

The ‘British’ Carmen Sylva: Recuperating a German-Romanian writer.

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Abstract.

Carmen Sylva (1843-1916), a German princess and the first Queen of Romania, was a well-known royal figure and a prolific writer. Under this pseudonym, she published around fifty volumes in a wide variety of genres, including poetry, short stories and aphorisms. During her lifetime she was a regular feature in the British periodical press and visited Britain on numerous occasions. Widely reviewed – both celebrated and condemned for her ‘fatal fluency’ – Sylva’s work became marginalised after her death and has yet to be fully recovered. She has only recently received critical attention in her native Germany and has yet to be recuperated within British literary culture.

This thesis will examine the reasons behind Sylva’s current obscurity as well as presenting the grounds for her reassessment. It will establish her connection to Britain, markers of which can still be found in its regional geography, as well as the scope of her literary presence in British periodicals. It will draw comparisons between Sylva and her contemporaries and will examine her contribution to *fin-de-siècle* British literary culture, analysing her short stories in order to detail her engagement with the ‘Woman Question’. This focus places Sylva at the centre of contemporary discussions and her often conflicting responses to such issues further our understanding of the complexity of nineteenth-century literary debates. In reassessing Sylva, this study will address broader notions surrounding the short story, popular fiction, and women’s writing, in order to question both current and contemporary attitudes to literature.

Acknowledgements.

Patience is not passive. On the contrary,
it is active; it is concentrated strength.

- Carmen Sylva, *Thoughts of a Queen*.

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A Note on Translation.

Alongside her literary works, certain nineteenth-century biographies of Sylva were translated into English. Others, however, ranging from modern criticism of Sylva to her work itself, were not. As a result, this thesis contains a number of German sources. For ease of comprehension, I have included my own translations in these instances.

Chronology of Carmen Sylva's Life.

Life.	Historical and cultural background.
1840	(Feb) Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert. (Jul) Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia sign the Convention of London treaty with the Ottoman Empire.
1843	(Dec) Born in Neuwied, Germany. First child born to Prince Hermann of Wied and his wife, Marie.
1847	Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i> .
1848	First visit to Britain (with family). Revolutions in the German states quickly spread across Europe (1848-9). British, German and Dutch governments lay claim to New Guinea. William Makepeace Thackeray, <i>Vanity Fair</i> . Anne Brontë, <i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i> .
1850	Birth of brother Otto. <i>Dreiklassenwahlrecht</i> (three-class franchise system) introduced in Prussia. Men over twenty-four years old now have the vote.
1851	Second visit to Britain (with family). (May-Oct) The Great Exhibition opens in London.
1853	Crimean War begins (1853-56).
1855	(June) Stamp duty removed from British newspapers. Death of Charlotte Brontë.
1857	Matrimonial Causes Act passed in England and Wales. Women receive limited access to divorce.
1858	Queen Victoria's daughter (Princess Victoria) marries Prince Friedrich of Prussia. Birth of E. Nesbit.
1859	Ascendancy of Alexandru Ioan Cuza as Prince of Moldavia and Wallachia (under suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire). Charles Darwin, <i>On The Origin Of Species</i> .

1860	Travels to Berlin with Queen of Prussia and meets future husband, Prince Karl von Hohenzollern.	Britain, France, Prussia, Austria and the Ottoman Empire form an international commission to investigate massacres of Maronite Christians in the Lebanon. As a result, a series of international conventions (the Règlement Organique) occur between the European Powers and the Ottoman Empire (1860-1864).
1861		Death of Prince Albert. Queen Victoria goes into mourning.
1862	Death of brother (Otto).	Moldavia and Wallachia are formally united as the Principality of Romania. Queen Victoria's daughter (Princess Alice) marries Prince Ludwig of Hesse. Mary Elizabeth Braddon, <i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> .
1864	Travels with Grand Duchess Hélène of Russia. This includes Lake Geneva, Moscow and St Petersburg. (Mar) Death of father, Prince Hermann of Wied (b. 1814).	First of the Contagious Diseases Acts passed in Britain.
1865		Theory of eugenics formulated by Francis Galton. Abolition of slavery in USA.
1866	Travels with Grand Duchess Hélène of Russia to Switzerland.	(Feb) Governmental coup in Romania – Alexandru Ioan Cuza overthrown. (May) Prince Karl von Hohenzollern (henceforth Carol I) appointed as Prince of Romania. Second Contagious Diseases Act passed in Britain. (Jun-Aug) Austro-Prussian 'Seven Weeks War.'
1867	Attends the International Exhibition in Paris.	(May) John Stuart Mill motions to give women the vote, but is rejected by the House of Commons. Second Reform Act expands British electorate. The Norddeutscher Bund (North German confederation) forms – a military alliance of twenty-two northern states, led by Prussia.
1869	(Nov) Marries Carol I. Relocates with him to Romania.	Multiple Franchise Act passed in Britain – unmarried female householders can vote in local elections. First residential college for women founded (Girton College, Cambridge). Suez canal opens. Third Contagious Diseases Act passed in Britain (repealed 1886).

1870	(8 Sept) Birth of only child, Marie.	<p>Elementary Education Act (commonly known as Forster's Education Act) passed in England and Wales.</p> <p>Married Women's Property Act passed in Britain.</p> <p>(Jul) Franco-Prussian War begins, lasting until May 1871.</p> <p>Revolt against the monarchy in Romania (by liberal radicals from Ploiești who were opposed to the new rule). Rioters arrested and Carol I later reaches a compromise with the Liberals.</p>
1871		(Jan) Official unification of Germany in Versailles. Wilhelm of Prussia becomes the first Kaiser.
1874	(9 Apr) Death of daughter Marie from scarlet fever and diphtheria. Third visit to Britain, following her daughter's death. Stays with Max Müller.	
1877	Assists in the treatment of wounded soldiers during Russo-Turkish War. Receives the Order of St Catherine from the Russian Tsarina.	Russo-Turkish War (also known as the Romanian War of Independence) begins, lasting until 1878. Romania sides with Russia.
1878	First literary work, (a poem entitled 'Sappho') published in <i>Gegenwart</i> , a German newspaper.	Russo-Turkish War ends (Russian victory). The Treaty of Berlin formally recognises Romania as independent.
1880		First Anglo-Boer War begins (1880-1).
1881	(May) Sylva and her husband are crowned as the first official King and Queen of Romania.	Romania becomes a kingdom.
1882	First published volume: <i>Leidens Erdengang</i> (Berlin: Alexander Duncker). First short story published in English: 'A Love Tragedy,' in <i>Temple Bar</i> .	Married Woman's Property Act passed in Britain.

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|-------------|--|---|
| 1884 | First English-language volume: <i>Pilgrim Sorrow</i> (London: T. Fisher Unwin), a translation of <i>Leidens Erdengang</i> . | Third Reform Act extends the franchise to most adult males. |
| 1887 | Oscar Wilde becomes editor of <i>The Woman's World</i> (1887-1889) and writes to T. Wemyss Reid that Sylva should be invited to contribute. | Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. |
| 1888 | The <i>Académie française</i> awards Sylva the <i>Prix Botta</i> for her aphorisms, <i>Les Pensées d'une Reine</i> (<i>Thoughts of a Queen</i>). | Mona Caird, 'Marriage'. |
| 1890 | (Aug-Oct) Fourth visit to Britain.
<i>Thoughts of a Queen</i> published (London: Eden, Remington & Co.).
First English-language biography: <i>The Life of Carmen Sylva</i> , trans. by Baroness Deichmann (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Limited). | Oscar Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> .
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wallpaper.' |
| 1891 | Involvement in the Ferdinand-Vacaresco affair. Leaves Romania for Venice and other parts of Europe.
First series of <i>The Bard of the Dimbovitza</i> published (London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.).
(May-Oct) <i>Edleen Vaughan: or Paths of Peril</i> serialised in <i>Hearth and Home</i> . | Passing of International Copyright Law.
The Great Trans-Siberian Railway begins.
Thomas Hardy, <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> . |
| 1892 | <i>Edleen Vaughan: or Paths of Peril</i> published (London: F.V. White & Co.). | First automatic telephone exchange. |

- 1893** Returns to Romania for the wedding of Prince Ferdinand to Princess Marie, granddaughter of Queen Victoria. They become King and Queen of Romania in 1922.
E. Nesbit, *Grim Tales*.
- 1894** Second series of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* published (London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.).
(Mar) Sarah Grand coins the term 'New Woman' in her article 'A New Aspect of the Woman Question.'
- 1895** *Shadows on Love's Dial* published (London: Downey & Co.).
Arrest, trials and conviction of Oscar Wilde.
- 1896** Third series of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* published (London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.).
Legends from River and Mountain (folktales) published (London: George Allen).
E. Nesbit, *In Homespun*.
Vernon Lee, 'Lady Tal.'
- 1897**
Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies established.
Bram Stoker, *Dracula*.
- 1899**
Second Anglo-Boer War begins (1899-1902).
Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*.
- 1901** *A Real Queen's Fairy Book* published (London: George Newnes).
Death of Queen Victoria and accession of Edward VII.
- 1902** Death of mother, Princess Marie (b. January 1825).
- 1903** *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories* published (London: R.A. Everett).
Emmeline Pankhurst founds the Women's Social and Political Union.
E. Nesbit, *The Literary Sense*.
- 1907** Death of brother William (b. 1845).
(Mar) Peasant revolt in Romania, primarily against landowners. Begins in Moldavia and spreads across Wallachia. A state of emergency is declared and the Romanian army mobilised. Thousands of peasants die before the riot ends.

- 1911** *From Memory's Shrine* published (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Limited). Suffragette riots in Britain.
- 1912** (Oct) Start of First Balkan War – Montenegro, joined by Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, declares war on Turkey.
- 1913** Final article, 'If I were a Millionaire,' published in the *Fortnightly Review*. (May) End of First Balkan War. (June) Start of Second Balkan War – hostilities between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. Romania sides with the newly formed Republic of Turkey.
- 1914** (Mar) The Royal Society of Literature makes Sylva an Honorary Fellow. (Oct) Death of King Carol I in Bucharest. (Aug) Outbreak of World War One. King Carol I wishes to side with Germany.
- 1916** (Nov) Sylva dies in Bucharest. (Aug) Romania (under the rule of King Ferdinand) enters the war on the side of the Triple Entente. (Dec) Bucharest is occupied by a combined Austrian and German army.

Introduction. The literary diet.

Modern society is preoccupied by loss – of time, work, or weight. This trend is continued with regard to literature. Literary criticism, as John Sutherland has noted, remains on a literary diet. He argues that ‘one must resist the curricular anorexia which currently thins Victorian fiction down to a fortnight’s undemanding reading and some judicious skimming. What remains, on this diet, is not “literature” but its skeleton.’¹ There are a number of broad caveats connected to our consumption of nineteenth-century fiction: women’s writing can be read, but only women who are subversive enough – in life and work – to be interesting. Similarly, popular fiction is avoided in favour of formally complex works that draw interesting links with the male ‘greats’.

This thesis is about Carmen Sylva (1843-1916), the first Queen of Romania. She was a popular writer but, as will be shown in Chapter One, critical interest declined sharply after her death and modern studies have only recently begun to appear in Germany and France. In considering Sylva and the recuperation project itself, it becomes apparent that even in our current literary consumption, we restrict ourselves to the old adage that less is more. Reassessing Sylva’s forgotten fiction becomes a way to recognise the biases, both in contemporary and modern criticism, which have caused her work to be neglected.

¹John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (1988; Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), xi.

0.1. Literary value and bias.

The canon is one reason for the literary diet. By listing and grouping texts for public consumption, it governs a set of boundaries about literary knowledge, taste and expression.² Although Patricia Waugh notes that ‘certain qualities are more pleasing to our shared human nature than others, and for that reason there is a standard of taste,’ these qualities are not necessarily shared by all.³ The western literary canon that formed in the 1950s, for example, is largely a product of a male intellectual elite. From the outset, responses to literature are shaped by a set of subjective values that frequently come into conflict with gender, class and education.

Harold Bloom’s hyper-conservative defence of the western canon aims to maintain these elitist tendencies, which he sees as under fire both from ‘right-wing defenders,’ and ‘the School of Resentment,’ who seek to overthrow it in pursuit of social change.⁴ Bloom sees politically-based undercurrents beneath every discussion of the canon, yet seemingly fails to recognise his own misogyny. He makes a point of praising male writers, seeing William Shakespeare (1564-1616) as ‘the most original writer we will ever know,’ as well as praising Lev Tolstoy (1828-1910) and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900).⁵ This is an obviously unbalanced picture of the literary landscape. To a certain extent, Bloom recognises the elitist tendencies of canon formation, noting that literary criticism ‘always was and always will be an elitist phenomenon,’ but sees this narrow view

²Natalie M. Houston, ‘Anthologies and the Making of the Poetic Canon,’ in *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman and Anthony H. Harrison (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), p. 361.

³Patricia Waugh, ‘Value: criticism, canons and evaluation,’ in *Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Patricia Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 74.

⁴Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), p. 4.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 25.

of literature as a necessity – it cultivates readers and critics who are intellectually capable of engaging with the ‘greatest’ material.⁶ As such, he perpetuates the prejudices of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century intellectuals, who, John Carey argues, were committed to dehumanising the masses and restricting their access to literature in order to maintain their own status as the arbiters of literary taste.⁷ Being part of a gendered elite, however, does not result in universally accepted opinions.

Bloom’s elevation of elitist values extends to his definitions of canon-worthy literature. He argues that what defines a work as ‘great’ is difference: ‘when you read a canonical work for the first time you encounter a stranger, an uncanny startlement rather than a fulfilment of expectations.’⁸ A canonical author may be influenced by contemporaries or predecessors, but ‘any strong literary work creatively misreads and therefore misinterprets a precursor text or texts.’⁹ This is part of the modernist bias within Bloom’s work, deriving from Viktor Shklovsky’s (1893-1989) seminal *Theory in Prose* (1925), which suggested that ‘by “enstranging” [*sic*] objects and complicating form, the device of art makes perception long and “laborious.” The perceptual process in art has a purpose all its own and ought to be extended to the fullest.’¹⁰ Shklovsky’s theory of defamiliarisation seems to underlie Bloom’s definition of ‘strangeness’, a concept which should be viewed in conjunction with complexity, or difficulty.

⁶Ibid., p. 17.

⁷John Carey, *The Intellectual and the Masses. Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 2002), p. 15.

⁸Bloom, p. 3.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory in Prose* (1925), trans. by Benjamin Sher (Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991), p. 6.

This element aligns it with Carey's description of a 'gulf' in English culture and the belief by early twentieth-century male intellectuals, including Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), that mass culture was causing the slow death of society.¹¹ As they could not stop the spread of literacy, intellectuals, according to Carey, tried to deter the masses by making their literature difficult to understand. This development was associated with Modernism in early twentieth-century England. Here, the alleged aim of Modernist authors was to react against their literary predecessors and to alienate a mass audience through formal complexity. With regard to short fiction, Modernism elevated the genre to a status that was both complicated and, by extension, elitist. James Joyce (1882-1941) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) were among a number of writers who aimed to unsettle their readers and reveal the psychological complexity of their subjects through the use of fragmentation, ellipsis and free indirect speech.¹²

This thesis will focus on short fiction, as it was the genre that Carmen Sylva utilised most frequently. Writers like Sylva were working before the advent of Modernism and as such, she is part of the movement's development. Chapters Four and Five in particular will argue that pre-Modernist writing – in other words, the body of work that was produced in the late nineteenth century and that was not aimed solely at the intellectual reader – should not be dismissed or overlooked. To a certain extent, then, this thesis is writing against the Modernist agenda to argue that originality is not necessarily connected to that which is different or alien.

¹¹Carey, p. 10.

¹²See, for example, James Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Grant Richards Ltd., 1914) or Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1927).

The connection between strangeness and originality should also be unpicked. Bloom recognises that literary influence occurs, but that a ‘great’ author will creatively rework what has gone before it, but one might question whether the apparently divine spark of genius can coexist alongside spheres of literary influence.¹³ For Derek Attridge, this influence is vital in order to create original and inventive work. Whilst noting that an author may be unaware of the degree of influence upon them, he argues that ‘novelty is achieved by means *both* of the refashioning of the old *and* of the unanticipated advent of the new [...] each is incomplete without its counterpart.’¹⁴ Chapter Five of this thesis, which features three case studies comparing Sylva’s work to Felicia Hemans (1793-1835), E. Nesbit (1858-1924) and Bram Stoker (1847-1912), will argue that canonicity is not necessarily about originality. Particularly with regard to Sylva and Stoker, I argue that Sylva’s short fiction about Romania pre-empted Stoker’s in many ways. Stoker was not the first to produce literature about the supernatural Romanian landscape. He and Sylva used the same cultural references, but Sylva’s were more detailed and were published prior to Stoker’s novel. Yet *Dracula* (1897) has become a canonical Gothic text and Sylva’s work has been marginalised. In its representation of Romanian life, *Dracula* does not possess the ‘strangeness’ that Bloom aligned with ‘greatness’. Instead, it was fulfilling the expectations of readers who had already read work by Carmen Sylva. The modern definition of ‘strangeness’ is not, therefore, shared by the original readers of the work, but is connected to our relative ignorance of the period.

¹³Bloom, p. 8.

¹⁴Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 24.

If Sylva was, in some ways, ‘strange’ and ‘original’, at least to her contemporary readers, then there must be another reason for her current obscurity. I argue that this is, in part, gender based: women’s writing may anticipate that of male counterparts, but the biases of both modern and Victorian canons prevent them from being recognised for it. This corresponds with Talia Schaffer’s work on forgotten female aesthetes. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, Schaffer has argued that the writing of Ouida (Marie Louise de la Ramée) (1839-1908) prefigured many themes and motifs that later male aesthetes, including Oscar Wilde, would appropriate. For Schaffer, the reasons for the marginalisation of the female aesthetes include the fact that many of the first critics of Aestheticism were men who had participated in the movement – the male dominated canon is thus skewed to reflect their own interests. She also notes the double standards applied to male and female writing, which included the assumption that women’s work was a ‘self-revelation’ and should be humorous.¹⁵ These expectations resulted in women’s writing being seen as second-rate. This argument has also been applied to the marginalisation of another prolific writer, Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897), particularly with regard to her literary criticism. Joanne Shattock implies that Oliphant’s work was overlooked by a male critical establishment: ‘apart from the *Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II* (1868) none of her articles from *Blackwood’s* or elsewhere were collected, an extraordinary situation in a period

¹⁵Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes. Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 2000), pp. 6-8.

when remediating periodical contributions into a more permanent volume form had become the norm, particularly with her male colleagues.¹⁶

For much of the twentieth century, therefore, literary taste has been developed by men, for men and about men and what is seen to be most valuable is complexity and strangeness. This attitude, however, is no longer limited to male intellectuals – modern feminism is also guilty of a more restricted literary view, even as it strives to introduce us to hitherto underestimated literary works.

0.2. Feminism and recuperation.

There is an undeniably political focus to feminist theory and practice. Early feminists were working with a political agenda in mind – to improve civil rights and to draw attention to the systematic oppression of women within patriarchal society. Both the first and second waves of the feminist movement – the first from around 1830 to 1920, best known for the suffrage movement, and the second from the 1960s onwards – were concerned with legislative changes: improving social conditions for women in areas including marriage, divorce, child custody and contraception. With regard to literature and society, this movement illustrated, as Andrew Milner has argued, that ‘much of what literary critics have meant by literature [...] has also been, in part, the effect of censorship.’¹⁷ Yet censorship is not limited to patriarchal oppression of the female voice – feminist criticism itself has censored certain women writers from literary history.

¹⁶Joanne Shattock, ‘Introduction,’ in *The Selected Works of Margaret Oliphant*, ed. by Joanne Shattock and Elisabeth Jay (general editors), 25 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), I (Literary Criticism, 1854-69), xxix.

¹⁷Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society* (London: UCL Press Limited, 1996), p. 129.

The political focus of feminist literary critics obviously led to the elevation of certain writers over others – when arguing against inequality, who would cite the traditional, staunchly religious writer Sarah Stickney Ellis (1799-1872) over the New Woman Sarah Grand (1854-1943)? No-one would want to weaken their argument by advocating women writers whose ideas or agendas did not correspond with their own. The practical purpose of feminism, then, has resulted in a number of exclusions. This has been highlighted with regard to Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of their Own* (1977), which argued that women's writing needed to be read differently from that of men. Criticism of Showalter suggested that she was creating a separate canon for women's writing, one that perpetuated gender difference. As critics such as Ruth Robbins have enumerated, feminist criticism must not 'try to make one white woman's middle-class story *the* story of all woman's experience.'¹⁸ This idea of literary separation was furthered by critics who saw feminism as a movement that was, in Fiona Tolan's words, 'representing the views of a privileged minority.'¹⁹ Feminism in the late 1970s and 1980s was seen to ignore racial, sexual, or class differences and although this has now been rectified, I argue that popular writing continues to be neglected. As will be discussed in the following section, the 'privileged minority' that Tolan discusses could be extended to include literary intellectuals, who wish to restrict literary criticism to 'great' works and disregard popular volumes as inferior and produced solely for financial gain.

¹⁸Ruth Robbins, *Literary Feminisms* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), p. 100. See also Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, 'Feminist scholarship and the social construction of woman,' (pp. 1-36) and Sydney Janet Kaplan 'Varieties of feminist criticism,' (pp. 37-58) both in *Making a Difference. Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. by Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London: Routledge, 1988).

¹⁹Fiona Tolan, 'Feminisms,' in *Literary Theory and Criticism*, p. 330.

Feminist critics are not exempt from literary anxiety concerning the ‘great’ and ‘valuable’ categories of fiction and this is also apparent with regard to modern recovery projects. Even Schaffer’s work, reassessing female aesthetes and expanding our understanding of the movement, reveals a degree of bias. She notes, for example, that because some of Ouida and Rhoda Broughton’s (1840-1920) works were ‘merely potboilers, all of their work was read as inferior.’²⁰ By implying that these works are low-quality and not worthy of a more specific reference – there is no information on the ‘potboilers’ in question – Schaffer continues to segregate literary works based on their adherence to the canonically prized quality of formal complexity.

The other quality that continues to be valued is the subversiveness of an author’s oeuvre, whereby the more radical elements of women writers’ lives and works are elevated over more conservative counterparts. As this thesis will indicate, Sylva does not sit easily in this category – her life is not as subversive as those of some of her contemporaries. Unlike the Romantic poet, Felicia Hemans, she was not abandoned by her husband and forced to write in order to support her family. She did not live unconventionally, in the manner of George Eliot (1819-1880) or E. Nesbit, and was not a member of radical societies. She did not live in the relative obscurity of a small village, like the Brontës. Unlike Amy Levy (1861-1889) and Virginia Woolf, Sylva did not die in tragic circumstances, but instead had a long and privileged life as a member of the Romanian royal family. In her creative endeavours, too, she is not, on the surface at least, overtly

²⁰Schaffer, p. 8.

progressive. She did not write overly polemical pieces and therefore, it seems, is not of interest.

Anti-feminism, as Valerie Sanders has argued, has received less attention than feminism.²¹ It is not the right kind of politics, resisting change rather than calling for female equality or rights. *The Waste Land* (1922) has been canonised – even though T.S. Eliot is now largely recognised as a fascist who, ‘at crucial moments in his career [...] was an advocate of regressive social planning and a snob who saw Jews as an unwholesome and alien presence’ – but we are embarrassed by conservative women’s writing.²² However, as will be explored in Chapters Four and Five, Sylva’s writing does not easily conform to either a feminist or antifeminist category. Although at times advocating the Angel in the House stereotype, Sylva’s graphic depictions of marital violence, murder and rape deviate from the aims of a genre that was ultimately advocating female self-improvement and acceptance of the status quo.

With this in mind, I argue that, as with anti-feminist women writers, women whose work see-saws between progressive and traditionalist have also received less extensive criticism than their more radical counterparts. Sylva belongs to a category of writers like E. Nesbit, Rhoda Broughton and Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) – whose work exhibits, as Sanders has argued with regard

²¹ Valerie Sanders, *Eve’s Renegades. Victorian Anti-Feminist Women Novelists* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1996), p. 1.

