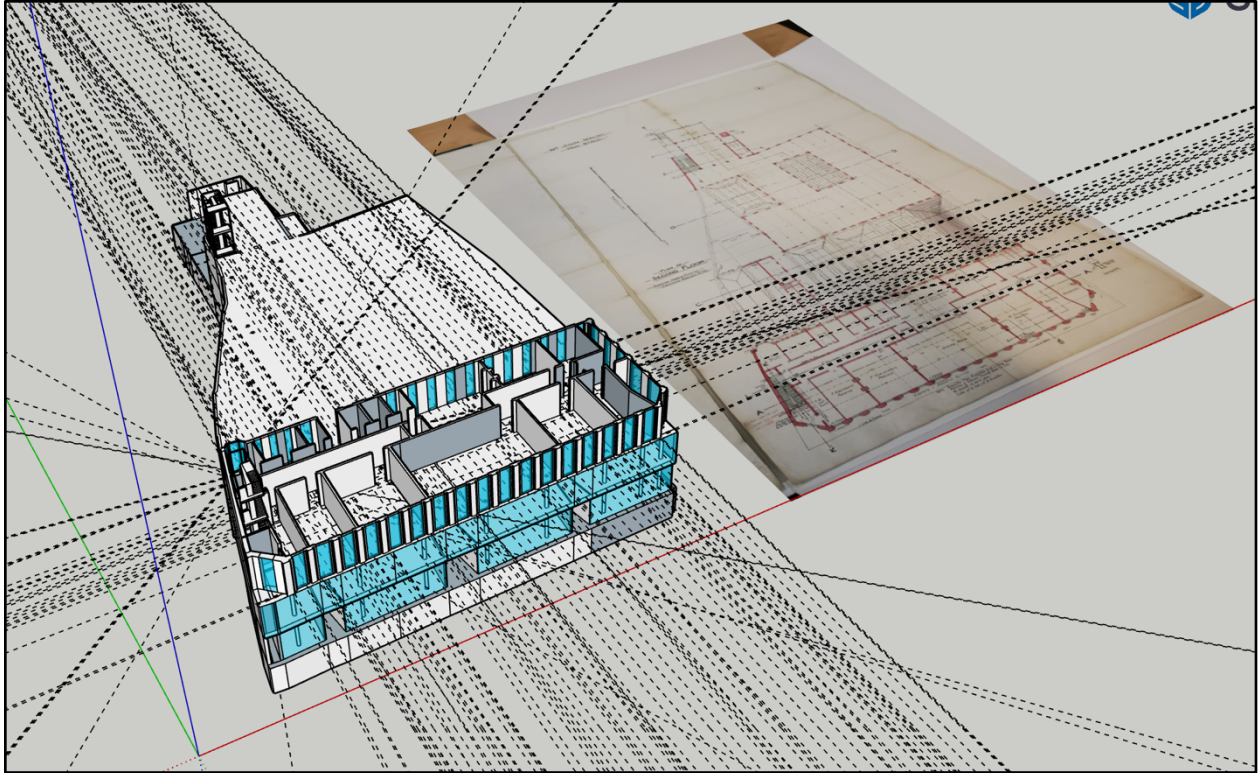


Figure 27: Another work-in-progress images of the second floor, upon completion of the main elements of the front part of the building.