²² William M. Chace, *The Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1973), xi. See also Paul Morrison, *The Politics of Fascism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Paul de Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Richard Griffith’s essay, ‘Another Form of Fascism: The Cultural Impact of the French “Radical Right” in Britain,’ (pp. 162-182) in *The Culture of Fascism. Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, ed. by Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas P. Linehan (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2004), is also of interest concerning the influence of the *Action française* (a French nationalist, anti-Semitic political movement founded in 1899) on Eliot.

to Martineau, a degree of ‘qualified feminism.’²³ They were neither overtly conservative nor subversive, neither clearly feminist nor anti-feminist. The prolific, bestselling authoress Marie Corelli (1855-1924) would also fit into this group of women responding to the ‘Woman Question’ in ambiguous ways. Although noting that there was a revival of interest in Corelli from the 1950s onwards, Brenda Ayres argues that her views on women were ‘baffling’ and ‘conflicted,’ and thus ‘representative of many Victorian women writers who once knew fame from their writing but somewhere along the way got buried alive.’²⁴ Elisabeth Jay and Joanne Shattock suggest that Margaret Oliphant can also be considered as what I call a ‘grey area writer’, arguing that her interest in the social inequalities for women, ‘combined with her reluctance to espouse political means of improving women’s legal lot, have continued to make her an interesting conundrum for modern critics.’²⁵ Valerie Sanders, Merryn Williams and Ann Heilmann have also produced work in this area.²⁶ There is, then, a dual problem when recuperating a writer like Sylva. Her work is, in part, conservative in tone, which is not as well received by modern criticism as radical writing. Yet it does not conform entirely to this category. As I argue in Chapter Two, with regard to nineteenth-century German women writers and their presence in both

²³ Valerie Sanders, *Reason over Passion. Harriet Martineau and the Victorian Novel* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1986), p. 65.

²⁴ Brenda Ayres, ‘Marie Corelli: “The Story of One Forgotten”,’ in *Silent Voices. Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers*, ed. by Brenda Ayres (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p. 214; p. 208.

²⁵ Elisabeth Jay and Joanne Shattock, ‘General Introduction,’ in *The Selected Works of Margaret Oliphant*, I, xiii.

²⁶ Oliphant is discussed in Sanders’s *Eve’s Renegades* and is also the subject of Merryn Williams’s chapter, ‘Feminist or Anti Feminist? Margaret Oliphant and the Woman Question,’ in *Margaret Oliphant: Critical Essays on a Gentle Subversive*, ed. by D.J. Trela (London: Associated University Press, 1995), pp.165-180, and Ann Heilmann, ‘Mrs. Grundy’s Rebellion: Margaret Oliphant between Orthodoxy and the New Woman,’ *Women’s Writing*, 6 (1999), 215-237.

contemporary and modern criticism, the underlying motives and interests of academic critics are the root cause of their marginalisation.

These motives can be found within Gilbert and Gubar's seminal, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, for example, which discusses well-known and well-respected writers – George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855), Jane Austen (1775-1817) and Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). George Eliot was marginalised after her death and reassessed as a literary 'great' in the early twentieth century, thanks to the influence of advocates like Virginia Woolf. She is now regarded as a female intellectual, who wrote on foreign affairs, translated philosophical work by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) and expressed scathing views of other women writers. This is exemplified in her article 'Silly [Novels by] Lady Novelists,' which derided women writers for their 'feminine fatuity' and for the 'silliness' found in 'the frothy, the prosy, the pious, or the pedantic.'²⁷ It seems that some modern criticism has retained this view of women's writing which, as I noted with regard to Schaffer's argument, is celebrated or disregarded depending on its adherence to our preconceived ideas of 'greatness.'

Gilbert and Gubar argue that the women in their study are linked by a 'common, female impulse to struggle free from social and literary confinement through strategic redefinitions of self, art, and society.'²⁸ In looking solely for oppressed figures and their subversive methods of escape, feminist criticism of this nature becomes part of a cycle of censorship. This connects to the practice of

²⁷George Eliot, 'Silly [Novels by] Silly Lady Novelists,' *Westminster Review*, October 1856, p. 442.

²⁸Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), xi-xii.

recuperating marginalised figures, an activity which often valorises deviation from traditional norms, or complex literary forms.

Increasingly, the emphasis of feminist scholarship has focused on the recovery of ‘lost’ writers, but the ‘lost’ writers that ‘matter’ are those who benefit a broader literary-political agenda. These women become part of a new canon of subversive, previously marginalised female writers. We might think of Vernon Lee’s (1856-1935) recuperation within the Aesthetic Movement or Amy Levy’s contribution to the ‘Jewish Question’ in this respect. Indeed, Levy’s work is now back in print thanks to publishers such as Persephone Books, whose aim is to reprint ‘neglected’ – mostly female – authors from the nineteenth and twentieth century.²⁹ Alongside Levy, Margaret Oliphant is also listed, a woman who had little formal education but defied convention by writing prolifically in order to support her family. As I noted, Oliphant was marginalised, at least partially, as a result of gendered bias in favour of her male contemporaries. The inclusion of both women again reflects underlying biases in favour of women who are subversive personally, professionally, or both. As the first Jewish woman to attend Newnham College, Cambridge, Levy was well-educated and well-connected, but committed suicide aged only twenty-seven. Her work is valued for its difference – its feminist undercurrents as well as the complexity of Levy’s engagement with Judaism. For Sarah David Bernstein, Levy’s subversive personal life, coupled with the ‘innovations’ in *Reuben Sachs* (1889), which she argues are ‘anticipating the “inward turn” of modernism,’ are reasons in favour of her recuperation.³⁰

²⁹See the ‘About Us’ section of the *Persephone Books* website:

<<http://www.persephonebooks.co.uk/about-us/>> (accessed 22 September 2013).

³⁰Sarah David Bernstein, ‘Introduction,’ in *Reuben Sachs* (1889), by Amy Levy, ed. by Sarah David Bernstein (New York: Broadview press, 2006), p. 33.

Even the recuperation of a popular, prolific writer like Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838), is tied to establishing her subversiveness. In the introduction to a selection of her work, Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess emphasise her scandalous personal life and her untimely, controversial death, which has been attributed to an accidental overdose, suicide or murder. They also argue that she, like Felicia Hemans, is important because of her 'cultural alienation' and draw links between the women in terms of commercial success as well as their financial necessity to write in order to support their families.³¹ Landon's work, whilst 'unspectacular,' is deemed 'provocative' in its engagement with erotic love and myths and in doing so, McGann and Riess again attribute a degree of distinction to Landon, which appears tied to the desire to recuperate her.³² In keeping with Harold Bloom's ideas of canon-worthy literature, what is being valued here is difference.

As Schaffer has noted:

Any literary critic knows how enormously tempting it is to call a neglected women writer 'subversive,' since that is the accepted way to demonstrate her worth. If critics ignore or decry a writer's gender politics, readers may register that statement as a judgment of worthlessness. With the best intentions, then, attempts to recover marginalised writers too often end up producing reductive versions of their oeuvres, which highlight politically pleasant utterances and gloss over the rest.³³

Women writers who were popular and did not have an overtly 'leftist' agenda are generally ignored by literary criticism and, as I will explore in the following section, this seems indicative of our continuing anxieties about the value of

³¹Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess, 'Introduction,' in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ed. by Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess (New York: Broadview Press, 1997), p. 20.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 29; p. 22.

³³Schaffer, p. 11.

literature in general. In this case, the implication is that reading women's writing that does not possess a strongly subversive undercurrent will make modern women want to give up their rights to equality. In limiting ourselves to radical writers, however, we lose sight of the period as a whole and distort our sense of cultural debates. This leaves us in danger of rewriting history to suit our own interests, overlooking women writers who contributed to debates in more ambiguous ways.

My recuperation of Sylva will circumvent a potentially reductive reading of her work by considering all aspects of her engagement with the 'Woman Question' – recognising her calls for reform, her stereotypical depictions of femininity and the middle ground that exists between them. Her work, as I will argue in Chapters Four and Five, allows for the critical recognition that marginalisation may stem from writing which resists traditional literary categorisation.

0.3. Popular fiction and 'Silly Lady Novelists.'

John Carey has drawn a distinction between British intellectuals' distaste for the masses and the production of tinned food, seen as soulless and therefore synonymous with mass culture.³⁴ This divide is maintained in modern literary culture, where there is still a tendency to differentiate between reading for 'pleasure' and reading for 'work' – the books studied on a university module, or consulted as part of a research project are not necessarily the books that would be read at home. As Ruth Robbins has noted with regard to women's writing, 'there

³⁴Carey, p. 22.

are traditions which have been very deliberately excluded from the academic studies that define “literature”.³⁵ This is also partly connected to the desire to ‘legitimise’ the study of literature. In order to become an academic subject, literature began to be valued for its difficulty.

Yet this way of viewing popular fiction is degrading not only to the literature and its authors, but also the genre’s significance in literary history. Canonical greats like Charles Dickens (1812-1870) produced fiction that was immensely popular with the general public, with penny editions becoming quickly available to the ‘masses’. He also made use of the periodical press, editing *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* and serialising his own work as well as that of Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) and Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865). Yet Dickens is never described as a writer whose sole aim was making money. Instead, he is praised for both his business acumen and his creative genius. Popular literature should not be seen simply as a money-making scheme. Similarly, it should not be seen as a way of producing inferior fiction for the uneducated masses – popular fiction may be a way of better understanding the literary marketplace, but its content should not be overlooked. As I will argue with regard to Carmen Sylva, it can present critical debates in an engaging and entertaining manner whilst exhibiting the same literary influences and ‘anxieties’ that Bloom defines as strictly belonging to the realm of canonical fiction.³⁶

Even when we recognise that the literary field should be expanded, tensions arise in the way we articulate this need for change. In 1962, for example, Richard D. Altick wrote:

³⁵Robbins, p. 99.

³⁶Bloom, p. 8.

Any discussion of authorship and its social bearings which confines itself to the celebrated names and neglects the journeymen inevitably has its limitations. [...] These second- and third-rate authors are meaningful for cultural analysis, in a period where the audience for their wares was swelling year by year, as the first-rate ones are for the pre-democratic centuries of reading.³⁷

Even as Altick argues in favour of a broader literary culture, he perpetuates the bias surrounding 'great' literature. The metaphor of 'journeymen' insinuates that these 'second- and third-rate' writers have completed an apprenticeship, but are in no way masters of their trade. Indeed, the idea of writers selling their work is continued in the final sentence, where Altick alludes to authors attempting to sell their 'wares' rather than achieve literary greatness. Masculine-based metaphors also indicate another exclusion of the female writer. These authors are culturally meaningful only in terms of understanding the marketplace – their work is of little intrinsic value. Yet the sociological impact of popular fiction should extend to its content, thereby allowing a more complex sense of the period and its literature to be achieved. It should be analysed, as Peter Humm, Paul Stigant and Peter Widdowson have argued, 'not as some kind of sugar-coated sociology, but as narratives which negotiate, *no less than* classic texts, the connection between "writing, history and ideology"'.³⁸

In other words, a new language for discussing popular authors needs to be developed, one that does not result in a negative value judgement simply because they sold well, wrote prolifically and are not part of the literary canon. This thesis

³⁷Richard D. Altick, 'The Sociology of Authorship. The Social Origins, Education, and Occupations of 1,100 British Writers, 1800-1935,' in *Literary Taste, Culture and Mass Communications*, ed. by Peter Davison, Rolf Meyersohn, Edward Shils (1962; Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd, 1978), 10 (Authorship), p. 49.

³⁸Peter Humm, Paul Stigant and Peter Widdowson, 'Introduction,' in *Popular Fictions. Essays in Literature and History*, ed. by Peter Humm, Paul Stigant and Peter Widdowson (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1986), p. 2.

will discuss Carmen Sylva as a marginalised and forgotten writer. It will not avoid negative reviews and criticism, but will use them to create a dialogue between the past and the present – to explain why her recuperation will develop our understanding of certain entrenched attitudes within British literary culture during the nineteenth century.

As I have noted, attitudes towards popular fiction are undeniably tied to critical elitism. Carey argues that the term ‘the masses’ was invented by intellectuals, who define them as both threatening monsters and herds of animals – akin to Edmund Burke’s (1729-1797) ‘swinish multitude.’³⁹ I argue that this sentiment has continued into modern criticism. As I will detail in Chapter One, there has been little engagement with popular or prolific German women writers and their influence on Britain. Elitist attitudes are also applicable to popular writing more broadly and privileged women writers. Milner states that ‘this distinction between literature and fiction, between “elite” and “popular” cultural forms, clearly overlaps with that between elite and non-elite social groups,’ but, as this thesis will argue, this is not strictly true of a nineteenth-century writer like Sylva, who, by virtue of being a member of the royal family, is part of a social elite.⁴⁰ Yet, whilst her work is recognised by critics as popular, it is not necessarily seen as literary. Reassessing Sylva becomes part of a broader destabilisation of modern definitions of the elite, indicating that the privileged female writer was not necessarily seen as part of this category. In fact, her privilege brought with it its own set of prejudices.

³⁹Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, ed. by Duncan Wu (1994; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 13.

⁴⁰Milner, p. 16.

If writers were discriminated against for being working class, then it seems that upper-class individuals, particularly women, were also seen as less capable of producing ‘great’ works of fiction. Again, George Eliot reveals this bias in nineteenth-century criticism, noting with disparagement that:

The fair writers have never talked to a tradesman except from a carriage window; they have no notion of the working-classes except as ‘dependents,’ [...]. It is clear that they write in elegant boudoirs, with violet-coloured ink and a ruby pen; that they must be entirely indifferent to publishers’ accounts, and inexperienced in every form of poverty except poverty of brains.⁴¹

In both contemporary and modern criticism, there is an added layer of gender bias on top of class bias. It is possible that Milner’s statement refers to the literary elite, but this returns us to the issue of canonicity raised at the beginning of this introduction – how does one become a member of the literary elite? Someone else, most likely someone who considers themselves qualified in terms of class, education or gender – and has been recognised as such by institutions of authority – must subjectively value your work.

In modern literary criticism, where there was once sensation fiction, there are new names for popular fiction that depreciate its value. ‘Chick-lit’ and, more recently, thanks to E. L. James’s (b. 1963) bestsellers, ‘Mummy-porn,’ not only describe a type of ‘light’, ‘trashy’ fiction, but also a certain kind of reader – the woman who enjoys it. However much we argue against it, there is still a gender discrepancy in the way we understand the act of reading and publishers are keen to capitalise on it. There is a recognisable market for such fiction, but it is not viewed positively. The popular becomes puerile, as does the realm of the female

⁴¹George Eliot, p. 444

reader. This is in contrast to the assumed male reader of popular fiction by writers including Stephen King (b. 1947), now widely celebrated as ‘at the top of his game’ and as one of America’s most successful male writers.⁴²

To counteract this bias, much modern popular fiction by women has become what I call ‘chameleon fiction’ – changing its colours to suit its intended reader. Bloomsbury, for example, repackaged the *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) with ‘adult-friendly’ covers, leading to soaring sales and a ‘revolt’ against the original jackets.⁴³ Technology makes this even easier: sales of *Twilight* (2005-2008) and *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2011), have sky-rocketed – predominantly for the Kindle, a device which provides even more anonymity.⁴⁴ It is unlikely that Kindle sales of the works of Shakespeare, or Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse* (1927) have grown in the same way – rather than a social stigma, these books are used to prove personal worth. There are still groups of people who advocate the value of difficulty. Yet what readers throughout the centuries have shown us is that formal complexity is not the only definition of ‘great’ literature: the ability to entertain also has a value. We will not stop reading this type of fiction but we will continue to apologise for it by changing the book’s appearance or the way we read it. I have mentioned modern literature in this introduction to make a point about literary value and the concerns we still express about certain types of literature. The current method of expressing our continued anxiety about popular writing –

⁴²Emma Brookes, ‘Stephen King: on alcoholism and returning to the Shining,’ *Guardian*, 21 September 2013 < <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/sep/21/stephen-king-shining-sequel-interview> > (accessed 22 September 2013).

⁴³Nigel Reynolds, ‘Adult fans taking over Harry Potter,’ *Telegraph*, 22 June 2007 < <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3666031/Adult-fans-taking-over-Harry-Potter.html> > (accessed 5 August 2013).

⁴⁴Anonymous, ‘Fifty Shades Of Grey tops 1m Kindle sales,’ *Independent*, 26 June 2012 < <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/fifty-shades-of-grey-tops-1m-kindle-sales-7888760.html> > (accessed 5 August 2013).

and about female writing – is in terms of literary value being synonymous with the avant-garde or the oppressed female figure. As I will argue with regard to Sylva, our modern anxieties were shared by the nineteenth-century audiences, for whom critics and reviews were a dominant part of literary culture.⁴⁵

Indeed, Carey argues that what was ‘truly meritorious in art is seen as the prerogative of a minority, the intellectuals, and the significance of the minority is reckoned to be directly proportionate to its ability to outrage and puzzle the mass. Though it usually purports to be progressive, the avant-garde is consequently always reactionary.’⁴⁶ Carey applies this argument to early twentieth-century writers, such as Woolf and Joyce, whose belief in the superiority of ‘high art’ stemmed from a fear that the swelling population and the rise of both the popular newspaper and the popular novelist, would result in the self-determined literary elites becoming obsolete. It seems that this anxiety has not left us.

0.4. Carmen Sylva and ‘literary health.’

Literature, according to Andrew Milner, is ‘the study not of writing *per se* but of valued writing.’⁴⁷ Value is, of course, subjective to the individual and with that in mind, it is important not to restrict oneself to other critics’ definitions of what is ‘worthy’ and what is not. A diet such as this does not result in a comprehensive understanding of literary culture and the influences that women’s writing and popular fiction had on the writers we now consider to be ‘great’.

⁴⁵The effects of industrialisation and the rapid growth of the publishing industry fundamentally altered the literary landscape. These changes provoked anxiety about the effects literature could have when available to the masses, as well as when it was produced by them. Many nineteenth-century critics and authors argued that allowing women and the lower classes to have access to sensation or Gothic fiction would cause them to transgress the boundaries of their class and gender and would lead to a rise in criminality and degeneracy.

⁴⁶Carey, p. 18.

⁴⁷Milner, p. 6.

Reassessing Carmen Sylva will allow us to not only consider the intricacies of her work afresh, but to address the various social strands that may cause marginalisation, recognising the biases towards gender, class and popular fiction that were present in the nineteenth century and that can be found in modern criticism. It will make us healthier critics.

There are four main strands to my argument in favour of Sylva's recuperation within nineteenth-century literary culture:

1. Recovering Sylva allows for a reappraisal of Anglo-German relations and Anglo-German writers, that is, writers who were German but who also had a British presence. This is both cultural – in terms of visiting Britain or having British acquaintances – and literary, in terms of the work they produced and published.
2. Sylva paved the way for later writers in terms of her contribution to the short story. She contributes to our understanding of the evolution of the genre.
3. Reassessing Sylva provides us with a better understanding of a particular type of woman writer. This woman's work was not easily categorised, oscillating between progressive and traditionalist.
4. Finally, Sylva is significant in terms of her representation of Romania. Sylva mediated Romania, representing its 'otherness' – or, as Chapter Five will argue, lack thereof – before it was popularised by better-known male contemporaries such as Bram Stoker. It is possible that it is not the vampires that cause the popularity of *Dracula*, but the Romanian context, a topic which has been downplayed in modern criticism.

Chapter One will begin by summarising Sylva's life and work. It chronicles her currently marginalised status and the limited references in modern criticism. It then discusses biographies of her and their significance. Chapter Two will consider her physical presence in Britain, focusing on her trip in 1890 and the geographical markers left to commemorate that visit. It also investigates the extent to which her royal status affected her subsequent marginalisation. Chapter Three will establish her place in British literary culture. It will examine the literary presence that can be traced over a period of around fifty years, focusing on reviews and articles published in the British periodical press as well as printed ephemera. Chapter Four is an analysis of her short fiction. It considers Sylva's contribution to the genre, which became an increasingly popular part of British literary culture as well as Sylva's own oeuvre. This chapter will engage with Sylva's participation in one of the most heated debates of the late nineteenth-century – the 'Woman Question'. In doing so, I argue that Sylva's blurring of progressive New Woman features with more conservative aspects may have impeded a lasting literary reputation. Chapter Five will draw parallels between Sylva's work and that of three British writers: Felicia Hemans, Bram Stoker and Edith Nesbit. In doing so, I argue that Sylva's recuperation is an opportunity to reconsider these well-known writers. Lastly, Chapter Six will draw together the factors affecting her marginalisation and will present a final argument in favour of her recovery within modern criticism.

Chapter One. (Re)acquainting ourselves with Carmen Sylva.

1.1. Carmen Sylva's life and significance.

In 1843, in a palace in Wied, on the banks of the Rhine, a princess was born into a family known for its 'intellectual pre-eminence.'¹ Her uncle, Prince Maximilian zu Wied (1782-1867) was an explorer and naturalist who made two expeditions to Brazil and North America (1815-1817 and 1832-1834, respectively) and published accounts of his travels, which were translated into a number of languages.² Her father, Prince Hermann of Wied (1814-1864), had a keen interest in metaphysics, mesmerism and hypnosis and had published his research anonymously in 1859, under the title *Das unbewusste Geistesleben und die göttliche Offenbarung (The Unconscious Life of the Soul and the Manifestations of God)*.³ Although less philosophical in her literary leanings, his only daughter would follow in her father's footsteps: as Princess Elisabeth Pauline Ottilie Luise zu Wied she would become the first Queen of Romania, but under the pseudonym Carmen Sylva, she would become a prolific authoress.⁴

Creative from an early age, Sylva was acquainted with a number of prominent intellectuals, who frequented the palace in Wied. These included the writer E.M. Arndt (1769-1860) and the painter Karl Friedrich Lessing (1808-

¹Baroness Deichmann, *The Life of Carmen Sylva. Queen of Roumania*. Translated from the original German work by Baroness Stackelberg, *Aus dem Leben Carmen Sylvas* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Limited, 1890), p. 2.

²The first German edition of Prince Maximilian of Wied's *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1832-1834* was published in Germany in 1837 (Koblenz: Jakob Hölscher); in France in 1840 (Paris: Arthus Bertrand) and in Britain, in 1843, by a German publisher and print seller (London: R. Ackermann and Co.).

³Gabriel Badea-Păun, *Carmen Sylva*, trans. by Silvia Irina Zimmerman (Stuttgart: *ibidem*-Verlag, 2011), pp. 21-22.

⁴Given the nature of my research and the focus on her literary career, I will continue to refer to the queen using this pen-name.

1880). Her parents provided her with an English nanny, as well as a tutor who conducted lessons in English. She also studied French, Italian, Spanish, Latin and, after her marriage, became fluent in Romanian. Biographers report that the first novels she read were Walter Scott's (1771-1832) *Ivanhoe* (1820) and *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) by the bestselling American author Elizabeth Wetherell (1819-1885) (also known as Susan Warner).⁵ Sylva remembers reading Wetherell's novel, as well as work by Robert Burns (1759-1796), Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) and the Whig politician and essayist Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859).⁶ She also recounts her recital of Lord Byron's (1788-1824) 'The Prisoner of Chillon' (1816), which reportedly amazed her tutor.⁷ Nicknamed 'Waldroschen' ('Little Wild Rose') by her family, she began composing poetry as a young girl and continued to write during the more traumatic aspects of her childhood, including the loss of her younger brother, Otto, born with 'an organic disorder,' who died in 1862.⁸

The young princess took frequent trips with her family, visiting Britain in 1848 and 1851. In the early 1860s, she travelled across Europe with her aunt, the Grand Duchess Hélène of Russia (1807-1873). She spent time in St Petersburg with the Tsar and his family, as well as in Paris, Sweden and Switzerland. It was on one of these trips that she met Prince Karl (1839-1914), the second son of the prominent Hohenzollern family who had fought for the Prussian army in the Second Schleswig War (February to October 1864).⁹ Sylva had previously been

⁵Deichmann, p. 37.

⁶Carmen Sylva, *From Memory's Shrine*, trans. by Edith Hopkirk (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Limited), p. 175; p. 232.

⁷Ibid., p. 231.

⁸Deichmann, p. 26.