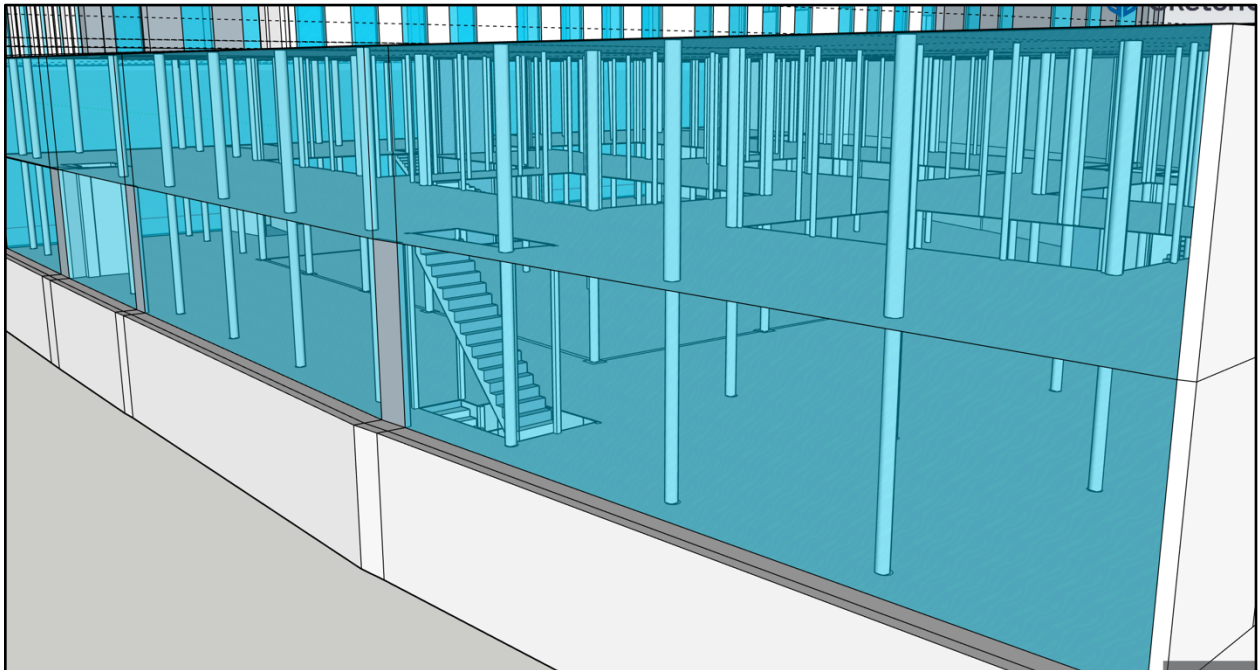


Figure 28: View of the ground and first floor Mulberry Street windows in the whole building model. You can see a customer staircase leading to the basement and first floors at center.



Figure 29: A close-up of the individual third floor model exterior. The interiors feature stock elements approximating components of employee bedrooms. The decorative balconies were approximated from images of the exterior of the store at the turn of the century.



Figure 30: A close-up of the interior of a bedroom in the third-floor model. I approximated the size of the stock furniture. It is possible that this room had a second bed and small table, depending on the number of people living-in.

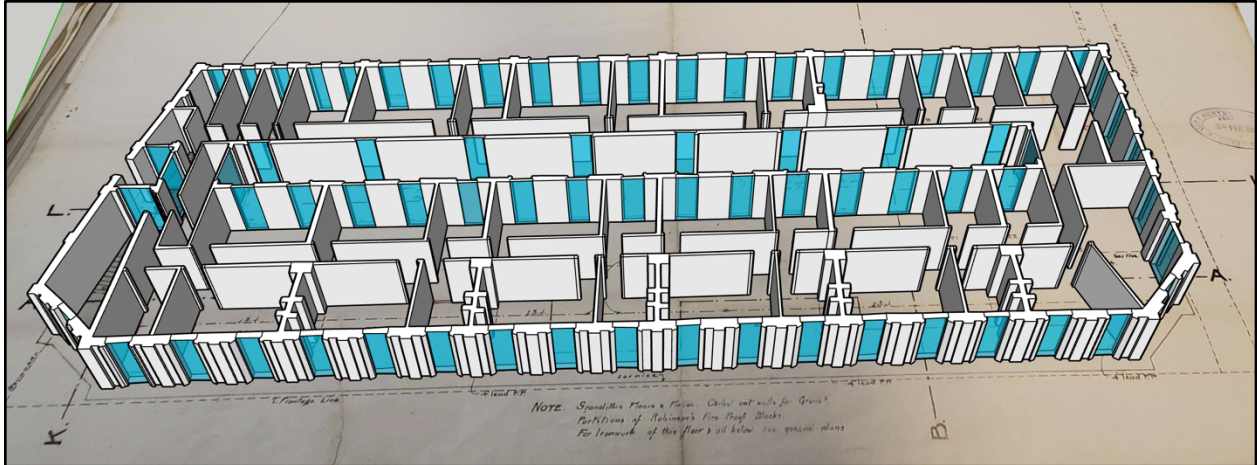


Figure 31: Over-head view of the floor-by-floor fourth floor model. This floor housed male assistants, but the floorplan was largely the same on the third floor for women, and the fifth floor, also for men.