⁹Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 14.

considered as a potential bride for Prince Albert Edward of Wales, the future King Edward VII (1841-1910).¹⁰ In a meeting since romanticised and, if later biographies are to be believed, fabricated, an accidental slip on the staircase sent Sylva into the arms of her future husband. Biographers also reveal that the previously vocationally-minded young princess had declared her aversion to marriage, which Sylva's memoirs confirm.¹¹ Nonetheless, the two were married on 15 November 1869. The ceremony was attended by numerous royal families, as well as French and German ambassadors representing their respective emperors. As Prince Karl had been chosen as Sovereign Prince of Romania in 1866 – after the previous ruler, Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1820-1873), was overthrown – the honeymoon was spent travelling to their new home, arriving in Bucharest on 25 November of the same year. In 1870, Sylva gave birth to her only child, a daughter named Marie. Mother and child took frequent trips together, but after one such visit in 1874, Marie died of diphtheria and scarlet fever, which had broken out in Bucharest shortly after their return. After a brief sojourn in Britain to recover, Sylva returned to Bucharest where she began to write in earnest.

There thus appear to be a number of possible explanations for this development: that a prolific output would not have been possible alongside her

¹⁰The monarchs of Europe were closely related during this period: Queen Victoria (1819-1901) was nicknamed the 'grandmother of Europe' and her third cousin, King Christian IX of Denmark (1818-1906), was known as the 'father-in-law of Europe.' Queen Victoria married her first cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1819-1861), in 1840 and both saw their children's marriages as an extension of foreign policy, allowing them to establish and maintain links with other countries. Their eldest daughter Victoria (1840-1901), for example, married Frederick III of Prussia (1831-1888) (their son became Wilhelm II (1859-1941)) and their son Prince Alfred (1844-1900) married Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia (1853-1920), whose daughter, Marie (1875-1938), became the second Queen of Romania after Sylva's death. At the outbreak of World War One, Queen Victoria's grandson King George V (1865-1936) was the first cousin of both Kaiser Wilhelm II and Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918). The descendants of both the British monarch and King Christian IX also occupied the Danish, Greek, Norwegian and Spanish thrones.

¹¹*From Memory's Shrine*, p. 195.

royal and maternal duties, or that writing acted as a form of compensation for the loss of her child and the absence of any others. Early biographers cite this period as the point in which Sylva produced the collection of short stories, *Leidens Erdengang (Pilgrim Sorrow)*, eventually published in 1882 in Germany and 1884 in Britain. Simultaneously, she began to promote and translate the works of Romanian writers.

Sylva was also involved in the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), in which Romania sided with Russia. With her husband on the frontlines, Sylva turned areas of her palace, as well as the local monastery where she had made her summer home, into hospitals. She personally administered to patients, becoming known as ‘Muma Ranitilor’ (‘Mother of the Wounded’). In recognition of this work, Sylva received the Order of St Catherine, encrusted with diamonds, as a birthday present from the Russian Tsarina. Sylva also established her own Order during the war: the Order of Elizabeth – consisting of a gold cross on a blue ribbon – to reward distinguished service.’¹²

Sylva’s first publications occurred after the war. Until 1878, when a German translation of a Romanian poem appeared in the German newspaper *Gegenwart* under the pseudonym ‘E. Wedi,’ she had published nothing in the public sphere. She had, however, produced private volumes, such as her Book of Gospels for the Curtea de Arges Cathedral. There was a drastic change from the late 1870s onwards and it has been suggested that between 1878 and 1884 Sylva published twenty-five volumes.¹³ Whilst there is no definitive explanation for this

¹²Anonymous, ‘Carmen Sylva,’ on *Prodan Romanian Cultural Foundation* website, <http://www.romanianculture.org/personalities/Carmen_Sylva.htm> (accessed 13 August 2013).

¹³Elizabeth Burgoyne, *Carmen Sylva. Queen and Woman* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1941), p. 127.

change from private to public publishing, this decision coincides not only with the end of the Russo-Turkish War, but also with the foundation of Sylva's numerous charitable foundations. Dedicated to charity work, Sylva published in order to donate whatever profits she made from her pen to these projects.¹⁴ She began with a society for poor relief in 1871 and this was followed in quick succession by charities designed to benefit nearly every strand of Romanian society: a society to translate books – particularly school text books – into Romanian; a local orphanage, *Asyle Hélène*, where she helped to finance the building of a church; a society to give employment to poor women through sewing; the *Regina Elisabeto Societate de Binefacere* for the elderly and the Sisters of Charity (*Institutul Surorilor de Caritate 'Regina Elisabeta'*), which trained nurses. Publishing in the public sphere therefore had a financial incentive. Indeed, after her death *The New York Times* reported that she 'left all her property to charitable institutions.'¹⁵ If her formal role as a queen made a commercial career as a writer socially inappropriate, then writing to fund charitable projects was a way for her literary work to achieve positive recognition.

Her early work was published under a number of pseudonyms beginning, as I noted, with 'E. Wedi' – an anagram of her name and place of birth (Elisabeth and Wied). She later progressed to 'Ditto und Idem', the former being Sylva's pen-name and the latter belonging to Mite Kremnitz (1852-1916). German-born Kremnitz was the daughter of the famous surgeon Heinrich Adolf von Bardeleben

¹⁴This is hinted throughout Elizabeth Burgoyne's biography and is explicitly stated by Jennie Chappell in *Women of Worth. Sketches from the lives of "Carmen Sylva", Isabella Bird Bishop, Frances Power Cobbe and Mrs Branwell Booth* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co. Ltd, 1909): 'the fact that all the money she gains by her pen is devoted to the relief of poverty and suffering among her subjects raises her higher than any literary honour which has ever been awarded her,' (p. 53).

¹⁵Anonymous, 'QUEEN'S ESTATE TO CHARITY,' *The New York Times*, 6 March 1916, <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9806E2D8103FE233A25755C0A9659C946796D6CF>> (accessed 20 July 2013).

(1819-1895), a founding member of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Chirurgie*. She became Sylva's Maid of Honour in 1881, after moving to Bucharest in 1875 with her husband Wilhelm, a doctor, and their children. After his death in 1897 Kremnitz left Bucharest for Berlin, where she continued to write until her death. With Kremnitz, Sylva produced a number of short novels, including *Aus Zwei Welten* (1884) and *Astra* (1886), which do not appear to have been published in Britain. Kremnitz's husband also contributed to Sylva's expanding literary reputation, helping her to devise her longest-running pseudonym of Carmen Sylva.¹⁶ Wanting to reflect her love of nature and connect to the heritage of Romania, she combined the Latin words for 'song/singing' ('carmen') with 'sylvae', meaning 'of the forest.' Carmen Sylva was born.

The first pieces published under this new name were 'Hammerstein,' a historical poem, and 'Sappho,' which focused on the Ancient Greek poetess. Sappho re-entered literary culture as a result of a neo-Classical revival from the mid-eighteenth century and can be found in the works of Robert Southey (1774-1843), Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon. In the later decades of the nineteenth century, Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) and Michael Field (the pseudonym of Katherine Bradley (1846-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913)) also produced poetry influenced by, or focusing on, the Greek poetess. Margaret Reynolds notes that not all of the women listed here would have read the Greek fragments of Sappho's poetry, but nevertheless argues that Sappho became a 'powerful Muse figure for the Victorian women poets, a Muse figure that was perennially interesting because she was so much about themselves and their own

¹⁶Burgoyne, p. 108.

projects.¹⁷ From the beginning of her literary career, then, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, Carmen Sylva's work showed her interest in, and adherence to, contemporary cultural and literary conventions.

In the early 1890s, however, Sylva's involvement in the Ferdinand-Vacaresco affair meant that she was forced to leave Romania and her charitable enterprises. Her husband's nephew and heir to the Romanian throne, Prince Ferdinand (1865-1927), began a relationship with Hélène Vacaresco (1864-1947), Sylva's long-time acquaintance and collaborator on *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*.¹⁸ Ferdinand and Hélène wished to marry, but outrage ensued within the Romanian court. Early biographers state that according to the Romanian constitution, the heir to the throne was not permitted to marry a Romanian, but Gabriel Badea-Păun has more recently suggested that there was little legal reason to forbid the match. Instead, he argues that it was because the government feared that the marriage would hand back an element of power to the boyar families who had once ruled Romania (until the 1866 constitution), and that this would damage and delegitimise the prestige of the current dynasty.¹⁹ Sylva, who was seen as having orchestrated and encouraged the match, was subsequently exiled from Romania, apparently at her husband's behest. She returned in 1893, in time for the wedding of Ferdinand to Princess Marie, granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Sylva had met the British monarch several times, the most recent being her 1890 tour of Britain, when she had stayed at Balmoral. It is possible that they had met decades earlier, however, as Queen Victoria's 1890 journal entry suggests: 'I was delighted to see

¹⁷Margaret Reynolds, *The Sappho History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 126.

¹⁸These were a selection of folktales that Vacaresco had collected and transcribed into Romanian. Sylva then translated the volume into German and Alma Strettell (1856-1939) produced the English translation.

¹⁹Badea-Păun, p. 171.

the Queen [of Roumania] again, which I had not done since '63.'²⁰ There is no information to suggest that Carmen Sylva was in Britain at this time, so it is possible that she met the British monarch at a ball in Karlsruhe, Germany, which she attended with her father in 1863 and which was her first introduction to society.²¹

In her later years, Sylva published prolifically in many different languages. Her collection of aphorisms, first written and published in French under the title *Les Pensées d'une Reine*, won the *Prix Botta* for Literature in 1888, a prize awarded by the *Académie française*.²² She continued to work until her death in 1916, which was mourned by the Romanian people and on an international scale. Newspapers from around the world published obituaries and reported on her funeral in Bucharest, the significance of which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

1.2. Criticism Past and Present.

Despite her social connections and varied publishing history, Carmen Sylva is rarely discussed in modern criticism. This project began whilst collecting preliminary data about the presence of German writers in British culture. Whilst articles and reviews of German 'greats' such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) and Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-1876) were frequent, there were very few references to German women. Carmen

²⁰*The Letters of Queen Victoria. A Selection from her Majesty's Correspondence and Journal between the years 1886 and 1901*, ed. by George Earle Buckle, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1930), I (1886-1890), p. 642.

²¹Countess A. von Bothmer, *The Sovereign Ladies of Europe* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1899), p. 356.

²²The *Prix Botta* was awarded every four years between 1875 and 1985. It was presented to the individual who produced the best essay (in either Latin or French) on the theme of women. See Anonymous, 'Prix Botta' in *Académie français*, <<http://www.academie-francaise.fr/prix-botta>> (accessed 3 June 2013).

Sylva was one of the exceptions. Further research uncovered results relating to her that initially extended only as far as the early twentieth century. As will be discussed later in this chapter, there have been recent reprints of some of Sylva's works, but these were produced in German. English-language reprints are very limited, the most recent being in 1996, when a facsimile of her 1896 collection of Romanian folktales, *Legends from River and Mountain* was published by Felinfach, in Llanerch, Wales. It is unclear why this reprint occurred, other than the fact that it was a century after its initial publication. Other English-language reprints are limited not only in frequency, but also in size. For example, five poems by Sylva were published in *An Anthology of Romanian Women Poets* in 1994.²³ In 2001, a single fairy tale – 'Furnica – Queen of the Ants' – was published as part of another anthology of women's writing.²⁴

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to present Carmen Sylva as a case study, arguing in favour of her recuperation as a forgotten nineteenth-century writer. Evidence of her literary presence in Britain – defined here as the sustained interest in Sylva in British periodicals – will be uncovered. As this thesis will indicate, this is a period of fifty years, from May 1881 to May 1931. As I argued in the introduction, I will also engage with methodological questions surrounding recovery projects, the reasons why certain writers fade from critical consciousness and the benefits of critical reassessment. Through analysis of her literary presence, it should be possible to ascertain not only the scope of interest in Carmen Sylva during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, in comparison with other

²³ *An Anthology of Romanian Women Poets*, ed. by Adam J. Sorkin and Kurt W. Treptow (1994, New York; Iași: the Center for Romanian Studies, 1995).

²⁴ Carmen Sylva, 'Furnica – Queen of the Ants,' trans. by Jeannine Blackwell in *The Queen's Mirror. Fairy Tales by German Women, 1780-1900*, ed. and trans. by Shawn C. Jarvis and Jeannine Blackwell (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), pp. 325-333.

women writers, but to also consider what her presence reveals about British literary culture during this period.

In assessing the potential for Sylva's recuperation, it is necessary to first establish how much material has been written about her. Conducting a name search on databases such as *British Periodicals Online* returned over seven hundred results between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As well as articles, adverts and reviews, a number of commemorative pieces were dedicated to Sylva. These act as a tribute to her life and work, as well as a testament to interest in her during her lifetime. Postcards featuring her image were produced, both in Britain – including a souvenir of the 1900 Woman's Exhibition at Earls Court – as well as continental Europe. As of 1908, the French businessman Félix Potin (1820-1871) featured Sylva as one of five hundred *Celebrities Contemporaines* (contemporary celebrities) from around the world.²⁵ The public's interest in famous faces was not new to the *fin-de-siècle*, but by the time Sylva began to publish, the reproduction of photographs and images of an author had become a convention of book publishing. Annette R. Federico, for example, notes that Marie Corelli refused to be interviewed or photographed in order to remain in 'control of her celebrity,' but also recognises that authors were 'expected to cooperate in the commodification of their faces, bodies, pets, houses, and favourite haunts, all in the name of art, if not profit.'²⁶ As John Plunkett has noted – to be discussed in more detail Chapter Three – Queen Victoria was one of

²⁵Also included in this collection were Sylva's husband, King Carol, the French politician Henri Rochefort (1831-1913), Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) and Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna of Russia (1895-1918).

²⁶Annette R. Federico, *Idol of Suburbia. Marie Corelli and Late-Victorian Literary Culture* (Charlottesville, Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 21.

the first monarchs to actively embrace the media. Royal photographs were regularly printed from 1860 onwards, and Sylva's relationship with the British press conformed to this convention.²⁷

Literature, as well as images, was also dedicated to Sylva. The German poet Johanna Ambrosius (1854-1939) addressed a poem to Sylva in her *Poems*. First published in German in 1894, the volume proved popular on an international scale, translated in America in 1896 and Britain in 1910. Ambrosius's poem, in which Sylva is the symbol of 'all beauty which the heav'n and earth enfold,' was republished in the American periodical, *New Century Path*, in 1904 – testament to continuing interest in Sylva.²⁸ Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), an American poet best known for her sonnet 'The New Colossus' (1883) – lines from which were engraved on the Statue of Liberty in 1903 – also published a poem about Sylva. 'To Carmen Sylva' appeared in the American periodical, *Century Magazine*, in 1888 and was reprinted in James and Mary Ford's anthology, *Every Day in the Year* in 1902. The anthology, subtitled as 'A Poetical Epitome of the World's History,' is arranged according to the calendar, commemorating historical events as well as 'the men and women who have left an imprint on their day and generation.'²⁹ The anthology also includes poems addressed to Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle and Isaac Newton (1642-1727), and features the work of Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), Robert Browning (1812-1889) and William Wordsworth (1770-1850), among others. Lazarus's poem, to be discussed in

²⁷John Plunkett, *Queen Victoria. First Media Monarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 10.

²⁸Johanna Ambrosius, 'Carmen Sylva,' in *Poems*, by Johanna Ambrosius, ed. by Professor Karl Schrattenthal, trans. by Mary J. Safford (1894; Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1896), p. 93.

²⁹James L. Ford and Mary K. Ford, 'Preface,' in *Every Day in the Year*, ed. by James L. Ford and Mary K. Ford (1902; New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1969), n. pag.

Chapter Three, is included on 29 December, Sylva's birthday, and addresses her as 'Mother, Poet, Queen, in one!'³⁰

On a rudimentary level, this indicates that Sylva and her writing were indeed being discussed during her lifetime. Although some of these pieces were produced in America or continental Europe, they are still relevant as evidence of a sustained interest in Sylva and recognition of her as a significant literary figure with an international reputation. This corresponds with interest in German literary figures and their writing within British culture at this time, as established by twentieth-century critics such as Susanne Stark. Stark's study, *"Behind Inverted Commas": Translation and Anglo-German Cultural Relations in the Nineteenth Century* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1999), provides a useful overview of Anglo-German cultural relations, documenting the British literary communities dedicated to reading German, as well as listing translators of German literature. *German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860*, edited by Bayard Quincey Morgan and A.R. Hohlfeld (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1949), presents the physical evidence of this interest in German literature, listing the German writers published in one hundred and sixty four British magazines, including the *Athenaeum* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. Although German male writers such as Goethe, the poet Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862) and Schiller are shown to be the most prominent, a number of women writers are referenced, including Fanny Lewald (1811-1889) and Ida von Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880). However, since this survey does not extend beyond 1860, it is unhelpful with

³⁰Emma Lazarus, 'To Carmen Sylva,' in *Every Day in the Year*, p. 419.

regard to understanding Sylva's reputation, whose literary presence did not develop until the late 1880s.

Nevertheless, as the second chapter of this thesis will indicate, Sylva was published and discussed in a wide variety of these same periodicals, as Bayard Quincey Morgan himself recognised, albeit on a limited level, in his *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation 1481-1927*. This study provides the longest list of English-language editions of Sylva's works, listing seventeen titles in total. Morgan includes information on translations – even describing some as 'very good' – as well as a list of reprints, which has proved very useful in assessing continued interest in Sylva during her lifetime.³¹ It is, however, limited to single volumes of Sylva's works, rather than a more exhaustive list of all her publications. As will be indicated in Appendix Five, such a list would include the pieces published in anthologies and the British periodical press.

Stark and Quincey Morgan's studies suggest that there was a clear interest in German literature in the nineteenth century but, for reasons this thesis will consider, this interest has not been investigated as strongly for women writers like Carmen Sylva. Assessing modern interest in Sylva, then, becomes problematic. There is a recurring limitation found in sources with references to her: as will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter, lists of her published works are often incomplete. *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900*, for example, includes only one listing for Carmen Sylva – a short story published in *Temple Bar* in 1882 – and does not include listings for other magazines, such as

³¹Bayard Quincey Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation 1481-1927* (1922; New York: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 1965), p. 84.

the *Fortnightly Review* or the *New Review*.³² This could be tied to her status as a woman writer, whereby infrequent references to Sylva are a symptom of a wider gender imbalance in modern criticism when discussing German writers. The majority of recent studies focus predominantly on male ‘greats’, a bias that the recuperation of Carmen Sylva aims to address. It is widely recognised that Goethe was the most popular German author in Victorian Britain and his status has been maintained in what could be termed the British ‘canon’ of German literature, which developed from nineteenth-century studies of German literature by ‘Germanophiles’ like William Taylor (1765-1836) and Thomas Carlyle. Rosemary Ashton, for example, in *The German Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), provides contextual information on the development of interest in German culture through her engagement with key ‘Germanophiles’ such as Carlyle, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), and G.H. Lewes (1817-1878). She notes their interest in equally ‘great’ German men: the philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Ludwig Feuerbach as well as Goethe. Reconsidering this interest will provide a more accurate picture of British literary culture during this period, not least by indicating that British awareness of international writing was more wide-ranging than was initially thought.

Subsequently, twentieth-century scholarship has largely reinforced the prejudices of nineteenth-century studies and anthologies, which gave preferential treatment to male writers and almost entirely overlooked the influence of German women writers on British society. Carlyle wrote numerous essays focusing on the

³²*The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900*, ed. by Walter E. Houghton, 5 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966-1989).

canonical ‘greats’ such as Schiller and Novalis (pseudonym of Georg Philipp Friedrich von Hardenberg) (1772-1801), and his *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, in Seven Volumes* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1839) contains a number of essays on Goethe’s life, works and death. Similarly, Frederick Metcalfe’s *History of German Literature: Based on the German Work of Vilmar* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1858) only references four women across the entire anthology and often in no detail beyond their names. The exception is a single reference to the lyrical poems of Annette von Droste-Hülshof (1797-1848). A later anthology by William Scherer references a larger number of women, nineteen in total, but the majority are mentioned not as writers, but in terms of their relationships with canonical ‘greats.’³³

By the 1890s, however, the focus on eighteenth-century women writers appears to have shifted and an 1892 anthology covers a number of nineteenth-century German women writers, such as Ida von Hahn-Hahn and Fanny Lewald. Nevertheless, these references remain limited, ultimately illustrating the extent to which German literature was canonised in the nineteenth century to exclude women writers. These preferences are recognised stylistically within James K. Hosmer’s anthology, whereby ‘the few supreme names are printed in italicised capitals’ and ‘Roman small letters indicate a throng who, though undistinguished,

³³William Scherer, *A History of German Literature* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886). See, for example, Scherer’s reference to Charlotte Stein (1742-1827), who is included in the anthology because of her relationships with Schiller and Goethe. It is also interesting to note that Metcalfe and Scherer’s anthologies, although published in English, are either based on previous German scholarship (in the case of Metcalfe’s anthology) or were written in German and translated into English (in the case of Scherer’s anthology, which was translated by Mrs F.C. Conybeare – Max Müller’s daughter, Mary).

still deserve notice in an elaborate study.’³⁴ The women writers Hosmer references are all in this latter category and are not mentioned in the main body of the anthology. Hosmer’s lack of engagement with their work suggests they are recognised as less significant and only worthy of the briefest of references. Twentieth-century surveys of German literature, such as *A Literary History of Germany*, have maintained this canonical focus.³⁵ Although the editors, Kenneth J. Northcott and R.T. Llewellyn, note that the anthology is not designed as a ‘catalogue’ but ‘to try and capture the spirit and literary genius of a given period through a selection of typical and outstanding texts,’ their approach clearly does not extend to an interest in German women writers.³⁶ Certain women, including Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, are again mentioned, but the collection continues to give preference to male writers and reference women in the context of their relationships with these men.

This bias is continued in modern scholarship. Ruth Whittle and Debbie Pinfold have chronicled the political writing produced by Malwida von Meysenbug (1816-1903), Fanny Lewald, Johanna Kinkel (1810-1858) and Louise Aston (1814-1871), but there is no full length study of German women writers and their influence on British literary culture.³⁷ Discussion of such writers is limited to isolated chapters and articles by critics including Rosemary Ashton,

³⁴James K. Hosmer, *A Short History of German Literature* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1892), p. 579.

³⁵Kenneth J. Northcott and R.T. Llewellyn, ‘Foreword,’ in *A Literary History of Germany. The Nineteenth Century, 1830-1890*, by G. Wallis Field (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1975), ix.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷Ruth Whittle and Debbie Pinfold, *Voices of Rebellion Political Writing by Malwida von Meysenbug, Fanny Lewald, Johanna Kinkel and Louise Aston* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2005).

Gisela Argyle and Carol Diethe.³⁸ Longer works dedicated solely to women's writing, such as Jo Catling's edited collection, *A History of Women's Writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), aim to provide a full account of women's writing in German from the Middle Ages to the present, as well as a bibliographical guide, but do not detail any potential influence they had outside of their homelands. Whilst some chapters, such as Patricia Howe's 'Women's writing 1830-1890,' provide the contextual background to women's writing during this period, chronicling the slow improvements in women's education in Germany, there is little engagement with the international presence of these women.³⁹ Moreover, they do not make any reference to Carmen Sylva.

Despite the argument that the limited interest in German women's writing has negatively influenced Sylva's literary reputation, she also has a very limited presence in collections which specifically focus on women's literature.⁴⁰ This could be connected to her status as a non-canonical and largely marginalised writer and could also reflect the motives of the various editors. *Women and Gender in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Asia*, for example, edited by

³⁸For example, there is a chapter in Rosemary Ashton's *Little Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), as well as Carol Diethe's 'Keeping busy in the Waiting Room: German Women Writers in London following the 1848 revolution,' in *Exiles from European Revolutions. Refugees in Mid-Victorian England*, ed. by Sabine Freitag (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), pp. 253-274. Gisela Argyle has also focused on two women writers in 'The Horror and the Pleasure of Un-English Fiction: Ida von Hahn-Hahn and Fanny Lewald in England,' *Comparative Literature Studies*, 44 (2007), 144-165.

³⁹Patricia Howe, 'Women's Writing 1830-1890,' in *A History of Women's Writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland*, ed. by Jo Catling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 88-103.

⁴⁰These were the *Bloomsbury Guide to Woman's Literature*, ed. by Claire Buck (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1992) and *An Encyclopaedia of Continental Women Writers*, ed. by Katherina M. Wilson, 2 vols (London: St James Press, 1991). There was no mention to Carmen Sylva under her pen name, her real name (Elisabeth) or as the Queen of Romania.

Mary Zirin, Irina Livezeanu, Christine D. Worobec and June Pachuta Farris, purports to be a comprehensive bibliography but only includes a list of thirteen works for Sylva. Moreover, despite their recognition that she ‘wrote extensively,’ four of the thirteen entries do not refer to Sylva’s original work, but to biographies.⁴¹ Similarly, the scope of the *Bloomsbury Guide*, which aims to produce an international account of women’s writing and ‘ensure that the writers included represent as many different kinds of literary production as possible,’ inevitably results in some women writers being excluded.⁴² However, the anthology references other German women who were writing both before and during Sylva’s lifetime: Mathilde Blind (1841-1896), Ida von Hahn-Hahn, Johanna Kinkel and Fanny Lewald. Katherina M. Wilson’s *An Encyclopaedia of Continental Women Writers* also provides information on Hahn-Hahn and Kinkel. As is explained in Chapter Three in more detail, German women writers such as Fanny Lewald have a significantly smaller British presence than Sylva, but have remained in public consciousness. It appears that there are certain nineteenth-century German women writers who are discussed within modern scholarship, but Carmen Sylva is not one of them.

Encyclopaedias that do discuss Sylva’s life and works predominantly present the same information: Carmen Sylva was the pseudonym of Elisabeth, the Queen of Romania, who was born in the Neuwied in 1843 and died in Bucharest

⁴¹*Women and Gender in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Asia. A Comprehensive Bibliography*, ed. by Mary Zirin, Irina Livezeanu, Christine D. Worobec and June Pachuta Farris, 2 vols (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 2007), I (Southeastern and East Central Europe), ed. by Irina Livezeanu and June Pachuta Farris, p. 332.

⁴²Claire Buck, ‘Introduction,’ in *Bloomsbury Guide to Woman’s Literature*, ed. by Claire Buck (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1992), ix-x.

in 1916.⁴³ The *Deutsches Literatur Lexikon* is the only encyclopaedia to attempt a comprehensive list of her original works, her translations of other writers' works and literature written about her. The bibliography moves chronologically from one of her first published works – 'Hammerstein' in 1880 – to a posthumous collection of Sylva's letters, published in 1920. It should be noted, however, that this encyclopaedia focuses on German-language editions of Sylva's work and does not reference volumes published in other languages, thus limiting its usefulness for this study.

W.N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley is the only critic to describe Sylva as a 'poet and prose-writer, writing in Rumanian, German, French and English,' rather than in familial or matrimonial terms.⁴⁴ However, the limited information on Carmen Sylva in his *Dictionary of European Writers* is again connected with Hargreaves-Mawdsley's overall aims, specifically his decision to include a writer only if 'his work is (a) of historical value as illustrating the social life of his day, (b) if he influenced a large public and (c) if his work, mediocre in itself and almost dead, started a literary movement or inspired an author greater than himself.'⁴⁵ Hargreaves-Mawdsley does not provide explicit evidence of Sylva adhering to these criteria. Indeed, his use of masculine pronouns may be further indication of gender bias. Nevertheless, the information presented in this thesis will assert that Carmen Sylva's life and work reflect at least the first two of Hargreaves-Mawdsley's categories.

⁴³These were: W.N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Dictionary of European Writers* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1968); Henry and Mary Garland, *The Oxford Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and the *Deutsches Literatur Lexikon*, ed. by Wilhelm Kosh (Zurich: K.G. Saur Verlag AG, 2001).

⁴⁴Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 109.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, v.

This British interest in Sylva was returned to sporadically by the Romanian scholar Eric Tappe, who had served in Romania with the Royal Signals both during and after World War Two (1939-1945). In later life, Tappe endeavoured to introduce Anglophone society to Romanian literature, whilst working at London University.⁴⁶ This extended to a consideration of Carmen Sylva. In 1967, Tappe published a letter written by Sylva to Mrs Müller, wife of the Oxford professor, philologist and orientalist Max Müller (1823-1900).⁴⁷ The letter, written in 1875, expresses Sylva's thanks for the Müllers' hospitality – Sylva had spent two days in their Oxford home following the death of her daughter. In 1986, Tappe again established a link between Sylva and famous nineteenth-century figures, discussing newspaper editor and author T. Wemyss Reid (1842-1905) and his connection to Oscar Wilde, whose help Reid sought for the fledgling monthly, *The Lady's Realm*.⁴⁸ Wilde's response was to list potential contributors, which primarily consisted of prominent women writers who would write on topics that would appeal to a sophisticated and well-educated female audience. These included Olive Schreiner (1855-1920), Lady Emilia Dilke (1840-1904) – whose first husband was the Oxford scholar and Germanophile Mark Pattison (1813-1884) – and Carmen Sylva. Another article, tracing the development of a Romanian folktale and its English adaptation, also mentions Sylva. Here, Tappe describes Sylva's recitation of her play, *Meister Manole*, to an audience that included the actors Ellen Terry (1847-1928) and Sir Henry Irving

⁴⁶Dennis Deletant, 'Tappe, Eric Ditmar (1910–1992),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, May 2010, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/98435>> (accessed 13 Aug 2013).

⁴⁷E.D. Tappe, 'A Letter of Carmen Sylva to Mrs Max-Muller,' *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 45 (January 1967), 210-212.

⁴⁸E. D. Tappe, 'T. Wemyss Reid and Rumania; His *Woman's World*, Oscar Wilde and Carmen Sylva,' *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 64 (April 1986), 256-260.

(1838-1905).⁴⁹ Tappe's work engages with Sylva's life and work in the context of her connection with other nineteenth-century writers living and working in Britain, a link which the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis will explore in more detail.

There is also evidence that Sylva is starting to attract more modern critical attention and a limited number of critical works have emerged in recent years. In 2009, Rosalind Marie Craft published a thesis entitled *Carmen Sylva and her Contribution to Turn-of-the-Century Music as Poet, Translator, and Patron*, which focused on Sylva's musical connections.⁵⁰ There are, however, a number of areas where this present thesis differs from Craft's, particularly with regard to its engagement with Sylva's literary work. Perhaps as a result of her musical focus, Craft overlooks much of Sylva's writing, suggesting, for example, that after the English translation of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* in 1891, 'Sylva's next major English work to be published was *A Queen's Fairy Book* in 1901.'⁵¹ As shown throughout this study and its accompanying appendices, Sylva published widely between 1891 and 1901, in genres ranging from short stories to poetry and novels.

Inaccuracies in Craft's thesis also extend to Sylva's other works, stating, for example, that her novel *Edleen Vaughan: or Paths of Peril* (henceforth *Edleen Vaughan*) was written in 1894 in collaboration with Mite Kremnitz. I have found no evidence to suggest that the novel was produced collaboratively, and it was, in fact, published in 1891. Craft also allocates Sylva a larger level of contemporary

⁴⁹E. D. Tappe, 'A Rumanian Ballad and Its English Adaptation,' *Folklore*, 95 (1984), 113-119.

⁵⁰Rosalind Marie Craft, *Carmen Sylva and her Contribution to Turn-of-the-Century Music as Poet, Translator, and Patron* (Connecticut: University of Connecticut, 2009).

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 17.

interest than seems appropriate, noting that ‘a great deal of interest [in Sylva] still exists, particularly in Europe.’⁵² This sentiment does not seem justified, given that the most recent studies have been published in German and French and that, apart from Craft’s thesis, I have found nothing written in English about Sylva since 1941. As will be explored at a later stage in this chapter, these inaccuracies and mythologising accounts have contributed to Sylva’s current literary marginalisation.

With this in mind, the most significant modern criticism about Sylva has been published in German and French. Silvia Irina Zimmerman has brought out two detailed studies of Carmen Sylva’s life and work. In 2010, she produced a broad account of Sylva’s works, *Die dichtende Königin*, and in 2011 published another study specifically focusing on Sylva’s Romanian folktales, *Pelesch-Märchen*.⁵³ More recently, she has edited German-language reprints of some of Sylva’s writing, including her folktales and aphorisms. A dedicatory website and Facebook page are also connected with Zimmerman’s scholarship, as well as that of Gabriel Badea-Păun, whose biography of Sylva will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter.⁵⁴

In both studies, Zimmerman provides background information on Sylva and her literary activity and then engages in a thematic discussion of her works. The 2010 study, much larger than that of 2011, mainly focuses on the ways in which Sylva presented her ‘Weltanschauung’ (‘world view’) to her readers.

⁵²Ibid., p. 4.

⁵³Silvia Irina Zimmerman, *Die dichtende Königin* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2010) and *Der Zauber des fernen Königreichs* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2011).

⁵⁴Silvia Irina Zimmerman, *Carmen Sylva*, <<http://www.carmen-sylva.de/index.htm>> (accessed 13 August 2013). This webpage is linked to the Facebook page for Carmen Sylva: <<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Carmen-Sylva/183869317838>> (accessed 13 August 2013).

Zimmerman's argument stems from discussion of the autobiographical aspects of Sylva's work as well as recurring themes within it, such as the contrast between the poor and the rich, marital problems and war. She then discusses the various literary forms used by Sylva, before considering the reception of her work and how she can be viewed within the context of late nineteenth-century culture. This last aspect is of particular interest, as Zimmerman places Sylva in the context not only of German literature, but also women writers, 'foreign literature', Romanian literature, and the intellectual ideas of the period.⁵⁵

Zimmerman's engagement with the influence of English literature on Sylva's oeuvre is, nonetheless, limited, merely noting that Sylva visited England in 1848 and learnt to speak the language from her English nanny, to the extent that it became 'eine zweite Muttersprache' ('a second mother tongue').⁵⁶ Zimmerman notes the works of Walter Scott, Charles Dickens and Thomas Carlyle as having influenced Sylva's literary production, but provides no further detail. This is the primary limitation of Zimmerman's work: as with the *Deutsches Literatur Lexikon*, the information on German editions of Sylva's work is far more extensive than 'foreign' and specifically English-language publications. This is seen most obviously in the catalogue of Sylva's published works provided by Zimmerman in both of her volumes. The 2010 volume contains an incomplete list of the foreign-language translations of Sylva's works, missing not only

⁵⁵*Die dichtende Königin*, p. 359. Zimmerman notes, for example, that aspects of Darwinism can be found in Sylva's work, but does not provide further explanation.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 340 (my translation).

publication details, but also key primary texts.⁵⁷ Consequently, I aim to expand Zimmerman's otherwise detailed catalogue and produce a comprehensive list of works that were published in English, both in book-form as well as in periodicals or magazines.

Modern references, albeit much smaller in scope, can also be found in works outside of the literary field. Walter Marsten's history of the Rhine, for example, includes a section on Monrepos, the palace where Sylva had spent much of her childhood.⁵⁸ There is also a limited engagement with Sylva within works focusing on the history of Romania.⁵⁹ R.W. Seton-Watson's *A History of the Roumanians* includes two short sentences on Sylva: that she 'was to devote a long life and very genuine artistic and literary talents to raising national and moral standards in her adopted country,' and that she had a 'vivid and charming personality.'⁶⁰ James P. Niessen's more recent study is equally brief, stating only that Sylva 'gained popularity through her fondness for Romanian folk costume and the poetry and collections of Romanian folktales she published under the

⁵⁷For example, Zimmerman lists Blanche Roosevelt's *Carmen Sylva. A Study with two tales from the German of Carmen Sylva*, as being published in 1891 but only provides the place of publication (London). Through my own research I can add further information: the work in question was published by Chapman & Hall. Similarly, Zimmerman lists the first English-language translation of a work by Sylva as *Songs of Toil* in 1888. In fact, it was her collection of allegorical short stories, *Pilgrim Sorrow*, first published in 1884. Other English-language works that Zimmerman does not mention are Sylva's novel, *Edleen Vaughan* (New York, London: Cassell Publishing Company; F.V. White & Co., 1891, 1892) or the publications of short stories such as 'Puiu'. These are only referenced in terms of their German publications, or their translation into other languages, as was the case of 'Puiu' in the Armenian newspaper *Illustrarum Ardzgang* in 1890.

⁵⁸Walter Marsden, *The Rhineland* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1973).

⁵⁹For example, Keith Hitchins's *Rumania 1866-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) makes no reference to Sylva, focusing instead on political developments in Romania from the accession of her husband, Carol I, onwards. Hitchins's forthcoming study, *A Concise History of Romania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) may contain more information, but will not be published until February 2014.

⁶⁰R.W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Roumanians* (1934; New York: Archon books, 1963), p. 326.

pseudonym Carmen Sylva,’ and that she had a ‘strained’ relationship with her husband.⁶¹

Limited references to Sylva in historical studies of Romania are, in part, tied to the country’s political history. The Communist party seized power in Romania in 1947 and the regime lasted until 1989. During this period, certain Romanian historians rewrote history to celebrate communism and condemn the previous government. For example, the *Chronological History of Romania* makes little reference to the monarchy, other than the fact that Carol I became King in 1881, supported war against the Central Powers in 1914, and died in October of that year. Instead, the study primarily refers to strike action, the formation of unions and the establishment of political newspapers that published work by socialists or communists, including Karl Marx (1818-1883).⁶²

This rewriting of history has been recognised by modern historians. Writing in 1964, just before the death of the Communist party leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1901-1965), who controlled Romania from 1947 to 1965, Ghita Ionescu notes that all histories of the regime written during this period are fundamentally unreliable.⁶³ Discussing educational policies under the regime, Ionescu states that ‘textbooks of grammar, history and the sciences were hastily rewritten in order to belittle and distort the Rumanian [*sic*] tradition, while putting

⁶¹James P. Niessen, ‘Romania,’ in *Eastern Europe. An introduction to the People, Lands, and Culture*, ed. by Richard Frucht, 3 vols (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, Inc, 2005), III (South-eastern Europe), p. 754.

⁶²Horia C. Matei, Marcel D. Popa, Nicolae Stoicescu, Ioan Chiper and Ion Alexandrescu, *Chronological History of Romania* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română in co-operation with the National Commission of the Socialist Republic of Romania for UNESCO, 1972), pp. 214-215.

⁶³He was succeeded by Nicolae Ceausescu (1918-1989), who became the head of state from 1965. In 1989, the regime collapsed and Ceausescu was overthrown and executed alongside his wife, Elena.

the Soviet Union on a pedestal.’⁶⁴ Similarly, Edward Behr notes that ‘historians of the Ceausescu era, in so far as they mention this period [King Carol’s reign from 1866-1914] at all other than in clichés, tend to stress the shortcomings: the parliamentary domination of landlords and aristocrats at the expense of the peasants and workers, the latent anti-Semitism, the German flavour of the period (Karl had married a German princess, named Elizabeth de Wied [*sic*]).’⁶⁵ Behr is one of the few historians to mention Sylva, but his references have largely negative connotations, suggesting, for example, she was ‘more hawkish than her husband’ when war broke out in 1914.⁶⁶ These historical accounts provide some explanation for Sylva’s obscurity: the political motivations of the Communist party from 1947-1989 led to a marginalisation of the monarchy. Rather than aspects of Sylva’s life being exaggerated or downplayed, as will be discussed in the following section, it was censored by communist historians. History was rewritten to exclude elements that did not suit the political motives of the regime and Sylva’s legacy in Romania, as well as her literary success, were two such ‘undesirable’ elements.

Sylva is also mentioned in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera* as a result of her connection to the German composer August Bungert (1845-1915). Indeed, the first fact about Bungert, taking up around half of the small paragraph dedicated to him, is that ‘in 1899 he formed a friendship with the Queen of Romania who, as “Carmen Sylva” wrote poems for him to set and also used her influence to found in 1911 the *Bungert-Bund* with a magazine *Der Bund*, for the

⁶⁴Ghita Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania 1944-1962* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 175.

⁶⁵Edward Behr, ‘Kiss the hand you cannot bite.’ *The Rise and Fall of the Ceausescus* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1991), p. 30.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 35.

advancement of his music.’⁶⁷ This reference, as well as those previously mentioned, suggests that although engagement with her is limited, Carmen Sylva has been credited with contributing to nineteenth-century society within modern criticism, even if this is predominantly in the context of her royal status rather than her literary output, a topic that will as be discussed in the following chapters.

1.3. ‘The weapon of personality’: biographies of Carmen Sylva.

In 1850, writing the preface to a joint publication of her sisters’ works, Emily’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Anne’s *Agnes Grey* (1847), Charlotte Brontë reflected that ‘critics sometimes use for their chastisement, the weapon of personality and for their reward, a flattery, which is not true praise.’⁶⁸ Such bias is not, however, limited to reviewers. With regard to Carmen Sylva, this dangerous flattery can be found in the numerous biographies published during her lifetime, as well as posthumously.

Secondary literature on Sylva primarily takes the form of biographies. They are generally written by women who are personally connected to Sylva and they portray her private life as stimulating her literary output. As will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter, her royal status may have prevented a more candid biographical treatment. The first English-language publication occurred in 1890 and was a translation from the German biography by Baroness Stackelberg, a childhood friend of Sylva’s. The most recent is from 1941, by Elizabeth Burgoyne. She also appears to have been personally acquainted with members of

⁶⁷*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, ed. by John Warrack and Ewan West (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.100.

⁶⁸Charlotte Brontë, ‘Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell,’ in *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey with A Selection from their Literary Remains* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1850), n. pag.

the Romanian royal family. She thanks Queen Marie for her ‘help’ and for allowing her to stay at Monrepos, which was Sylva’s childhood home.⁶⁹ Other references to Sylva maintain this personal focus. As I have noted, she is included in a volume of extracts from Queen Victoria’s journal entries and is also mentioned in the biographies of other prominent women, such as Sylva’s close friend the Empress Elisabeth of Austria (1837-1898).⁷⁰ She is also discussed by Virginia Woolf in her review of Queen Marie’s biography.⁷¹

Sylva’s biographies generally rework the same anecdotes and information, aligning areas of her personal history with her literary abilities and output. There are numerous anecdotes about the young princess as a passionate child of nature with a ‘restless spirit’ whose apparently free and idyllic childhood was frequently interrupted by illness and the death of her loved ones.⁷² Deichmann in particular notes, and in most cases includes, poetry that Sylva composed during these periods, including ‘The Sickroom’ or ‘On Sorrow’ – a juxtaposition which clearly aligns motivation to write with personal experiences. This connection between life and work is developed to an even greater degree when biographers discuss the death of her daughter. Deichmann, Chappell and Burgoyne reiterate that Sylva ‘was never again quite on earth,’ after Marie’s death and that she was unable to conceive again.⁷³ Yet they also note that that it was during this bereavement that

⁶⁹Burgoyne, xiii.

⁷⁰Brigitte Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress. A biography of Empress Elisabeth of Austria*, trans. by Ruth Hein (1982; Berlin: Ullstein, 1994).

⁷¹Virginia Woolf, ‘Royalty,’ (1934) in *Women and Writing*, ed. by Michèle Barrett (London: The Woman’s Press Limited, 1979), pp. 193-198.

⁷²Deichmann, p. 76.

⁷³Burgoyne, p. 94.

Sylva began to translate Romanian poetry, including that of Vasile Alecsandri (1821-1890).⁷⁴

Unfortunately, by mythologising and exaggerating her life, Sylva's biographers ignore the problems that occurred during her life in Romania, such as the 1907 peasant revolt, as well as critical engagement with her work. Such tactical avoidance adheres to conventions of nineteenth-century life-writing which, as Elinor S. Shaffer has noted, was not as 'daring' as modern biographies and attempted to avoid negative representations of their subjects.⁷⁵ Similarly, Roger Paulin, discussing the role of biography in Germany, which peaked in popularity between 1830 and 1890, notes that German biographic tradition came to focus on the 'timeless poetic genius' who 'should transcend mere influence.'⁷⁶ This emphasis helps to explain the treatment of Sylva as a child genius in Deichmann's biography – the only study to have been translated from the German – but it is also applicable to the other English accounts. There are discrepancies between the biographies, with later accounts presenting conflicting opinions about her relationship with her mother as well as her husband. Whereas Deichmann's biography describes Carol I as Sylva's 'husband of choice [...] a true union of hearts, had united them,' and Seton-Watson, approximately forty years later, describes their 'great domestic happiness,' this is entirely contradicted by Burgoyne in 1941.⁷⁷ She suggests that Sylva's husband, as well as her mother, Queen Marie, 'treated her badly,' and throughout her biography makes reference

⁷⁴Burgoyne, p. 95.

⁷⁵Elinor S. Shaffer, 'Shaping Victorian Biography: From Anecdote to Bildungsroman,' in *Mapping Lives. The Uses of Biography*, ed. by Peter France and William St Clair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 132.

⁷⁶Roger Paulin, 'Adding Stones to the Edifice: Patterns of German Biography,' in *Mapping Lives. The Uses of Biography*, p. 105.

⁷⁷Deichmann, p. 133; Seton-Watson, p. 326.

to Sylva's parents 'suppressing and punishing her at every turn.'⁷⁸ Burgoyne also suggests that King Carol was fundamentally different to Sylva in temperament and that this led to conflict, a sentiment that Hamann supports. Hamann, comparing Sylva's life with that of Empress Elisabeth of Austria, notes that 'both "poet queens" were unfulfilled and unhappy in their marriages.'⁷⁹

These later accounts include significantly more negative information. Whilst not overtly criticising Sylva's lifestyle, they make more references to the hardships she experienced, including her inability to conceive, as well as public opinion towards her. Burgoyne, for example, hints at initial unrest in Romania, noting that France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) – during which Romania had sided with France – 'did nothing to increase the popularity of the Prince and Princess, who were frequently and scathingly referred to as "the German and his wife."'”⁸⁰ Zimmerman takes this further, suggesting that the royal couple's first year in Romania was characterised by 'heftige antidynastische und deutschfeindlich (frankophile) Stimmungen' ('intensely anti-monarchist and anti-German (Francophile) sentiments').⁸¹ Hamann, discussing Sylva's 1884 visit to the Empress of Austria in Vienna, also suggests that the reception of Sylva was more complicated than earlier biographies had indicated. She describes Sylva as 'a figure of fun' in Viennese society – which at the time was often associated with sophisticated literary and musical culture – due, among other things, to her peculiar dress-sense.⁸²

⁷⁸Burgoyne, xi; p. 24.

⁷⁹Hamann, p. 292.

⁸⁰Burgoyne, p. 80.

⁸¹Zimmerman, *Die dichtende Königin*, p. 14 (my translation).

⁸²Hamann, p. 291.

Sylva is also depicted as an eccentric, outlandish figure in Julia Gerlardi's *Born to Rule*, which documents the lives of Queen Victoria's granddaughters, Princesses Maud (1869-1938), Sophie (1870-1932), Alexandra (1872-1918), Victoria Eugenie (Ena) (1887-1969) and Marie, also known as Missy, who became Sylva's successor in Romania. Although highlighting Marie's numerous affairs, the individual who merits the most criticism is Sylva. Gerlardi's engagement with her alternates between the depiction of an absurd figure, 'unpredictable [...] capricious and eccentric, with a propensity for overacting,' and a cunning manipulator, who inflicted 'wounds' on the Romanian court.⁸³ Gerlardi also questions Sylva's mental health, noting her 'disordered personality' and belief in communicating with the dead.⁸⁴ Interestingly, Gerlardi's account stems from interviews with members of European royalty, making it another example of personal acquaintances producing a potential for bias. As a result, Gerlardi does not always provide evidence for her claims. For example, the suggestion that Sylva 'bullied the young mother [Marie] into handing over little Carol and Elisabetta,' and exercised a controlling influence over them is presented as proof of Sylva's devious nature.⁸⁵ It is not, however, given evidentiary support. Gerlardi's description of the relationship between Marie and Sylva is also largely taken from Marie's diaries and letters. The subjectivity inherent in this deeply personal mode of expression again calls the validity of Gerlardi's assertions into question. There is also a small contradiction in facts concerning Sylva's involvement in the affair between Prince Ferdinand and Hélène Vacaresco:

⁸³ Julia Gerlardi, *Born to Rule* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2005), p. 63; p. 224.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Gerlardi initially states that Sylva was banished from Romania for two years, but a chapter later increases it to three.⁸⁶

The conflicting information between more recent biographies and those from the 1890s thus represents what Richard Holmes has termed the ‘complications of human truth-telling.’⁸⁷ The elements of ‘truth-telling’ in the biographies were undoubtedly influenced by the subject herself, since Sylva was still living when the majority of them were written. Avoiding any negative impressions of her marriage, which would have been deemed inappropriate as well as potentially libellous, indicates that these biographers have been selective in their presentation of information – a bias most likely designed to avoid insulting the queen with whom many of them were personally acquainted. Instead of including details of the more salacious aspects of her life, Sylva’s nineteenth-century biographers shape her reputation as a charitable, talented individual. This partially adheres to Elinor S. Shaffer’s emphasis on tone, and how its ‘role in lulling, misleading, and smoothing over uncomfortable matters in biography [...] became a major one in Victorian life-writing.’⁸⁸ In the case of the earlier biographies by Baroness Deichmann, Blanche Roosevelt or Jennie Chappell, however, the ‘tone’ is clearly one of a suppression of facts, rather than an attempt to down-play them. Biographies written after Sylva’s death could offer alternative interpretations without fear of insulting their subject.