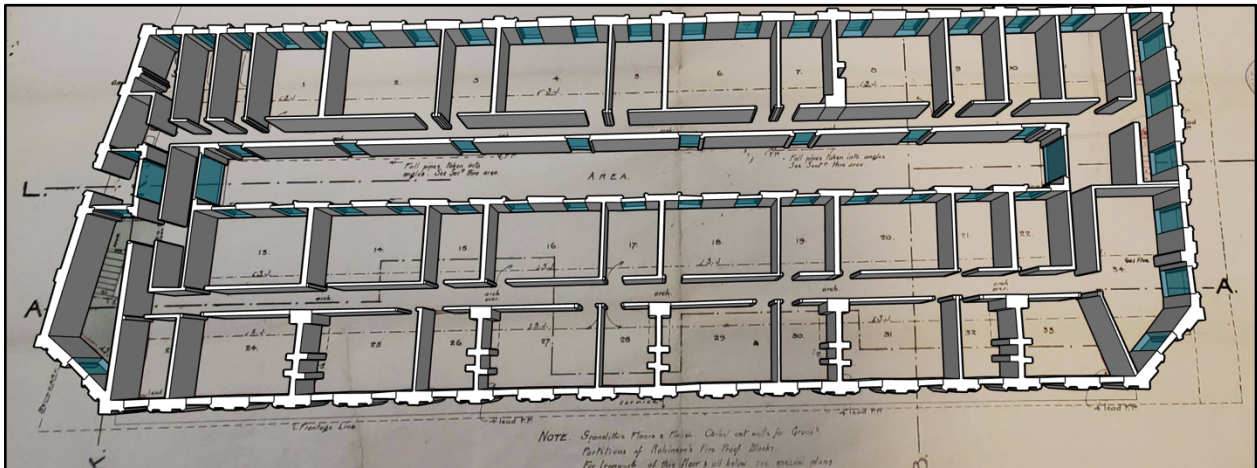


Figure 32: A direct overhead of the fourth-floor model. You can see the architectural plans under the model, which I have built up from.

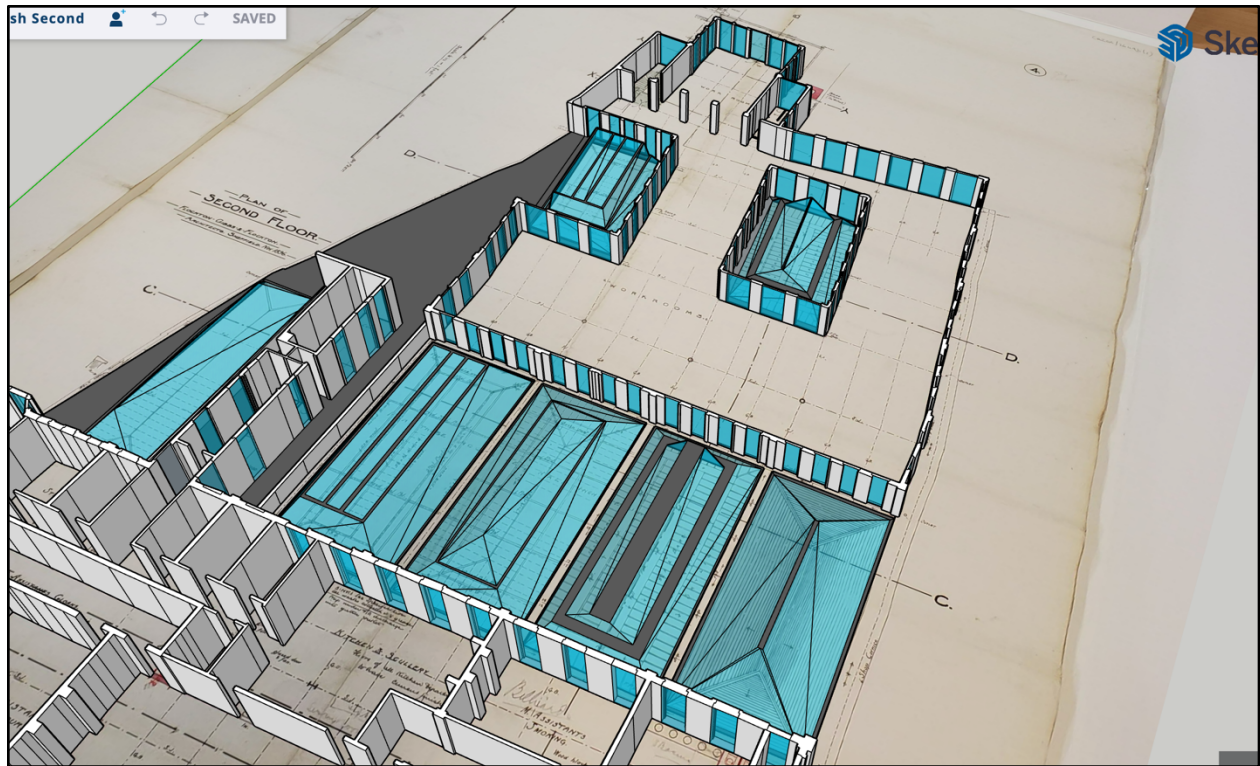


Figure 33: The back of the second floor from the floor-by-floor model. I had to approximate the look of the skylights and varied my approach. I have been able to find no clear images of this part of the building, so much of my work represents learning as I go.