Nevertheless, later biographies are still guilty of bias, fighting what Miranda Seymour terms the ‘battle between discretion and candour.’⁸⁹ The debate

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 35; p. 63.

⁸⁷Richard Holmes, ‘The Proper Study,’ in *Mapping Lives. The Uses of Biography*, p. 17.

⁸⁸Shaffer, p. 123.

⁸⁹Miranda Seymour, ‘Shaping the Truth,’ in *Mapping Lives. The Uses of Biography*, p. 258.

as to whether the pursuit of accuracy and truth should overrule ethics and discretion – in order to preserve the subject's reputation or the feelings of the family – can be applied to the engagement with the most controversial occurrence in Sylva's reign: her involvement in the affair between Prince Ferdinand and Hélène Vacaresco and her subsequent exile from Romania. Although this argument cannot be applied to Roosevelt or Deichmann's biographies, since both were published before the incident occurred, the desire to protect Sylva and her family's reputation may have been the ulterior motive behind those written by the Countess von Bothmer, Chappell and Burgoyne. Discretion seems to have been employed by these biographers because of Sylva's royal connections and the family members who could be affected by the scandal. These included Princess Marie, as well as her grandmother, Queen Victoria. The outcome of this affair directly affected Marie, as she eventually married Ferdinand and became the second Queen of Romania in 1922. The relations between these royal families would have been influenced by scandalous revelations and Sylva's biographers therefore appear to have intentionally misled their readers. They do not mention the affair and mask Sylva's exile from Romania under the guise of ill health, which made it necessary for her to remain away from home.⁹⁰ Even Burgoyne, who is the only biographer to discuss the scandal and exile and was writing twenty-five years after Sylva's death, states that some details are 'too personal' to present to readers.⁹¹

Gabriel Badea-Păun's French-language biography of Sylva attempts to redress this imbalance. Recently translated into German by Silvia Zimmerman,

⁹⁰von Bothmer, p. 363.

⁹¹Burgoyne, p. 167.

and introduced by Sylva's great-great-nephew, Carl Fürst zu Wied (b. 1961), Badea-Păun presents biographical information alongside literary criticism. He, too, recognises a potential for bias, due to the fact that Sylva was so frequently discussed in the press as well as in biographies, which he argues are just as likely to be hagiographies as they are diatribes.⁹² His work explores the other biographies as a means of uncovering the truth about Sylva's life and work. As a result, Badea-Păun provides further insight into Sylva's life, particularly with regard to her visits to Britain, which will be discussed in Chapter Two, as well as press interest in her. However, his work still includes evidence taken from potentially problematic sources: memoirs by Sylva's servants, friends and her successor, Queen Marie. It also contains a small number of inaccuracies, primarily connected to Sylva's presence in Britain, which will again receive more attention in the following chapter.⁹³

The interpretations offered by these biographies on Sylva's life have nevertheless contributed to her literary presence and how it can be perceived and analysed in modern scholarship. On a simple level, they indicate that Sylva was significant enough to become the focus of numerous biographies. Although the accounts by von Bothmer and Chappell are not entirely dedicated to Sylva, being biographical collections on 'significant' women, which included other sovereigns or other women writers, Sylva's presence reinforces the argument that her life was considered important enough to commemorate. This is tied to the status of female life-writing, which steadily increased in popularity from the mid-nineteenth

⁹²Badea-Păun, p. 10.

⁹³For example, Badea-Păun states that Sylva's novel *Edleen Vaughan* is concerned with contemporary Irish life (p.185). As will be argued in Chapter Five, certain character names (such as Llewellyn) and references to locations (such as Carnarvon and Llanelly) suggest that the novel is, in fact, set in Wales.

century, an argument that is supported by the fact that her first English-language biography was translated from a German original. A market for and an interest in Sylva were evidently perceived by British publishers, hence the decision to publish a translated version of her life by Baroness Deichmann in 1890.

Interest in Sylva was evidently sustained, given the appearance of two further biographical accounts in the 1890s, with Roosevelt's 1891 biography also including two translated short stories: 'In Fetters' and 'The Mother-in-Law.'⁹⁴ The editorial decision to translate and include Sylva's stories allowed her work and life to be presented to the public simultaneously. The juxtaposition of a biography alongside the subject's own work suggests a degree of confidence in Sylva's writing – from the publisher as well as Roosevelt. They provide an opportunity for readers to experience Sylva's work, but as it is accessed alongside an overwhelmingly positive biography, there is already a potentially biased foundation for their analysis. Nevertheless, Roosevelt's biography is unique compared to the others written on Sylva, which include only snippets of her work. These biographies adhere to a more conventional trope of nineteenth-century life-writing, which would include excerpts from letters and diaries.⁹⁵

Consequently, these biographies indicate the way in which Sylva was presented to the reading public in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, as well as illustrating how the biographers' ulterior motives may have impeded the development of her lasting reputation. Although some are more detailed than others, information from biographies produced in the 1890s is reworked and rewritten in volumes produced decades later. This problematises William St

⁹⁴Blanche Roosevelt, *Carmen Sylva. A Study with two tales from the German of Carmen Sylva* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1891).

⁹⁵Holmes, p. 14.

Clair's argument that 'the writing of biography is as much subject to what the Romantics called "the spirit of the age" as other forms of writing.'⁹⁶ If, as St Clair suggests, changing cultural assumptions affect how biographies are written, which details are included and, indeed, their ideological standpoints, the fact that the majority of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century life-writing about Sylva presents very similar information, suggests that the motivations of her biographers did not necessarily respond to the cultural changes of the *fin de siècle*. All of Sylva's biographers, writing from 1890 to 1941, retain an overwhelmingly positive impression of her life and work. They may emphasise different aspects of her life – Baroness Deichmann's 1890 biography emphasises the legacy of the House of Wied before Sylva's birth, whereas Burgoyne's work provides more detail about her literary achievements – but they all discuss Sylva as a child genius, mourning mother and beloved Queen. Their inaccuracies may have adversely affected her chances of recuperation within modern scholarship, but they constructed the image of Carmen Sylva as an individual with natural talent, who overcame hardships whilst never neglecting her royal duties. This image has been repeated in the small-scale engagement with Sylva and her work in modern criticism and also during her literary career, which the following chapters will now address.

⁹⁶William St Clair, 'The Biographer as Archaeologist,' in *Mapping Lives. The Uses of Biography*, p. 221.

Chapter Two. Carmen Sylva's presence in Britain.

The way information on Sylva has been presented during her lifetime and after her death has had an undeniable influence on the presence to be discussed in the following chapters. It has also influenced the recognition – or lack thereof – of her work within modern criticism. This chapter will consider Sylva in terms of what I call her 'physical presence' – the time she spent living and travelling in Britain. It will investigate the impact of these visits – specifically her longest stay in 1890 – and the ways in which they were chronicled and commemorated in the regional history and geography of the country. It will also argue that the focus on her personal life and royal status has negatively influenced her lasting literary reputation.

2.1 'A beautiful haven of peace': Carmen Sylva in Llandudno.

Physical evidence of Sylva's influence suggests a significant and sustained presence in nineteenth-century British literary culture. Whilst Sylva never lived permanently in Britain, as is true of other German women writers such as Johanna Kinkel or Mathilde Blind, she visited on numerous occasions.¹ References to these trips can be found in all of the biographies, with varying degrees of detail. Von Bothmer states that 'when she was five years old, the Princess paid her first visit to England, and made a stay of several weeks on the Isle of Wight.'² This

¹In 1851, Johanna Kinkel immigrated to London to join her husband, who had escaped from a German prison following his involvement in the 1848 revolutions. She remained in London until her death in 1858. Mathilde Blind's early years were spent in Germany, but she also immigrated to Britain with her family, as a result of the revolutionary activities of her stepfather, Karl Blind (1827-1907).

²von Bothmer, p. 347.

would make the year of her first visit to Britain approximately 1848, a proposition that Zimmerman supports.³ Burgoyne agrees, referring to it in the context of a second trip in 1851, when the family travelled to London and Hastings.⁴ The third visit occurred after her daughter's death in 1874. There appears to be a difference of opinion as to whom Sylva travelled with on this particular trip, but it is mutually acknowledged that Sylva was in Britain at this time.⁵ She recovered from the loss of Marie at St Leonards on the English coast, apparently at Queen Victoria's recommendation, as well as visiting Max Müller and his wife at their Oxford home.⁶

It is unclear how Sylva became acquainted with the Müllers, but it was most likely a result of Müller's close friendship with the Prussian diplomat to London, Baron von Bunsen (1791-1860). Through von Bunsen, Müller had been introduced to other high-status figures, including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. As was noted by Eric Tappe and Müller's biographer Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Sylva corresponded with the Müllers, sending them a number of poems after the death of their eldest daughter, Ada, in 1876. She also sent a consolatory telegram to Georgina Müller (1835-1916) after her husband's death in 1900, which Chaudhuri describes as the 'most touching and intimate' letter and reproduces for his readers.⁷

³Zimmerman, *Die dichtende Königin*, p. 340.

⁴Burgoyne, p. 41.

⁵Chappell states that Sylva ended her stay in London to go back to Neuwied and visit her mother (p. 36) whereas Deichmann, Badea-Păun and Zimmerman suggest she was there with her mother. Given the number of critics who disagree with her and the other inaccuracies in her work, I am inclined to disagree with Chappell. For example, Chappell states that Sylva's first visit to England was 1874 (p. 34), which, as previously mentioned, is contradicted by other biographies.

⁶Deichmann, p. 187.

⁷Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary. The Life of Professor The R.T. Hon. Friedrich Max Müller, P.C.* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1974), p. 2.

Müller's life and letters, edited by his wife, provide further insight into the visit in 1874. Georgina Müller writes that her husband had a positive impression of the royal couple, describing Sylva as 'very clever' and her husband as possessing 'great courage.'⁸ She also refers to the circumstances surrounding Sylva's stay: Sylva and her husband wanted to see Oxford, but 'their only free days coincided with some meeting that filled every hotel,' leading them to stay with the Müller family.⁹ She notes that a friendship developed and that they met again in London. The connection between the Müllers and Sylva was continued in later years, this time in terms of her literary presence: Müller's daughter Mary (1862-1886) later married Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare (1856-1924), an orientalist and Armenian scholar who would write an article on Sylva and her husband for the *National Review* in 1901. The significance of this article, which focused on Romania's anti-Semitic legislation, will be discussed in Chapter Three.

These findings, coupled with knowledge of Sylva's childhood education – her English nurse, a tutor who taught her in English and the fact that she wrote most of her adult correspondence in English – suggests that Sylva had a personal interest in Britain from a young age.¹⁰ In later life, her connection with prominent figures within British society, including Queen Victoria, may have further

⁸*The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller*, ed. by Georgina Max Müller (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1902), p. 466.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Burgoyne, xii.

influenced her decision to visit the country.¹¹ Sylva's most significant visit occurred in 1890. This trip, of approximately two months, appears to be the last record of Carmen Sylva staying in Britain. She began in London, attempting to travel incognito and visiting the National Gallery and Kew Gardens. She then went to Wales, Ireland and finally Scotland, where she visited Queen Victoria.¹² Unlike Sylva's childhood visits, there is more concrete evidence to support this stay. As I have noted, Sylva is mentioned in the journal entries of Queen Victoria, who chronicles her stay at Balmoral in October 1890.¹³ Prior to that, at the end of August, she stayed in Llandudno, a Victorian seaside town and a site that provides further evidence of Sylva's presence.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Llandudno became a popular destination for those seeking relaxation and recovery. As seaside holidays became more widespread, the town became increasingly entertainment-orientated.¹⁴ Sylva reportedly exhibited 'open annoyance' when she arrived in this bustling seaside town, rather than the secluded location she had anticipated.¹⁵ Nonetheless, her early biographers state that over the course of the five weeks she spent in Llandudno, she grew to appreciate the town and the surrounding area, which she toured with local wealthy families. Shortly before her departure, Sylva described the town as 'a beautiful haven of peace' and in appreciation of these sentiments, the townspeople translated her words into Welsh to create Llandudno's town

¹¹We can also see her influence on other famous figures. Vincent van Gogh references Sylva and her aphorisms *Les Pensées d'une Reine (Thoughts of a Queen)* in three letters, two to his older brother, Theo (1857-1891), and one to his youngest sister Willemien (1862-1941). These are dated September and October 1899. See *Vincent van Gogh: The Letters*, <<http://www.vangoghletters.org/vg/>> (accessed 10 July 2013).

¹²Badea-Păun, p. 158.

¹³*The Letters of Queen Victoria*, pp. 642-644.

¹⁴Stephen Williams, *Tourism and Recreation*, (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2003), p. 27.

¹⁵Ivor Wynne Jones, *Llandudno. Queen of Welsh Resorts* (Ashbourne: Landmark Publishing, 2008), p. 43.

motto – an association still emphasised today.¹⁶ She also took part in the annual Eisteddfod – a Welsh festival featuring competitions in art and poetry – which was discussed by a number of British newspapers and magazines, including the *Westminster Review* and the *Musical Standard*, the impact of which will be discussed below.

This was not, however, the only commemorative marker of Sylva's visit: 'sites of memory,' as Nuala C. Johnson describes them, can be found at various points around Llandudno.¹⁷ A dedicatory plaque, crediting her with the town's motto can be found outside the Marine Hotel (formerly the Adelphi), where Sylva stayed during her visit.¹⁸ Inside the hotel there are facsimile portraits of the queen and her husband as well as a framed letter, written by Sylva to express her gratitude to all who had welcomed her. Sylva is also mentioned on the 'town trail': a walking tour around Llandudno for those wanting to visit historic buildings or places of interest. On the information board at *North Western Gardens*, part of which has now become the main shopping street, Carmen Sylva is the first person to be listed under the heading 'Notable People in this area (Plaque Scheme)'. It mentions the Marine Hotel and is obviously designed to correspond with the commemorative plaque that rests there.

It is thus possible to see what Richard Prentice has termed 'preservationist philosophies' at work in Llandudno, where the aim is to preserve and protect the heritage of a site and to value objects and individuals for their cultural

¹⁶The Welsh-language translation is 'hardd hafan hedd'.

¹⁷Nuala C. Johnson, 'Public Memory,' in *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, ed. by James S. Duncan, Nuala C. Johnson and Richard H. Schein (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), p. 323.

¹⁸See Appendix One for photographs detailing Sylva's connection with Llandudno.

significance.¹⁹ For Prentice, monuments are a good example of preservationist principles and the dedicatory plaque outside the Marine Hotel, Sylva's framed letter inside the hotel and the board listing her name on the town trail could be considered monuments in this respect. They are permanent reminders of Sylva's presence, dedicated to her memory and to commemorating her as a notable figure in Llandudno's history. As in numerous towns and cities in Britain, Llandudno's method of generating tourism is to emphasise its links with famous or significant historical figures and Sylva is part of this strategy.

This preservation of Llandudno's cultural history connects to the practice of literary tourism, which developed in the late eighteenth century and was promoted in works such as William Howitt's (1792-1879) *Homes and Haunts of the most Eminent British poets* (1847). Literary tourism has been naturalised into British culture to the extent that, as Nicola J. Watson describes it, 'one sees literary sites detailed in guidebooks and marked on the road map, and expects [...] to visit the museum shop.'²⁰ Whilst the idea of purchasing Carmen Sylva merchandise in Llandudno seems unlikely, Watson does discuss aspects of literary tourism that can be applied to her, such as the methods of cultural remembrance and the practice of visiting poets' graves. Although visitors to Llandudno will find commemorative plaques, rather than her grave, Sylva has been 'locked' into the regional landscape and consciousness of Llandudno.²¹ Samantha Matthews has chronicled this Victorian fascination with poets' graves, with monuments acting as pilgrimage sites for tourists. She argues that their desire to commemorate 'minutiae' as well as more significant locations in writers' lives appears 'anxious

¹⁹Richard Prentice, *Tourism and Heritage Attractions* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 41.

²⁰Nicola J. Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 5.

²¹Ibid., p. 30.

and insecure, as though seeking to substantiate significant associations before they fade from view or were trampled under the feet of change and modernity.’²² Sylva’s visit, whilst relatively short, was clearly significant both in her life – she later set *Edleen Vaughan* in Wales – as well as in the lives of the local people, who continued to advertise their connection to her long after 1890.

These links have been maintained through a process that combines commemoration with financial opportunity. Literary tourism, and the revenue that can be generated through the association of a place with a particular author, can be seen with regard to the hotel Sylva stayed in and shops that served her. R. Roberts & Son, for example, renamed their shop *The Royal Fish Stores* and described themselves as ‘Purveyors of fish to the Royal Court of Roumania’ well into the 1960s.²³ A clothing boutique used a similar advertising technique. As I noted, the Marine Hotel continues to maintain its links with Carmen Sylva through memorabilia as well as the plaque on its outer walls and, as a result, Carmen Sylva remains rooted in the history of the town. Although she is not representative of Llandudno on the same scale as Robert Burns in Dumfries or the Brontës in Haworth, it is clear that Sylva’s physical presence affected the decisions made by small businesses, who sought to profit from their association with her. In choosing to advertise her patronage they undoubtedly aided the preservation of her memory, reminding shoppers of her presence and her influence. As a result, they

²²Samantha Matthews, *Poetical Remains. Poets’ Graves, Bodies, and Books in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 41-42.

²³Wynne Jones, p. 81; p. 101.

indicate the importance of public reinforcements, which, as Jay Winter argues, 'keep alive the ritual and practice of commemoration.'²⁴

Sylva is also presented as a significant figure in contemporary accounts of Llandudno, such as Ivor Wynne Jones's historical overview of the town. He references a number of noteworthy visitors, including foreign dignitaries such as Otto von Bismarck and Napoleon III (1803-1873), British political figures such as Winston Churchill (1874-1965) and Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) and the writer Matthew Arnold (1822-1888). However, it is Sylva's visit that receives the most discussion. Wynne Jones includes biographical information and numerous facts about her stay, including the people and places she visited. He also reproduces a letter Sylva wrote to her childhood friend – and eventual biographer – Baroness Deichmann. Wynne Jones notes, somewhat pointedly, that Sylva's visit was an event 'Llandudno will never be allowed to forget,' and yet his decision to include so much material arguably perpetuates this cycle: by elevating her visit over all other notable individuals, he presents it as a defining moment in the town's history.²⁵

Sylva's importance to Llandudno's history is further emphasised on a local map of the area. A number of streets were named after her – of which Carmen Sylva Road is the most obvious – in what became the Craig-y-don suburb.²⁶ Sylva's memory is maintained here on a commercial level: there is now a bed-and-breakfast on Carmen Sylva Road, named The Carmen.²⁷ Although Badea-Păun notes that there is only one street named after Sylva, closer consultation

²⁴Jay Winter, 'Historians and Sites of Memory,' in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. by Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 267.

²⁵Wynne Jones, p. 40.

²⁶See Appendix One.

²⁷*The Carmen Bed and Breakfast* <<http://www.carmenllandudno.co.uk>> (accessed 1 August 2011).

reveals that three other streets have incorporated her pseudonym: Sylva Gardens North, Sylva Gardens South and Sylva Grove.²⁸ Roumania Drive and Roumania Crescent are also a clear part of the commemorative connection to Sylva, acting as a reminder of the country she ruled with her husband.²⁹ These streets were also overlooked in a recent BBC article.³⁰ These streets are in close proximity to each other, interlocking across the eastern side of the Craig-y-Don area. A large number of other roads in this area are commemorative, of royalty in particular.³¹ There is also a road named after Lewis Carroll (1832-1898), who based the eponymous character of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) on Alice Liddell (1852-1934). Liddell spent summers in Llandudno with her family, although Wynne Jones notes that there is no evidence that Carroll himself ever visited the town.³²

Whilst Sylva was not, therefore, the only person to be commemorated on the streets of Llandudno, she appears to be the individual who had the most streets named after her. Although I have not been able to ascertain exactly when these roads were named, information received from the Llandudno archives suggests that the first reference to roads named after Sylva was 1897, but that development of the area continued into the 1930s.³³ The spelling of 'Roumania', however, restricts the potential dates, since the most recent English-language spelling for

²⁸Badea-Păun, p. 159.

²⁹These findings were published in: Laura Nixon, 'Carmen Sylva's Links to Llandudno,' *Notes and Queries*, 253 (June 2013), 274.

³⁰Stevenson, John, 'Romanian Links Could Prove Rewarding for Romania,' *BBC News Online*, 10 February 2013, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-21401101>> (accessed 17 May 2013).

³¹Wynne Jones notes that Queens Road was named after Queen Victoria (p.126) and it seems likely that Victoria Street has a similar history. Albert Gardens, most likely named after Queen Victoria's consort, and Prince's Drive are also in Craig-y-Don.

³²Wynne Jones, p. 107.

³³See Appendix One.

‘Romania’ was introduced in 1965. Consequently, it is likely that the roads using the earlier spelling were introduced before this date. This information contradicts Matthews’s argument that commemoration seeks to prevent historical events becoming ‘trampled’: Sylva’s commemoration is a result of modernity, not a fear of it.³⁴ Sylva’s name did not replace an existing street, but was intentionally built into it during the development of the Craig-y-don suburb. The street-naming that has occurred in Craig-y-Don commemorates the cultural contribution of famous and significant figures to Llandudno’s history, a practice that continues in contemporary society and is not restricted to Britain. These streets are, as Derek H. Alderman has noted, ‘memorial arenas,’ a sentiment that again reinforces Sylva’s importance to the people of Llandudno.³⁵

2.2. Making ‘eisteddfodic history’: Carmen Sylva and the 1890 Eisteddfod.

Llandudno may never become a site of literary significance for, or because of, Carmen Sylva, but her time spent in the town and her participation in regional activities, such as the Eisteddfod, means that her contribution has been deemed important enough to formally recognise within Welsh regional geography. Recognition of her participation in the 1890 Eisteddfod – held that year in Bangor – was chronicled in nineteenth-century articles. More recently, Ivor Wynne Jones has noted that Sylva was admitted – under her pen name, rather than royal title – to the Gorsedd of Bards.³⁶ This was a society for writers and artists who

³⁴Matthews, p. 42.

³⁵Derek H. Alderman, ‘Naming Streets for Martin Luther King Jr.: No Easy Road,’ in *Landscape and Race in the United States*, ed. by Richard Schein (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 217.

³⁶Wynne Jones, p. 43.

contributed to the Welsh nation through its language and culture, founded by the Welsh poet and forger, Iolo Morganwg (1747-1826), in 1792.

Although these articles constitute a small percentage of the references to Sylva, they nevertheless provide information about her time in the area. They also indicate that her presence in Wales and participation in the festival was an event worthy of note in national publications. Her presence thus extends across Britain and is not limited to Wales, a detail generally overlooked by her early biographers and only briefly mentioned by Burgoyne and Badea-Păun. Articles covering Sylva's presence at the festival were written for publications ranging from liberal, monthly papers such as the *Westminster Review*, to the *Musical Standard* and the *Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend*. The *Westminster Review* in particular was interested in world events and foreign literature. Its attentiveness to German writers increased further under the sub-editorship of George Eliot and the work of George Henry Lewes.³⁷

The majority of references in this context occurred shortly after Sylva's visit, between September and November 1890. Two more can be found six years later, in May and June 1896. These later articles mention Sylva in the context of Gloddaeth, an area near Llandudno owned by the Mostyns, a wealthy and influential family who were instrumental in the development of the town in the late 1840s. Sylva had visited their home during her 1890 stay and had toured the area with them. These articles suggest that Sylva was influenced by the time she spent there and briefly refer to her involvement in the 1890 Eisteddfod.

³⁷Roger P. Wallins, 'The Westminster Review,' in *British Literary Magazines. The Romantic Age, 1789-1836*, ed. by Alvin Sullivan (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 428.

The earliest article was published in the first few weeks of September, after Sylva had left Wales. This article, plus another from the same month, which was published in the *Musical Standard* and focused entirely on the Eisteddfod, is the most detailed account of Sylva and her Welsh visit, chronicling her participation in the festival and the positive reception she received. A.P. Thomas, one of the few named authors, even states, somewhat melodramatically, that Sylva's presence was the 'salvation' of the entire event and that it will 'live in eisteddfodic history.'³⁸ For Thomas, as for the other journalists, the festival in 1890 was made memorable because of Carmen Sylva and this was largely because she was the first queen in six hundred years to attend an Eisteddfod.³⁹ There is evidence to suggest that this might be true: although the date of the first Eisteddfod is unclear – with its origins extending into the twelfth century – nineteenth-century scholars noted that Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) commissioned such a festival in 1567, but do not state whether she attended.⁴⁰ There is no reference to any other queen attending an Eisteddfod. The most recent royal reference, other than to Sylva, concerns the Duke of Sussex (1773-1843), the brother of King George IV (1762-1830), who attended the 1828 Eisteddfod at Denbigh.⁴¹ In Sylva's case, this royal emphasis should be viewed in conjunction with her current literary obscurity: her status is elevated over her literary achievements. If her literature received less attention than her celebrity status

³⁸ A.P. Thomas, 'Welsh Mems. and Musings,' *Magazine of Music*, October 1890, p. 192 .

³⁹ Anonymous, 'The Welsh Eisteddfod,' *Musical Standard*, 13 September 1890, p. 211.

⁴⁰ William Davis Leathart, *The Origin and Process of the Gwyneddigion Society of London* (London: Hugh Pierce Hughes, 1831), p. 28

⁴¹ King George VI (1895-1952) and his Consort, Queen Elizabeth (1900-2002) were also admitted as honorary bards in 1926. Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926) became an Honorary Ovate in 1946, as was her husband, Prince Philip (b. 1921) in 1960.

during her lifetime, it is unsurprising that the memory of them would fade even further from public consciousness after her death.

Although a number of these articles include brief references to her literary capabilities, only two refer to a poem she wrote and recited at the Eisteddfod. One publication even reproduces it for its readers, to be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. The decision by *Murray's Magazine* to reprint Sylva's poem in the final section of their long 'Notes of the Month' article, rather than simply referring to it, suggests that the author wanted readers hitherto unfamiliar with Sylva to be introduced to her work. It is also possible that the decision to reproduce her poem was designed with literary appreciation in mind. As with Roosevelt's biography, the article allows readers to value the 'great intellectual gifts' Sylva possessed, which those at the Eisteddfod had experienced in person.⁴²

This can also be inferred from the 'impromptu lines' written by 'J.E.W' and published in the *Magazine of Music* in November 1890. Composed after the author had read an account of Sylva's reception at the Eisteddfod, this short poem is presented in the original Welsh as well as in English. Juxtaposing the languages on the page stresses Sylva's connection with Welsh culture. By translating the lines into English, the wider population is also invited to recognise the significance of her visit and 'sing loud in her praise their Aleluia.'⁴³ The poem also reaffirms that Sylva's visit was to Britain as a whole and was not confined to Wales, as the author goes on to describe Sylva's audience with Queen Victoria. Through these articles, Carmen Sylva's presence as a literary figure, but particularly as a queen, is represented as an important – if not unique – occurrence

⁴² Anonymous, 'Notes of the Month,' *Murray's Magazine*, October 1890, p. 568.

⁴³ J.E.W, 'Staccato,' *Magazine of Music*, November 1890, p. 3.

in the history of the Eisteddfod and Welsh culture. The articles written about her time in Wales, coupled with the physical evidence that remains in Llandudno, suggest that Sylva's visit to Britain and presence in specific areas was one of significance at the time of its occurrence and continued to be viewed as such long after she had left.

Unfortunately, these links cannot be found in the promotional material available to modern tourists: neither the pocket map nor the Llandudno town trail pamphlet mentions Sylva by name. Whilst this is not necessarily expected of the pocket map, the town trail leaflet refers to the Mostyns and Alice Liddell. This is surprising, given that Sylva is the first to be listed on the town trail tourist boards. Similarly, no information is provided about the roads named after her. Indeed, the small map included in the town trail booklet is cut off just before the Craig-y-Don suburb. These findings support Winter's argument that the importance placed on certain sites of memory can decrease if those involved in its establishment become less interested or fade away.⁴⁴ There is more detailed information to be found on Carmen Sylva in history books about Llandudno, or by consulting maps, but these must be sought out. Even the letter inside the Marine Hotel, written in Sylva's own hand, is not advertised. The most readily available tourist information only mentions her royal status and the date of her visit, although the road names, somewhat paradoxically, commemorate her pseudonym. This emphasis on her status may well have contributed to her marginalisation, since her royal background appears to overshadow her literature. Sylva's fiction is downplayed or set apart from the other sites of memory dedicated to her. However, it also serves

⁴⁴Winter, p. 252.

to indicate that her pen-name, and by extension her literature, was a part of Sylva's presence in Britain during the nineteenth century: if the Victorian population of Llandudno saw Sylva solely as royalty, then there would be little reason to celebrate her pen-name.

Currently, Sylva's potential to be of interest to modern visitors is only partial, but by considering the various commemorative practices operating in Llandudno since her visit, we might see Sylva adhering to one of Hargreaves-Mawdsley's definitions of a writer worthy of note: influencing the public.⁴⁵ Her presence in Llandudno was clearly perceived positively, to the extent that the local people wished to celebrate it. This impact has been maintained to a smaller degree in modern society, since these markers of memory have not been removed or replaced. In this way, Carmen Sylva is historically meaningful for those chronicling the development of Llandudno, in terms of her visit itself as well as the way memories of that visit were retained and shaped by the townspeople. Sylva is permanently marked and literally sign-posted in the geography and history of this place. Due to her marginalised status, it may well be that the queen mentioned on Llandudno's town trail has not yet been reconnected with the street names in Craig-y-don – an issue that might be addressed through her recuperation. The following chapter will explore this potential for reassessment in more detail, considering Sylva's literary presence and the extent to which she was discussed in the British periodical press.

⁴⁵Hargreaves-Mawdsley, v.

Chapter Three. Her ‘authorship is but a pastime’: Carmen Sylva’s literary presence.

The previous chapter established Sylva’s physical presence in Britain and that her impact on regional Welsh culture was documented and discussed in the nineteenth-century periodical press. It thus remains to investigate the extent of her literary presence in Britain. The Victorians lived in a period of rapid expansion. This affected industry, technology and the media. Increased literacy levels meant that what was once the ‘listening public’ became the ‘reading public,’ and Carmen Sylva’s presence in British periodicals is a product of these changes.¹ Her presence will be discussed with regard to a large number of primary sources: advertisements, reviews and articles written about Sylva and her work. This chapter will also involve discussion of Sylva’s English-language works, that is, the significance of their publication history in British magazines and journals. In doing so, I will argue in favour of her recuperation on the grounds that she produced a diverse body of work that retained the interest of contemporary readers and reviewers alike.

As noted in Chapter One, a name search for Carmen Sylva on databases dedicated to nineteenth-century periodicals returned a large number of results. The data from *British Periodicals Online*, for example, reveals clear peaks in interest:

¹Matthew Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 6.

Table 1.

<u>Decade</u>	1780- 1879	1880 - 1889	1890 - 1899	1900 - 1909	1910 - 1919	1920 - 1929	1930+	<u>Total</u>
<u>Total No. of Articles</u>	29	116	316	195	64	8	1	729

It is necessary to contextualise these results in order to obtain a more accurate sense of Sylva's position in the British periodical press, specifically with regard to the literary presence of other German women writers. These comparisons reveal that engagement with Sylva was in some sense 'typical' of the broader British engagement with writing by German women in the nineteenth century.

Similar searches conducted for other German women writers, either those producing work contemporaneously to Sylva (such as Malwida von Meysenbug, Hedwig Dohm (1831-1919) and Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914)), or her predecessors (such as Johanna Kinkel and Fanny Lewald), reveal a smaller number of references. Despite this, there are some similarities in terms of the way these women were discussed and marketed. Articles and reviews were published in a number of the same leading periodicals, including the *Athenaeum*, the *Saturday Review* and the *Review of Reviews*. These articles, as with Sylva, often placed the female writer in the context of her wider society, with discussions of her political affiliations, social circles and relationships. There are frequent references to life-writing, ranging from biographies written about Bertha von Suttner to Fanny Lewald's memoirs. Their own non-fictional articles were also published in these journals. Indeed, Bertha von Suttner and Carmen Sylva's views on women's sporting activities were recorded in the same article – an issue that

had come under scrutiny as a result of the rise of the New Woman and the feminist movement.² There is also evidence of these women producing very popular works: von Suttner's pacifist text *Die Waffen Nieder* (*Lay Down Your Arms*) (1889), for example, was translated and republished in a variety of languages. Similarly, Fanny Lewald is frequently described as 'well-known' to the British public, a sentiment also applied to Carmen Sylva.³

Despite these similarities, Sylva remains the dominant force. The greater level of interest in Sylva may be connected, as discussed in the previous chapter, to her royal status and her acquaintance with the British aristocracy, but this circumstance does not explain why a large proportion of the references to Sylva are reviews of her work. Although they often reference her royal title, their focus on her literary productions, rather than society appearances or charity work alone, suggests that what she wrote played an important role in creating and maintaining British interest in her.

It therefore seems strange that so little critical material has been produced on Sylva's oeuvre in recent years, even though she was discussed far more frequently during her lifetime than her female German contemporaries. As noted in Chapter One, Johanna Kinkel, Fanny Lewald and Bertha von Suttner have remained part of our critical consciousness, if not on the same level as the male 'greats' such as Goethe and Schiller. It is possible that this difference can be explained through consideration of the types of literature that these women were producing: the modern focus on Fanny Lewald and Bertha von Suttner, for example, centres on their political affiliations and opinions. Perhaps Sylva's

²Anonymous, 'Ought Women to Cycle, Row, Etc.?' *Review of Reviews*, July 1900, p. 46.

³Anonymous, 'The Bookseller's Record,' *Critic*, 1 December 1860, p. 686.

writing has not survived because political critique is not an overt element. This proposition was recognised by nineteenth-century critics themselves, with regard to German women's writing in particular. An 1897 article on German literature notes that less than a decade after her death Fanny Lewald is 'all but forgotten,' and argues that writing produced in the middle decades of the nineteenth century was no longer interesting to *fin-de-siècle* society.⁴ John G. Robertson asserts that certain writers will be marginalised with the passage of time, if there are no 'literary historians' to remember them.⁵ With this in mind, the results relating to Carmen Sylva should be considered in more detail, not only to reassess her place within British literary culture, but to reflect on the values that critics have placed on literature from this period.

The majority of references to Sylva occur between 1880 and 1930, a period of fifty years. As shown in Table 1, there is a peak in interest during the 1890-1899 period and a sharp decline from 1910.⁶ The first decade of the twentieth century appears to have been the catalyst for Sylva's marginalisation and, as will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis, it is most likely an effect of World War One (1914-1918). Interest in Sylva, already more tentative than with regard to other German writers, did not recover.⁷

⁴John G. Robertson, 'Current German Literature,' *Cosmopolis*, March 1897, p. 696.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Results prior to 1880 are all false positives. References to 'carmen' or 'sylva' refer to poems written in Latin and were the only type of result returned for 'Carmen Sylva' until 1875. After this date, false positives were primarily of a musical nature, referring to Georges Bizet's (1838-1875) French opera *Carmen* (based on Prosper Mérimée's (1803-1870) 1846 novella of the same name), which premiered in Paris in 1875. There were also numerous musicians with the surname of Sylva. From around 1904, in the later stages of Sylva's literary career, there are multiple references to an eight-year old soprano named Carmen Sylva. Other false positives from this period include a Chilean mountain range (Sierra Carmen Sylva).

⁷Regular references to other German women writers, including Bertha von Suttner and Fanny Lewald, also declined by the turn of the twentieth century.

By considering the search results in more detail and placing them into broad categories, it is possible to ascertain the most popular method of referring to Carmen Sylva. This is a vital element of establishing her British literary presence as it considers not only the quantity of references to her, but also the manner in which she and her work were discussed. This chapter will analyse seven categories: advertising, references, reviews, articles on or that mention Carmen Sylva, primary texts, and ‘Other.’⁸ These results and their implications for Sylva’s personal popularity, as well as the interest in her works, will allow me to posit an argument for her eventual recuperation within modern criticism.

3.1. Advertising.

Growing interest in Sylva can be seen through the large number of advertisements. Although not all of Sylva’s works were advertised and some received more promotion than others, adverts indicate that publishers took an active interest in her work. They were often the first kind of material encountered by readers when they opened a magazine or newspaper. Such ephemera also have important ramifications for her recuperation: Sylva’s obscurity is not a reflection of a lack of interest in the nineteenth century. Advertising constitutes a significant proportion of the references to Sylva, present from the very beginning of her literary career in Britain. They refer predominantly to primary sources – works produced by Sylva herself – but a select number of works written about Sylva are also advertised, including biographies by Baroness Deichmann and Blanche Roosevelt. A collection of essays by the French naval officer and author Pierre

⁸Appendix Two contains a more detailed table of categories, using *British Periodicals Online* as an example.

Loti (1850-1923) is also included. Loti (the pseudonym of Julien Viaud) was acquainted with Sylva and two of his essays are focused on her.⁹ Given the peaks of interest in Sylva, it is unsurprising that the majority of advertising occurs in the decades that contain the most references to her. As references to Sylva decrease over time, so do the adverts. The lack of later advertisements could explain the eventual lack of interest in Sylva: if she was not publishing new material, there was no new work to advertise. As a result, interest in her was not sustained. As noted earlier, this decline was cemented by her death, coinciding with World War One and outbreaks of anti-German sentiment.

The majority of advertisements were placed in the *Athenaeum*, with the remainder in the *Academy* and the *Saturday Review* and a small number in the *Bookman*, the *National Review*, *Belgravia* and *Cornhill Magazine*. Placing the majority of advertisements in publications with good circulations and good reputations, which were produced in weekly or fortnightly editions aimed at the middle and upper classes, appears to have been a marketing strategy designed to optimise the potential purchasers of Sylva's work. These readers would be encouraged to buy her volumes having seen an advert placed in a publication that they knew and respected, especially when these publications, such as the *Academy*, were known to be influential with regard to art criticism.¹⁰ Although R.C. Terry has argued that paid advertising 'which consisted of sheets of a publisher's new books, with selected comments enthusiastically greeting each and every novel, probably did far less than word of mouth,' advertising for Sylva

⁹Pierre Loti, *Carmen Sylva and Sketches from the Orient* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912).

¹⁰Christopher Kent, 'The Academy/The Academy and Literature,' in *British Literary Magazines. The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837-1913*, ed. by Alvin Sullivan (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 4.

indicates the willingness of publishers to spend money in order to promote her work.¹¹ The initial financial outlay was clearly considered worthwhile in order to generate larger profits.

Advertisements for Sylva's work fall into two categories, the first being adverts which are placed into periodicals by her publishers. The second category refers to individual pieces – single stories or poems – which were advertised by editors of publications such as *London Society* and the American monthly, *Century Magazine*, to promote forthcoming editions. Advertising an upcoming issue by referring to a piece written by Carmen Sylva was used to encourage readers to purchase a particular number. The overall styles for both types of advert are, however, relatively uniform. Each advert and the writers it features are listed under an overall title, which is then connected to a publishing house or periodical.

Another notable feature is the manner in which they refer to Sylva. Although occasionally referred to by her pseudonym alone, it is more often the case that her royal status is listed, as shown below:

¹¹R.C. Terry, *Victorian Popular Fiction, 1860-1880* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), p. 49.

418 THE ATHENÆUM N° 3361, MARCH 26, '92

F. V. WHITE & CO.'S
RECENT PUBLICATIONS.
TO BE OBTAINED IN TOWN OR COUNTRY.

I.
By John Strange Winter.
ONLY HUMAN.
By the Author of 'Bootles' Baby,' 'Bootles' Children,'
'Army Society,' 'The Other Man's Wife,' &c.
2 vols. 21s. [At all Libraries.]

II.
By "Carmen Sylva"
(H.M. the QUEEN of ROUMANIA).
EDLEEN VAUGHAN;
Or, Paths of Peril.
By the Author of 'Nine Days,' &c.
3 vols. [Shortly.]

III.

EDITED BY PERCY RUSSELL.
THE WELCOME HOUR, APRIL. Price 1d.;
Annual Subscription, post free, 1s. 6d. Here and Hereafter; or,
His Little Girl. (Continued.) By the Editor.—The Child Queen of
Holland. (Illustrated.)—Fishermen of the Caspian Sea. (Illustrated.)—
Sir John Millais R.A. (Illustrated.)—Charles Kingsley. By Mackenzie
Bell.—Solitude and Silence. By F. B. Daveton.—Our Author's Page, &c.
Digby, Long & Co. 18, Boulevard-street, E.C.

EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE,
HER MAJESTY'S PRINTERS.
New Book, now ready, cloth, small quarto, 5s.
THE HISTORICAL PRAYER BOOK. Being
the Book of Common Prayer, with Marginal Notes, giving in
detail the origin of the several parts and the date of their incorporation.
A work of great interest to all Members of the Established Church.
The notes are printed upon a wide margin, with ample space for manu-
script notes.
The Book is printed on the best rag made paper. A superfine edition
is in preparation, printed upon the Queen's Printers' New India Paper.
Eyre & Spottiswoode, Great New-street, Fetter-lane, London, E.C.;
Edinburgh, 10, Elder-street; New York, Cooper Union; and at Mel-
bourne and Sydney. Retail of all Booksellers.

OLIPHANT, ANDERSON & FERRIER'S
LIST.
TWO NEW LOVE STORIES.
I.
FALCONER OF FALCONHURST.
By EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN,
Author of 'Dorothy's Vocation,' &c.
With numerous Illustrations, 2s. 6d. cloth extra.
[This day.]

Just published, 4to, sewed, 6s. net.
ON SOME FRAGMENTS of an UNCIAL MS.
of S. CYRIL of ALEXANDRIA, written in Papyrus. By Rev.
J. H. BERNARD, B.D. With 4 Autotypes of Papyrus. (Transactions of
Royal Irish Academy, Vol. XXIX. Part 18.)
Williams & Norgate, 14, Henrietta-street, Covent-garden, London; and
30, South Frederick-street, Edinburgh.

Messrs. W. & N. have still a few copies left, price 42s. net.
DR. J. P. MAHAFFY on the FLINDERS
PETRIE PAPYRI. With Transcriptions, Commentaries, and
Index. With 30 Autotypes. (Royal Irish Academy's Cunningham
Memoirs.)
In 1 vol. 8vo. price 10s.
SOCIAL STATICS, Abridged and Revised, to-
gether with **THE MAN & THE STATE.** By HERBERT SPENCER.
Also, Second Thousand, in 1 vol. 8vo. 8s.
JUSTICE: being Part IV. of the **PRINCIPLES**
of ETHICS. By HERBERT SPENCER.
Williams & Norgate, 14, Henrietta-street, Covent-garden.

"Messrs. J. M. DENT & CO. are earning for
themselves what we hope they will prize beyond
rubies—the gratitude of the ever-increasing band
who love good books in goodly form. They display
commendable courage in their selections of Dead
Authors, and show a confidence in the public taste
which we believe the facts warrant."—*Speaker.*

LANDOR'S
IMAGINARY
CONVERSATIONS.

Fig. 1. 'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 26 March 1892, p. 418.

Variations in wording and style mean that her royal title is sometimes included before the pen-name, but it may also appear in parentheses or a smaller typeface. Regardless of these minor discrepancies, British publishers were clearly aware of her royal identity. More importantly, they had evidently decided to capitalise on it, using her title to promote her work. This in turn made British readers aware that 'Carmen Sylva' was a pseudonym, and a superfluous one at that, since it did not conceal the real name or queenly status of the author. Its constant presence in these adverts impedes the development of the alternative identity that comes from a pseudonym. Like the commemorative markers of her stay in Llandudno, there is a conflict of interest at the heart of British engagement with Carmen Sylva: she could not develop a reputation based solely on the literary merit of her writing. As shown in Fig. 1, the publishing company F.V. White also listed her previous

works alongside the new title. This decision, however, was clearly part of the publisher's formal style and was also used to advertise John Strange Winter. Winter, also known as Henrietta Eliza Vaughan Stannard (1856-1911), was a prolific novelist who clearly managed, in this instance at least, to maintain the alternative identity denied to Sylva. This does not necessarily indicate that the publishers expected the public to be unaware of Sylva's work, but it may be vital to understanding why she has been marginalised in later years: the confused manner of referring to Sylva, combining her pen-name with her royal title, may have overshadowed the work she produced and become detrimental to her reputation.

As Fig. 1 indicates, Sylva's works are always advertised alongside that of other writers. This allows her publishing history to be contextualised. An advert from the *Athenaeum* in 1891, for example, markets the collection of folksongs *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* alongside a diverse collection that ranges from Alexander Dumas's (1802-1870) *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844) to non-fictional studies of Edinburgh's literary landmarks.¹² However, the advertising page is then divided into further categories. 'New Books,' 'Forthcoming Books,' and 'Books for Children' bring order to an otherwise disparate group. These adverts also feature a small italicised description of the volume's condition: whether it is 'At All Libraries,' will be available 'Shortly' or can be purchased 'This Day.' These small details are significant because they indicate when advertising for Sylva's work began. F.V. White & Co., for example, placed seven adverts for *Edleen Vaughan* between 27 February and 21 May 1892. The first three of those adverts,

¹²Anonymous, 'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 7 November 1891, p. 606.

in February and March, described the novel as 'Shortly' available for purchase (see Fig. 1). This has changed by April however:

APRIL 9, 1892.—No. 1040.] THE ACADEMY. 339

OXFORD SUMMER MEETING,
AUGUST, 1892.

Special Biological Course for Beginners.—An Introduction to the Study of Life and specially of Nervous Organisation. Introductory Lecture by Prof. Burton Sanderson. Two Lectures by Mr. E. B. Titchener on *Mixis* and *Myrmica*. Three weeks' Practical Instruction (Daily Lecture, followed by three hours' Laboratory Work) by Mr. J. B. Farmer (Botany), Mr. Chalmers Mitchell (Zoology and Embryology), and Dr. Leonard Hill (Physiology). Weekly Seminar for Discussion of Essays. July 25—August 8. Introductory. August 9—13. Single Cells. August 14—21. Cells in Tissues. August 22—26. Development and Structure of Nervous System.

Fee, including admission to other parts of the Summer Meeting, £5. Limited to 40 Students. Two Scholarships of £3. Apply for Tickets before June 10th, to SECRETARY, University Extension Office, Oxford.

SUMMER MEETING, EDINBURGH.
VACATION COURSES, August 1 to 31, 1892.

(i) Education.—Geographical and Technical Survey of Edinburgh and District (Industries, Agriculture, and Physical Features); Afternoon Excursions; Teaching of Hygiene and Physiology; Evening Lectures on Technical Education.

(ii) Social Science, &c.—History of Civilisation, and Principles of Science with Historical Seminar (Prof. Geddes); Literature (Mr. Moulton); Anthropology (Prof. Haddon); Studio.

(iii) Natural Science.—Biology (Mr. Arthur Thomson); Physiology (Mr. Haverhill); Zoology (Mr. Thomson); Botany (Messrs. Herbertson and Turnbull); Studio.

Prospectus from J. ARTHUR THOMSON, University Hall, Edinburgh.

LECTURES ON SYSTEMATIC BOTANY
Mr. A. W. BENNETT, M.A., B.Sc., V.P.L.S., Lecturer on Botany at St. Thomas's Hospital, will give a COURSE OF LECTURES on "THE CLASSIFICATION and the PRINCIPAL ORDERS of FLOWERING and FLOWERLESS PLANTS," at the MEDICAL SCHOOL of the HOSPITAL. The Course will consist of about Twenty-four Lectures, and will be delivered on Tuesday and Wednesday Mornings, at 10 a.m., commencing Tuesday, May 3rd. They will be illustrated by Diagrams and Fresh Specimens. Fee, 5 Guineas. Syllabus may be obtained from the SECRETARY to the Medical School, St. Thomas's Hospital, Lambeth, S.E.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE (for LADIES),
43 & 45, HARLEY STREET, W.
Founded 1848. Incorporated by Royal Charter 1853.
Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.
Theology—The Rev. Canon Evans, Principal.
Department of Languages—
H. GRIFPIN, B.A., English Literature XVII Century. Milton.
H. LALAMAND, B.Sc., French Writers XIX Century.
C. NIBB, Ph.D., German Poets and Novels XIX Century.
L. RICE, M.A., Dante's Works.
G. C. WARR, M.A., Virgil's Aeneid, Book VI.
H. F. WILSON, M.A., The Greek Lyric Poets.
BARTER TRIST, begins APRIL 27th.
For Syllabus apply to Miss Crowder, Lady-Resident.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.—An EXAMINA-
TION for filling up ONE VACANCY on the Foundation.

F. V. WHITE & CO'S
RECENT PUBLICATIONS.
TO BE OBTAINED IN TOWN OR COUNTRY.

I.
BY
John Strange Winter.

ONLY HUMAN.
By the Author of
"Bootles' Baby," "Bootles' Children,"
"Army Society," "The Other Man's
Wife," &c. 2 vols., 21s. [At all Libraries.]

II.
BY
Carmen Sylva
(H.M. the Queen
of Roumania).

EDLEEN VAUGHAN
Or, Paths of Peril.
By the Author of
"Thoughts of a Queen," "Legends
of the Carpathians," "Roumanian
Fairy Tales," &c. 3 vols. Immediately.

MESSRS. METHUEN'S LIST.

RUDYARD KIPLING'S NEW BOOK.
BARRACK ROOM BALLADS, and
other Verses. By RUDYARD KIPLING. Extra post
8vo, printed by Constable on laid paper, rough edges,
buckram, gilt top, 6s.
Also an Edition of 200 copies on Dutch hand-made large
paper, price £1 1s. net.
And an Edition of 20 copies on Japanese paper,
price £2 2s. net.
Orders for the Special Editions should be sent in at once.

CARDINAL MANNING'S LIFE.
CARDINAL MANNING: a Biography.
By A. W. HUTTON, M.A. With Portrait and Biblio-
graphy. Crown 8vo, 6s. [Shortly.]

AUTHOR OF "MEHALAH."
MARGERY OF QUETHER. By S.
BARING GOULD, Author of "Mehalah," &c. Crown
8vo, 3s. 6d.
"In these stories Mr. Baring Gould is probably seen at his
best."—*Times*.
"A delightful budget; an abundance of points and passages
which enchain the imagination."—*Daily Telegraph*.

W. CLARK RUSSELL.
A MARRIAGE at SEA. By W. Clark
RUSSELL. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.
"Stirring situations in abundance, and not a few amusing
ones."—*Scottish Leader*.

AUTHOR OF "INDIAN IDYLLS."
IN TENT and BUNGALOW: Stories
of Indian Sport and Society. By the Author of "Indian
Idylls." Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.
"These sketches are without exception good."—*Morning Post*.

ROWLAND GREY.
THE STORY OF CHRIS. By Rowland
GREY, Author of "Lindobumen," &c. Crown 8vo,
3s.
"Rowland Grey must take a high place among modern
writers of fiction. His style is admirable, and he displays
quality of a high order."—*Speaker*.
"Delightful by humour which is always genial, by pathos
which is never strained, by lightness of touch and unflinching
courage to write characters and life."—*Edinburgh Review*.

Fig. 2. 'Advertisement,' *Academy*, 9 April 1892, p. 339.

This advert contains the same information as Fig. 1, advertising Sylva's work after John Strange Winter, listing previous works and capitalising the titles in order to draw attention to them on the page. The significant difference is the presentation: information is presented in a larger typeface, cutting diagonally across the advert. This takes up more space, making the advert less cost-effective, but in doing so, it again suggests that the publisher wanted actively to promote Sylva's work and was willing to pay for it. The advert is made more prominent due to its position on the page: placed in the centre, it is clear and attention-grabbing. The names of the novels leap out at readers, emboldened and more

easily discernible than the information presented by the publishers on either side. This promotional strategy ensures that Sylva and Winter are the main focus of the page.

References to the novel in May list its condition as ‘At all Libraries.’¹³ There are no more adverts after May 1892. F.V. White & Co. thus appears to have made the decision to market the book only a couple of months in advance of the intended release date, in order to intensify interest and increase the number of potential purchasers. This marketing strategy was a relatively common one, used to remind the public that a product is ‘coming soon.’ It remains a popular form of promotion today, one not limited to literature. It was also employed by other nineteenth-century publishers, albeit less consistently, for other works by Sylva.¹⁴

Overall, these details contribute to the construction of an accurate bibliography of her works: Sylva’s publications can be tracked not only in terms of when they were first published, but when publishers tried to increase public awareness of the work. The presence of such ephemera also hints at the decision-making process behind advertising: we can see where publishers chose to present information in order to obtain the most significant numbers of purchasers. The cost and location of these adverts also reveal information about the intended readership, which would be educated and largely middle-class. Advertising prior to publication indicates that publishers were trying to excite readers about an upcoming volume. They saw Sylva as a financially viable writer, one whose

¹³‘Advertisement,’ *Saturday Review*, 16 April 1892, p. 464.

¹⁴A similar method was used by Downey & Co. for Sylva’s collection of short stories *Shadows on Love’s Dial*, trans. by Helen Wolff (London: Downey & Co., 1895). It was described in an advert from the *Saturday Review* on 30 November 1895 as available ‘This Day’ and later in the *Bookman*, in February 1896 as ‘Now Ready’.

work, with a reasonable amount of advertising, would appeal to British readers – who were most likely aware of her celebrity – and sell well.

Assessing the interest of Sylva's nineteenth-century readers is an important step when explaining her literary presence. Limited interest in her work, both from publishers and readers alike, could explain her later marginalisation. Sustained interest, however, would hint at alternative explanations, not necessarily tied to her literary productions. Advertisements provide evidence that publishers, as well as the British reading public, were interested in her work. Republishing certain volumes demonstrates a market for her work, which remained years after its initial publication. *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* is a good example in this respect. Sylva only produced the German translation of these folksongs, but this collection is included in her bibliography because it was consistently associated with her by British publishers in their promotional material. *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* received the most promotional advertising of all works connected to Sylva. Where advertising for other works was limited to a few months, this collection was advertised across a number of years.

Osgood, McIlvaine & Company advertised the collection from October 1891 until around October 1897 and further promotion was undertaken a few years later, between October and December 1902, when Harper & Brothers became responsible for the collection. These adverts credit Sylva with producing the translation of the original Romanian folksongs and with writing the introduction. The adverts between 1891 and 1894 predominantly present the same information, incorporating a positive review from the *Fortnightly Review*, written in November 1891 by Frederic Harrison (1831-1923). Harrison was familiar with

the Oxford Liberal and Germanophile Mark Pattison and wrote regularly for the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Athenaeum*. Although his reputation was built on articles about French and British politics, writing on the cotton famine in the mid-1860s and against women's suffrage in the late 1880s, he also wrote a novel, a drama, critical accounts of writers including Lord Tennyson, and literary reviews.¹⁵ This reputation explains why his comments were still being used by Harper & Brothers in 1902.

These adverts also emphasise the material condition of the volume. The hand-cut Imperial Japan paper (see Fig. 3 below) – limited to the deluxe edition – gives the impression of luxury. The promotion of both a standard edition, priced at 10s 6d, and an 'Edition de Luxe' at the substantially increased price of 42s, is a strategic structuring of the market to appeal to a range of incomes.¹⁶ Sylva's work was not aimed at a niche market, but was available to a variety of readers. This readership becomes even broader with the knowledge that Sylva's work was also widely published in the periodical press – an even cheaper way for readers to access her work. This becomes an important factor in her potential recuperation: the fact that she was read by a diverse audience suggests that Sylva's work possessed a general appeal. Reassessing the work of this forgotten, yet popular, writer enables modern critics to gain a deeper understanding of nineteenth-century reading habits. The material conditions of the editions might differ, but the content itself generated a broad interest, regardless of budget.

¹⁵Martha S. Vogeler, 'Harrison, Frederic (1831–1923),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33732>> (accessed 6 July 2013).

¹⁶Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing. The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), pp. 1-2.

Awareness of pricing highlights another similarity between the reception of Sylva's work and that of other German women writers. Fanny Lewald's novel *Die Kammerjungfer* (*The Lady's Maid*), advertised in the *Athenaeum* in 1856, was priced at 10s 6d – exactly the same price as a number of works by (or associated with) Sylva.¹⁷ These included *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* and her memoirs, *From Memory's Shrine* (1911). Changing rates of inflation and the value of British currency in the 1850s compared to the 1890s means that Sylva's volumes most likely retailed at a slightly lower price than Lewald's, but this parallel suggests that their works were being marketed at a specific class of reader, who would not have to wait for cheaper editions to be printed.

From 1892, the marketing of the folksongs began to alter and a different type of edition was promoted. This can be seen most clearly when an 1891 advert is viewed alongside one from November 1892:

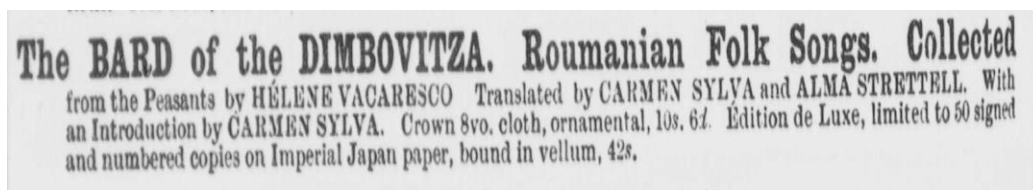


Fig. 3. 'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 28 November 1891, p. 708.

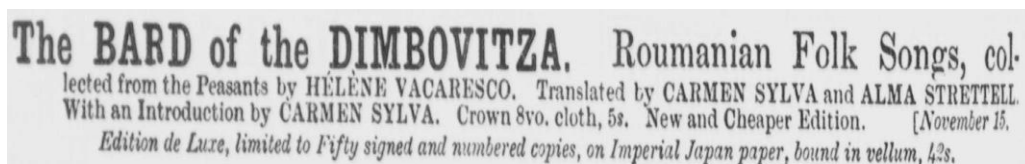


Fig. 4. 'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 12 November 1892, p. 652.

¹⁷ 'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 10 May 1856, p. 596.

These adverts were produced nearly a year apart but are almost identical in style and content. Both also indicate that there were fifty signed copies of the Edition de Luxe, although I have not been able to ascertain whether this edition was signed by Vacaresco, Sylva, or Strettell. Nevertheless, these adverts reveal an important detail about the manufacture of the collection: as of 12 November 1892, a new and cheaper 5s edition was marketed alongside the deluxe edition. This was the average – and more affordable – price of a book by the late nineteenth century. The 10s 6d edition is no longer mentioned. There may be a number of reasons for this, the first being that a cheaper price was introduced to sell more copies and appeal to a wider range of readers. Alternatively, a cheaper price could be indicative of its popularity – if the 10s 6d edition had sold out and further editions were expected to do the same, publishing and selling at a cheaper price allowed more copies to be printed and more to be sold. In Fig. 4, the date ‘November 15,’ which is small and italicised within parentheses, suggests that this is again promotional advertising undertaken before the volume’s release date, albeit only by three days in this instance.¹⁸

Advertisements from April 1894 onwards, however, uncover the most significant information about the folktales. Osgood, McIlvaine & Company did not advertise just one volume, but three, each containing new material. This detail is first made clear in April 1894, when an advert in the *Athenaeum* describes a second series as ‘Just Ready’ and lists it directly above the reference for the first collection.¹⁹ Like the first volume, the second series was originally priced at 10s 6d, making it the most expensive book advertised by Osgood, McIlvaine &

¹⁸‘Advertisement,’ *Athenaeum*, 12 November 1892, p. 652.

¹⁹‘Advertisement,’ *Athenaeum*, 14 April 1894, p. 489.

Company at this time. Underneath, the publishers retained Harrison's 1891 review and continue to advertise the first collection, now, as I noted, reduced to 5s. It was still possible to obtain the first series as an Edition de Luxe, of which 'few remain,' but the 10s 6d edition is now listed as out of print. This could be an intentional marketing strategy to suggest the volume's popularity. By implying that only a few copies remain and that the original edition has sold out, they encourage the reading public to buy their copy quickly, before it is too late. This strategy, a variation on what Clark Rogers has termed the 'coming event close' – where the prospective customer is told that an item will soon be discontinued – is still at work in modern marketing.²⁰

October 1896 heralds the arrival of another apparently new edition, now marketed at 5s from the outset.²¹ Closer consultation, however, reveals that this volume is not entirely new, but contains the songs from the second series alongside seven additional poems. The publishers describe the edition in very similar terms to the adverts that have already been discussed and emphasise its resemblance to previous volumes: it is 'uniform with 5s Edition of the First Series, a SECOND EDITION of which will be ready immediately' (not my emphasis).²² This book has been deliberately designed to resemble the previous editions, most likely in order to tempt those who already purchased the previous two volumes into adding another aesthetically identical third volume to their collection. The publishers have even anticipated the needs of readers who do not

²⁰Stuart Clark Rogers, *Marketing Strategies, Tactics, and Techniques: A Handbook for Practitioners* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books, 2001), p. 197.

²¹'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 17 October 1896, p. 504.

²²'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 21 November 1896, p. 701.

have the first series, releasing a second edition at the same time – there is no reason for the British public to have an incomplete set.

That cannot be said of the advertising by Harper & Brothers who introduced a new format for *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* in 1902. Boston publisher James R. Osgood (1836-1892) had been forced into bankruptcy in 1885 and had taken a job with Harper & Brothers, eventually moving to a London office. He was joined by Clarence W. McIlvaine (1865-1912) in 1891 and in doing so, Harper's had established an English publishing house under the name of Osgood, McIlvaine and Co. Osgood's death in 1892, however, meant that by 1897 the firm 'ceased publishing for English authors.'²³ This would explain why Harper & Brothers began marketing the collection under their own name. Their decision to reprint the collection over a decade after it was first published again suggests it had lasting popularity: Harper & Brothers clearly believed that the collection would continue to be financially viable and the format and content of the adverts for this 'new' collection supports this supposition. All the folksongs from the first and second series, as well as new material 'never before published' have been combined into one volume, priced at 5s.²⁴ Although using a new quote from a review in *The Times*, which termed the collection 'a classic with which every person of intelligence ought to possess some acquaintance,' Harrison's criticism is also utilised.²⁵ Other adverts for this combined collection – if they included a quote at all – have Harrison's comments from 1891.

²³Eugene Exman, *The House of Harper* (1967; New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), p. 162.

²⁴'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 4 October 1902, p. 437.

²⁵*Ibid.*

Advertisements also reveal the broad scope of Sylva's literary production, which operated across a range of genres and included both fiction and non-fiction. These are primarily English-language volumes, although in May 1890 a German edition of Sylva's poems, *Meine Ruh* – which was set to music – is advertised.²⁶ Similarly, in August 1899 there is an advert for *Le Hêtre Rouge*, a French translation of Sylva's short fiction.²⁷ The latter provides a price in francs, suggesting that it could only be purchased abroad. The price of the German edition, however, is in shillings and pence. Despite these discrepancies, foreign-language adverts indicate that British publishers and readers were, at least on some level, aware of the popularity of Sylva's work on an international scale.

Public awareness of Sylva's work also developed as a result of advertisements that listed her as a contributor to collaborative collections. In December 1892, for example, there were a number of adverts for *Capitals of the World*, two illustrated volumes published by Sampson Low, Marston & Company and priced at three guineas. Sylva wrote the chapter on Bucharest. The contributors appear to have been well-known: the review quoted as part of the advert states that not all contributors need listing, but nevertheless goes on to mention the Liberal politician Sir Charles Dilke (1843-1911), Pierre Loti and Sylva. This provides an 'indication of the quality.'²⁸ The fact that this collection has been advertised by including Sylva's name, albeit not first in the list, is an indication that she was well-known in British literary culture and society. It also

²⁶ 'Advertisement,' *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, May 1890, p. 314.

²⁷ French translation by George A. Mandy (Paris: Librairie Nilsson). Zimmerman's list of Sylva's foreign-language works references this volume, but does not provide further information concerning genre or content. Consulting the text reveals that it contains two short stories, translated from Sylva's 1884 collection *Handzeichnungen (Sketches)*. Stories from this volume were later published in English under the title *Shadows on Love's Dial* (1895, 1905).

²⁸ 'Advertisement,' *Saturday Review*, 17 December 1892, p. 731.

implies that she was a reputable writer, to the extent that those reading the advert would possibly purchase the volume as a result of seeing her association with it.

This argument is also applicable to *Wayfarer's Love* (1904), where Sylva's name was once again used in the promotional advertising. This anthology featured the 'poets of the day' and was edited by the Duchess of Sutherland (1867-1955), with all proceeds going to the Potteries and Newcastle Cripples Guild, a charitable cause that reflects Sylva's own motives for literary production.²⁹ This anthology is of particular importance as Sylva was invited to contribute to it: the Duchess 'turned to the Poets, begging them to contribute to a volume which the Guild should print.'³⁰ That Sylva was personally approached to contribute to *Wayfarer's Love* alongside other prominent writers such as Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and Hélène Vacaresco, suggests that she was considered an equally significant living writer, even if only by those producing the collection. Furthermore, despite upper-class contributors including the Earl of Crewe (1858-1945) – a Liberal politician and the son of the poet and politician Richard Monckton-Milnes (1809-1885) – and Lady Margaret Sackville (1881-1963), who was known for her poetry and children's fiction, Sylva is the only royal figure to be published in the collection. Sylva's contribution, an aphorism written and published in French, is on the first page, directly after the Duchess's introduction. Whilst there is no indication as to whether contributions were new, that is, produced specifically for the collection, with regard to Sylva's contribution at least, an English-language translation does not appear in her 1890 volume of aphorisms, *Thoughts of a Queen*. This suggests that it was developed solely for this project. With this in mind, this collection is

²⁹ 'Advertisement,' *Athenaeum*, 15 October 1904, p. 502.

³⁰ The Duchess of Sutherland, 'Introduction,' in *Wayfarer's Love*, ed. by The Duchess of Sutherland (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd, 1904), p. 10.

further indication of British recognition of her literary skills as well as her popularity, both of which were used to stimulate public interest in the collection and benefit charitable profits.

Ultimately, these adverts indicate that Sylva's works were generally promoted a number of months before initial publication, with *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* – due to the fact it is in three different volumes – being the notable exception. There is a straightforward explanation for periods without any advertising: as an accurate list of her published works develops, it becomes apparent that there were simply no British, English-language works being published by Sylva during certain years.³¹ It is important, however, to emphasise the lack of British publications and advertising, since there is evidence to suggest that English-language works by Sylva were translated and published in the United States of America. For example, although nothing by Sylva was advertised in Britain during 1888, her collection of poems, *Songs of Toil*, was published in New York by F.A. Stokes & Brother. It was never published in Britain – which could explain the lack of advertising – although this is partially contradicted by the small amounts of advertising for Sylva's *Le Hêtre Rouge*, which as previously mentioned, was advertised but not published in Britain. Given that *Songs of Toil* was published before the 1890 Chace Act, which secured copyright agreements between Britain and the USA, it is likely that it is a pirated copy and would not have been for sale in Britain.

³¹See Appendix Five for a bibliography of Sylva's published works.

Whilst it is possible to explain the gaps in advertising as a result of a lack of new work, it is harder to explain why certain works do not appear to have been advertised at all, despite being referenced or reviewed in British periodicals. Interestingly, Sylva's collection of aphorisms, *Thoughts of A Queen* (1890) do not appear to have been advertised, although it was briefly referenced around the time of its publication. Indeed, F.V. White & Co. list the volume as one of Carmen Sylva's 'other' works when advertising their own publication of *Edleen Vaughan*. John Gross, recounting the history of the aphorism, notes that 'the first to go by that name, at least – were a collection of brief medical teachings and sayings by Hippocrates. [...] Soon, however, it came to denote the formulation of a moral or philosophical principle as well, and gradually this took over as its accepted everyday meaning.'³² The genre began to flourish in England in the sixteenth century, but then faded from critical interest until, as William Ringler has argued, 'the flowering of Romanticism early in the nineteenth century,' prompted new interest, as a result of the influence of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, among others.³³ Aphorisms became increasingly popular, with international appeal. Alongside many anonymous offerings, well-known writers including Goethe, Oscar Wilde, Mark Twain (1835-1910) and Lev Tolstoy turned to the genre for a witty turn of phrase. Yet Sylva's collection does not appear to have been promoted prior to or during its publication, despite the fact that it had been awarded the *Prix Botta* in 1888.

³²John Gross, 'Introduction,' in *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, ed. by John Gross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), vii.

³³William Ringler, 'Poeta Nascitur Non Fit: Some Notes on the History of an Aphorism,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2 (October 1941), 503.

A number of Sylva's individual short stories and poems, which appeared in various British magazines, were also not advertised. This is less surprising: magazines with a regular readership, such as *Belgravia* or the *English Illustrated Magazine*, may not have deemed it necessary to advertise the contents of their editions. Certain publications, however, such as the *Queen: the Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle*, or *London Society*, did advertise their forthcoming editions in other periodicals. It is particularly interesting that *London Society* is included here, as it can be used to highlight an apparent inconsistency: the magazine that placed an advert in *Belgravia* in August 1891, advertising, among others, Sylva's short story 'A Funeral in the Carpathians,' neglected to advertise another edition in 1894, which featured 'Puiu' – another of her stories.

Considering the large number of adverts available for consultation makes it possible to ascertain the extent of Sylva's oeuvre and to develop a more accurate picture of her English-language publications in Britain. The physical appearance of the adverts and the information contained within them also reveal the popularity of particular works and provide vital insight into the development of Sylva's literary reputation in Britain during the *fin de siècle*.

3.2. References.

The importance of references stems from their potential to expand our knowledge of Sylva's work in its various forms. Contents page references make up a significant part of this category, but their contribution is limited. They only reveal basic information: that Sylva was referenced, her work was reviewed, or she contributed to a particular publication.

Some references may be speculative in nature, merely referencing potential titles or unnamed volumes that are in the process of composition.³⁴ Articles that are more definitive, however, often provide valuable information about a text's lineage and the textual variants that stemmed from the original. This is particularly useful if a later edition has been translated differently. A prime example is the collection of allegorical short stories, *Suffering's Journey on the Earth*, published by Jarrold & Sons in 1905. Given that Sylva was still publishing fresh material in this period, it might be assumed that this was a new work. This is called into question, however, when a short piece of 'literary gossip' written by an anonymous correspondent is considered:

May I say that the translation of Carmen Sylva's 'Leiden's Untergang,' [sic] noticed by you last week [*Suffering's Journey on the Earth*], is not the first, and that the book is, in fact, by no means new in its original form? Over twenty years ago Mr. Fisher Unwin published a rendering from the accomplished pen of Miss Helen Zimmern, entitled 'Pilgrim's Sorrow.'³⁵

This piece asserts that *Suffering's Journey on the Earth* is not a new work, but a new edition, which has been retranslated and republished twenty-one years later. This is confirmed when the two editions are compared in more detail: there are material variants between them, to do with how the stories have been arranged on the page. This includes font size, illustrations and translation-based decisions – how, in this instance, Helen Zimmern's rendering of the text is different from Margaret A. Nash's version. Textually, however, the content of both volumes is the same. Recognition of this affects critical comprehension of the nineteenth-century engagement with Sylva's works. Over twenty years after it was initially

³⁴ Anonymous, 'Literary Gossip,' *Athenaeum*, 1 November 1884, p. 563.

³⁵ Anonymous, 'Literary Gossip,' *Athenaeum*, 10 March 1906, p. 300.

presented to the British reading public, publishers evidently considered the work financially viable enough to republish it. The different title may be a publishing sleight of hand – in order to market the text as a new volume – or a genuine unfamiliarity with the original version.

Nevertheless, evidence of republishing lends weight to the argument that Sylva should be recuperated as a popular writer. Although *Suffering's Journey on the Earth* was not initially recognised by British reviewers as a retranslated edition of *Leidens Erdengang*, or its earlier English edition, *Pilgrim Sorrow*, these references create a more accurate representation of Sylva's publishing history for modern criticism. This misunderstanding may have negatively affected her literary reputation, as the popularity of certain works appears to have been overlooked during her lifetime and then repeated in later scholarship. Quincey Morgan, for example, does not recognise that the two English-language versions are variants of the same source and references them separately.³⁶

Other nineteenth-century references to primary texts function as recommendations for readers. Some may reinforce the bias surrounding 'great' literature, referencing Sylva in the context of 'minor poetry,' but many indicate the international popularity of some of her works.³⁷ One such article references an Italian version of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*.³⁸ That the British periodical press considered this detail to be print-worthy speaks volumes about interest in Sylva as well as interest surrounding this particular work.

³⁶ Bayard Quincey Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation 1481-1927*, p. 84.

³⁷ Anonymous, 'The Sale of Minor Poetry,' *Academy*, 29 January 1898, p. 131.

³⁸ Anonymous, 'New Notes,' *Bookman*, December 1891, p. 94.

This interest in translation and Sylva's own input into this process is cemented through further references to collections such as *Thoughts of a Queen*. The author of 'Facts and Comments,' for example, notes that Sylva proof-read H. Sutherland Edwards's translation and made 'several valuable suggestions.'³⁹ This may not have been the case for every English-language translation of Sylva's work, but this reference nevertheless offers insight into the collaborative nature of translation, where the author might be invited to scrutinise the translation before publication. Sylva was not necessarily the passive author her reviewers considered her to be. She may have been criticised for insufficient editing of her work – as the following section will explore – but this example suggests that this did not necessarily extend to her entire oeuvre. Given her comprehensive knowledge of English, it does not seem surprising that, given the opportunity, she would make some suggestions. These references therefore allow us to critique the contemporary reviews of Sylva's work more accurately, as they provide information that might challenge the negative criticism she received.

3.3. Reviews.

Reviews are a vital part of establishing Carmen Sylva's literary presence in Britain. They contribute to the development of an accurate bibliographical list, indicate which works were discussed most frequently and, most importantly, provide insight into how these works were received. Although R.C. Terry notes that reviewers judged work based on a 'haphazard set of standards,' which ranged from the motives of the journal to those of the reviewer themselves, the discovery

³⁹Anonymous, 'Facts and Comments,' *Musical World*, 27 September 1890, p. 765.

of consistently scathing reviews would explain Sylva's current marginalisation.⁴⁰ If her work was deemed uninteresting or lacking value on any level, then it is unsurprising that it has not survived. Similarly, overwhelmingly positive reviews, mirroring those of Sylva's biographers, would be equally detrimental to her literary reputation as they do not provide sufficient critique: indiscriminate praise out of deference to her royal status prevents Sylva's work from being reviewed on its own merits. As with the advertisements, reviews are not constant, occurring in peaks and troughs. Again, they correspond with her publishing history: the first reviews begin in 1882, peak between 1890 and 1899 and end around 1913, three years before Sylva's death. Critics do not return to earlier volumes in order to compare styles, stories or genres. Instead, they generally focus on her most recently published work, reflecting the topical nature of reviewing.

These reviews are not limited to Sylva's own works, however; a number also discuss secondary literature associated with her. These are largely personal in nature, focusing on the biographies and essays written by people who are acquainted with her, such as Baroness Deichmann, Blanche Roosevelt and Pierre Loti. Unsurprisingly, given the subjective nature of reviewing and the manner in which Sylva's own works were received, to be discussed at a later stage in this chapter, these biographical pieces obtained mixed reviews. Reviewers' comments generally critique the style, rather than the content. For example, Deichmann's biography was well-received, with a number of critics praising the accuracy of her translation (as I noted, she translated the original German volume by Baroness Stackelberg) as well as her 'discriminating tone.'⁴¹

⁴⁰R.C. Terry, p. 50.

⁴¹Anonymous, 'New Books and Reprints,' *Saturday Review*, 5 April 1890, p. 423.

Conversely, Blanche Roosevelt is condemned for her apparent inability to capture Sylva's life and for errors in her translation. The majority of reviewers deem Roosevelt too extravagant in her praise of Sylva, with one particularly irate reviewer going as far as to term the work 'high flown twaddle.'⁴² The significance of these reviews lies in their potential impact on Sylva's reputation. If British reviewers felt that biographers praised Sylva indiscriminately, then, by implication, she did not deserve this positive reception. Such a judgement has the potential to dissuade readers from purchasing Sylva's other works. The argument has added weight with regard to Roosevelt's biography, as it contains two short stories by Sylva: if the biography was seen as poorly written, then readers were less likely to read or purchase it. They are thus deterred not only from Sylva's life, but also from her writing. Although these reviews, as with all reviews relating to Sylva, express both positive and negative sentiments, the impact of overtly negative reviews on a potential readership should not be underestimated. A tarnished literary reputation does not bode well for lasting authorial recognition.

Unlike the advertising for Sylva's works, which focused almost entirely on English-language editions, nineteenth-century reviewers did not limit themselves to translations. In the first decade of Sylva's literary career (1880-1889), the majority of the reviews written for the British periodical press focused on her foreign-language works, written in German and French respectively. This circumstance can be partially explained by Sylva's publishing history and the fact that no English-language works appeared until 1884. Foreign-language reviews

⁴²Anonymous, 'New Books and Reprints,' *Saturday Review*, 16 May 1891, p. 605.

are not limited to these early decades, but become increasingly infrequent as a larger number of English-language volumes appear.

It is possible that the desire to review works in Sylva's native language, as well as in French, was tied to the international interests of the periodicals in question.⁴³ The majority of foreign-language reviews were written for the *Saturday Review*, a weekly publication with a large circulation, a middle-to-upper-class readership and an authoritative, at times 'sharply critical' style.⁴⁴ Most significantly for Sylva, its early contributors were closely associated with German culture and learning, including George Henry Lewes, Mark Pattison and Max Müller, the last of whom, as I noted, was personally acquainted with Sylva. Remaining reviews of this nature were predominantly published in the *Athenaeum*, one of the foremost weeklies of the nineteenth century, with a focus on foreign literature that was rivalled only by the *Westminster Review* or the *Foreign Quarterly Review*. Another periodical, although reviewing her work far less frequently, is the *Academy*, founded in 1869 by Charles Appleton (1841-1879), who was a close friend of Mark Pattison and another admirer of German scholarship. Although Kent notes that Appleton's death caused a 'decline in the journal's intellectual cosmopolitanism,' the periodical retained its influential status.⁴⁵ These publications had the highest number of reviews and produced pieces on Sylva throughout her literary career.

It was common for British reviewers to take an interest in international writing and works published in foreign languages. It was also common for this

⁴³Biographers agree that Sylva spoke fluent French. She also published in French periodicals, including *La Revue et Revue des Revues*, to be discussed at a later stage.

⁴⁴Kerry Powell, 'The *Saturday Review* (of Politics, Literature, Science and Art),' in *British Literary Magazines. The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837-1913*, p. 380.

⁴⁵Kent, p. 4.

interest to extend to women writers, including the French author George Sand (1804-1876) and, as I have mentioned, German women writers such as Fanny Lewald and Bertha von Suttner. This suggests – albeit on a relatively small scale – that Sylva's current marginalisation is not a result of her nationality. In fact, it demonstrates the versatility of the British reviewer and the international interests of the British reading public. These foreign-language reviews reaffirm that British literary critics were already aware of Sylva and were taking an interest in her work before the first English-language edition was published.

Consideration of the foreign-language works themselves is also worthy of note, since the majority are volumes which, although reviewed by British critics, do not appear to have been published in English for the British literary market. Of the twelve German and French-language works reviewed in British periodicals between 1882 and 1913, it seems that only two were later translated into English: *Lieder aus dem Dimbovitzthal* (1889) became *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* and the first ten stories from *Pelesch-Märchen* (1883) were part of *Legends from River and Mountain* (1896).

There are also certain – albeit limited – instances where foreign-language works by Sylva were published in Britain but not translated. The titles, such as the collection of poetry, *Meine Ruh* (*My Repose*), are translated and British-based publishing information is cited, but the reviewer then discusses the German-language content. This suggests that an English-language edition was never produced. In the case of *Meine Ruh*, the reviewer, although negative overall, singles out two poems entitled 'Die Stern-schuppe' [*sic*] and 'Wenn Frauen

scherzen’ as excellent ‘both in form and feeling.’⁴⁶ Uncovering such reviews implies that a proportion of the British public could access Sylva’s work in translation as well as in its original German. Even if German volumes were limited to specialised reading circles around Britain – which was typical of interest in the German language in the nineteenth century – it nevertheless expands our knowledge of Sylva’s reading public, reaffirming that she was a writer whose work was seen to be marketable in both its original and translated forms.

In order to assess both the criticisms and the praise, it is helpful to categorise reviews into those that were predominantly positive, predominantly negative and finally those that were a balance of positive and negative comments. As shown in Appendix Two, the majority of reviews were either positive or mixed. There are some recurring comments, which are not confined to specific decades, but are repeated across her literary career with regard to her entire body of work. Such reviews focus on content, style, language and her literary output.

Critics frequently commented on Sylva’s writing style, noting that there was not enough critical examination and ‘artistic restraint.’⁴⁷ By implication, then, ‘great literature’ is valued for its careful construction. One 1906 reviewer even went as far as to compare Sylva’s writing style to that of an uncontrolled child, suggesting that her stories ‘retain so much of this childlike romance and tender feeling that they please the simple-minded more than does many a better-made

⁴⁶ Anonymous, ‘German Literature,’ *Saturday Review*, 19 January 1884, p. 94. I believe that the title of Sylva’s poem has been spelt incorrectly here: the title should be ‘Die Stern-Schnuppe’. The extra letter results in the title being translated as ‘The Shooting Star’. The other poem is entitled ‘When Women Jest’.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, ‘Book Review,’ *Athenaeum*, 3 March 1906, p. 263.

article.’⁴⁸ The seeming superiority of the reviewer is shown through his/her disdainful view of the work and its readers. Both are equally ‘simple’ in the mind of this reviewer, in the sense of being unsophisticated and unaware of what constitutes ‘great’ writing. The critic’s attitude is detrimental to Sylva’s potential readership, as readers might avoid her work in order to preserve their reputations as people who read the ‘right’ kind of literature. As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, this connects to attitudes towards ‘popular’ writing, whereby commercially successful works were criticised for being insufficiently cultured, or ‘high-brow’. It is likely that this is also a veiled comment on women’s writing more generally, which was often seen as less valuable than that of their male counterparts.

This argument is supported by a paper given by Professor Maurice A. Gerothwohl (1877-1941) to the Royal Society of Literature (RSL) on 25 March 1914. ‘The Poetry of Carmen Sylva’ was presented on the day that Sylva was admitted as an Honorary Fellow. Although it was initially read to the small audience at the RSL, it was later published in the *Fortnightly Review* – further indication of sustained interest in Sylva. As part of his review, which focuses primarily on Sylva’s poetry, Gerothwohl discusses her writing style:

Whenever she is writing prose she is inclined, like many, I could say most women writers, and the greatest – George Sand to wit – she is inclined to allow too free a flow to her emotions and ideas. She does not always knit with sufficient care and looseness the texture of her sentence, the contours of her periods. She sometimes writes, I will not say loosely, but too smoothly, in too uniform a stream, one that neither dyke nor lock repairs.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Anonymous, ‘Suffering’s Journey,’ *Academy*, 27 January 1906, p. 88.

⁴⁹ Maurice A. Gerothwohl, ‘The Poetry of Carmen Sylva,’ (1914) in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature* (London: Asher and Co., 1915), pp. 4-5.

There is a clear link here between women's writing, over-sentimentality and an inferior writing style, a criticism which was levelled at earlier women writers, including Felicia Hemans. Women writers are viewed both stereotypically and collectively: they allow their emotions to dominate their work, apparently at the expense of precision.

This notion of Sylva being marginalised due to stereotypes surrounding women's writing also applies to criticism concerning the quantity of her work, rather than the quality (although this criticism was also applied to prolific male writers). An 1884 review from the *Saturday Review*, initially referencing Sylva's poetry collection *Meine Ruh (My Repose)*, becomes a general critique of her writing, commenting that 'her misfortune is a fatal fluency, evinced in the mere undertaking to write a poem for every day in the year. Could these have been condensed into a poem for every day in the month, the poetical result would not have been inconsiderable.'⁵⁰ By implication, the speed of her literary production is detrimental to her work's quality and this apparent lack of attention to detail and 'healthy objectivity' is then connected with her potential for long-term success.⁵¹ One critic makes this explicit: her works 'follow each other too rapidly for an enduring reputation.'⁵² These comments, as with so many negative reviews of Sylva's work, initially focus on a specific collection – in this case her German volume of short stories, *Handzeichnungen (Sketches)* – but quickly expand into a general critique. The reviewer makes a clear correlation between the quantity of work, the speed of production and the writer's reputation. In Sylva's case, she writes too much, too quickly, to ever be considered 'great'.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, 'German Literature,' *Saturday Review*, 19 January 1884, p. 94.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Anonymous, 'German Literature,' *Saturday Review*, 16 February 1884, p. 230.

This is a prevailing criticism of Sylva's writing. Even Burgoyne, in her otherwise glowing biography, notes that 'if she had been forced, by exigent editors and publishers, to prune and revise, she would have done better work.'⁵³ More recently, Brigitte Hamann argues that Sylva's 'outpourings [...] are literature only in the most qualified sense.'⁵⁴ The suggestion that Sylva's works are 'outpourings' – produced hurriedly and without restraint – closely resembles the comments made by Sylva's *fin de siècle* reviewers, who equated her rapid rates of production with ill-conceived and poorly written work. This criticism is taken to the extreme by Hamann, who concludes that Sylva's writing cannot be recognised as literature, a sentiment that this thesis strongly contests. Nevertheless, this similarity between nineteenth-century and modern reviewing adds another explanatory layer to Sylva's obscurity: a negative attitude to her production methods has excluded her from modern critical consciousness on the grounds that prolific publishing could not produce 'great' literature. Negativity surrounding a large body of work is not an unusual criticism of women writers and there are some similarities that can be drawn here between the marginalisation of Carmen Sylva, and Felicia Hemans – a topic which will be explored in Chapters Four and Five. German women writers like Fanny Lewald were also criticised for 'prolixity.'⁵⁵

Nevertheless, this critical stance is not shared by all reviewers. Indeed, the anonymous reviewer of *Thoughts of a Queen*, whilst criticising the *Thoughts* for not being suitably profound, also attacks the editorship of H. Sutherland Edwards for printing in a large typeface and having 'padded out' the collection with a long

⁵³Burgoyne, pp. 117-8.

⁵⁴Hamann, p. 290.

⁵⁵Anonymous, 'Foreign Literature. The Critic Abroad,' *Critic*, 1 March 1852, p. 241.

preface and number of blank pages.⁵⁶ In concluding that ‘there is not enough of these *Thoughts* [*sic*], and they are not good enough,’ the reviewer deviates from the other criticisms of quantity but provides a succinct summary of the points of contention for Sylva’s reviewers: quantity and quality.⁵⁷

Margaret L. Woods, who wrote one of the final reviews of Sylva in 1913, tried to counteract such criticisms. Printed for the *Fortnightly Review* but originally part of an address given to the Women Writers’ Dinner in June 1913, Woods’s review of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* was part of a larger article on women poets. Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Barrett Browning are briefly discussed without wider reference to their works, but *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* is singled out as a ‘very original and beautiful’ work that did not receive the proper accolades from the British public when it was first published, despite being ‘much read and admired by literary people.’⁵⁸ This in itself has implications for Sylva’s recuperation as Woods implies that work associated with Sylva – even a volume as popular as *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* – was not widely celebrated, although certain circles considered it to be of literary value. As a result, it seems unsurprising that works by Sylva which were advertised, promoted and discussed less frequently, met a similar fate. Woods also recited the poem ‘At A Grave’ – which was published as part of the first series – for her audience. As with the poem Sylva recited at the Eisteddfod, or the short stories in Roosevelt’s biography, Woods is providing direct examples of the work as she extols its virtues. This positive review is connected with Woods’s wider argument that

⁵⁶Anonymous, ‘Marcellula Aureliuncula,’ *Scots Observer*, 18 October 1890, p. 568.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 569.

⁵⁸Margaret L. Woods, ‘Poetry: and Women Poets as Artists,’ *Fortnightly Review*, August 1913, p. 233.

women poets 'are playing, and will play, their part in the revival of poetry,' and that, contrary to popular belief, their writing is not 'deficient in literary form.'⁵⁹ Although not attributed specifically to Sylva, her continued association with *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*, coupled with the favourable review it received from Woods, clearly indicates the impact of the volume. It also reiterates that one of the reasons for Sylva's marginalisation was tied to the dismissive view taken of women's writing.

Issues of style were not always a reflection on Sylva herself: linguistic errors were often attributed to poor translation. Attacks on the apparently clumsy lexical choices can be found with regard to her short stories, such as *Suffering's Journey on the Earth*, where 'the wrong word is too frequent and often vexatiously damaging.'⁶⁰ This criticism was also applied to translations of her poetry. One particularly unfavourable reviewer concludes that Sylva was never a 'remarkable lyricist' and the translation of her work has worsened the situation, creating poems that consist of 'vague, insipid melodies [and] lackadaisical banalities.'⁶¹ These comments, although not levelled at Sylva herself, would likely have made the volumes less attractive to the reading public: few readers would want to pay for a volume that was uninspiring in its conception and that had been rendered infinitely worse by the process of translation. This kind of criticism will have undoubtedly damaged both the sales of Sylva's work and its potential to be recognised as of significance in later literary culture.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 231.

⁶⁰Anonymous, 'Suffering's Journey,' *Academy*, 27 January 1906, p. 88.

⁶¹Anonymous, 'Notices of New Books,' *Athenaeum*, 4 May 1912, p. 498.

For many critics, the tone of Sylva's work was another pressing problem. They saw her work as too gloomy or overly melodramatic. This assessment was levelled at other German women writers, who, grouped collectively – and non-specifically – in a review for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, were described as 'wearisome and unpleasant.'⁶² It was also attributed to German literature more generally, which is 'not only perverse, but particularly dull and talentless.'⁶³ In part of a larger literature review, one of Sylva's early critics comments that the stories in *Pilgrim Sorrow* are 'the outpouring of a heart bowed down by grief and suffering, and are so intensely lugubrious that it would be cruel to put them into the hands of children.'⁶⁴ This view, like the anecdotes found in biographies, again establishes an autobiographical link between Sylva's 'heart' and the content of her work. For the reviewer, melancholia dominates and fundamentally affects the quality of the work and he/she even goes so far as to suggest that those who allowed children to access it are guilty of abuse.

This issue of audience suitability has been debated throughout Sylva's literary career, with regard to other short stories, such as 'In Fetters' and 'The Mother-in-Law,' (published at the end of Blanche Roosevelt's biography), *Legends from River and Mountain* (1896) and *A Real Queen's Fairy Book* (1901). These discussions are often couched in initial praise of the content, style, or aesthetic qualities, before becoming a debate about the intended readership. *Legends from River and Mountain*, for example, is described as fascinating for

⁶² Anonymous, 'The London Diary of a German Authoress,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1851, p. 209.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 220.

⁶⁴ Anonymous, 'Belles Lettres,' *Westminster Review*, January 1884, p. 278.

adults, but perhaps too ‘subtle’ for children.⁶⁵ This view is only partially contradicted by another article from the same month, where the reviewer notes that overall, only one of the stories from the collection, ‘The Serpent Isle,’ would be ‘acceptable to young readers.’⁶⁶ By implication, the remainder are not. Criticisms of *A Real Queen’s Fairy Book* are similar: there is praise for the lavish illustrations, but the content is inappropriate for a young audience and the stories are not ‘attractively told.’⁶⁷

Audience suitability often affected the authors of fairy tales, including Christina Rossetti and her collection *Speaking Likenesses* (1874) and Oscar Wilde’s second volume of fairy tales, *A House of Pomegranates* (1891). In a letter to the editor of *Pall Mall Magazine* in December 1891 Wilde famously wrote that ‘I had about as much intention of pleasing the British child as I had of pleasing the British public.’⁶⁸ Here, he succinctly summarises the problems surrounding the intended audience of fairy tales: they have, in Caroline Sumpter’s words, a ‘double audience,’ of both adult and child readers.⁶⁹ This dual function extended both to the practice of reading as well as the location of the stories. They could be found in periodicals which appealed to educated adults, such as the *Cornhill Magazine*, or juvenile magazines, such as *Good Words for the Young* and *Aunt Judy’s Magazine*. As will become apparent in Chapter Four, Sylva depicted themes, including bigamy, murder and domestic violence, which are probably not suitable for children and I have found no evidence to suggest that such stories

⁶⁵ Anonymous, ‘Legends from River and Mountain,’ *Bookman*, January 1896, p. 129.

⁶⁶ Anonymous, ‘The Literature of Folk-lore,’ *Athenaeum*, 18 January 1896, p. 85.

⁶⁷ Anonymous, ‘Books for Children,’ *Academy*, 7 December 1901, p. 552.

⁶⁸ *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Fourth Estate Limited, 2000), p. 503.

⁶⁹ Caroline Sumpter, *The Victorian Press and the Fairy Tale* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 40.

appeared in magazines designed for a younger readership. In fact, they were predominantly published in periodicals with a middle-class, adult readership, such as the *English Illustrated Magazine*, and a specifically female readership, including the *Lady's Realm*. Nevertheless, the suitability of Sylva's stories for an adult audience was also called into question.

One reviewer, writing for the *Academy* in June 1891, takes this issue one step further by deeming Sylva's stories equally inappropriate for women. He/she argues that the subject matter of the stories is fundamentally immoral: so 'unnatural and revolting' that 'no self-respecting woman' should read them.⁷⁰ Again, this is a value judgement on the quality of the work as well as the quality of the reader. Decent women would not degrade themselves by reading such a volume. If Sylva's work was seen as inappropriate for any audience and was accepted as such by a large proportion of nineteenth-century readers, then its reputation would be diminished. Readers would turn to writers who had been reviewed more favourably, a pattern that appears to have been continued in modern criticism.

Small amounts of negative criticism also extend to the setting of Sylva's works, specifically in *Edleen Vaughan*. A number of reviewers accuse Sylva of inaccuracy with regard to her knowledge of Wales, with one particularly scathing reviewer commenting that 'the reader is compelled to amuse himself with the astounding ignorance which the author displays of her chosen locality, and to acknowledge that a short residence in a Welsh watering-place but ill qualifies even an accomplished writer to describe with circumstance the manners and

⁷⁰Anonymous, 'Book Review,' *Academy*, 13 June 1891, p. 560.

customs of the Welsh.’⁷¹ Here, the reviewer’s pointed reference to Sylva’s time in Llandudno is used to emphasise her literary deficiencies. By implication, Sylva was naive to think she could recreate a country in which she had spent no more than a few weeks and that proves she is not an accomplished writer. This review takes on added significance when the critic’s justifications are taken into account. The reviewer qualifies his/her criticism by observing that ‘of course it is not to be expected that a visitor, even a Royal visitor, to a country can achieve acquaintance with all phases of its natural life.’⁷² Through this admission, the reviewer is making allowances for ‘these dismal unrealities of Welsh life,’ because they stem from the pen of a high status, foreign individual, unconnected with everyday life.⁷³ Again, royal status interferes with and influences the reception of Sylva’s work.

Many critics were unable to discuss Sylva’s work without engaging with her royal background, as exemplified by an early review of *Pilgrim Sorrow*, where the opening sentence attributes authorship to ‘the young and beautiful Queen of Roumania,’ and later comments that ‘to assign them their right position in literature would be as puzzling a task as a critic could undertake.’⁷⁴ This reviewer objectifies Sylva from the outset, colouring any literary criticism with her physical attributes and royal identity. The critic affects a degree of neutrality, commenting that he/she does not ‘care to judge from a single sample,’ and that a range of Sylva’s work should be considered before her literary prowess can be

⁷¹ Anonymous, ‘Novels,’ *Saturday Review*, 11 June, 1892, p. 687.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 688.

⁷⁴ Anonymous, ‘Book Review,’ *Academy*, December 1883, p. 385.

judged.⁷⁵ However, it would appear that a value judgement has already been made: there is an inability to consider her work in the context of contemporary literature due to the inability to escape the royal reputation that precedes her.

Five years later, Helen McKerlie makes similar remarks, ignoring the attempted anonymity by referencing Sylva's royal name directly after her pseudonym. McKerlie recognises that whilst consideration of her work for its literary merit would be preferable, an objective distance is impossible, since readers and critics are tempted 'to seek a more intimate acquaintance with, and better knowledge of, the great harmonious Songstress of the German Woods.'⁷⁶ Her argument also highlights another fundamental issue in contemporary reviews of Sylva's work: as discussed with regard to her biographies, praise was often received almost entirely as a result of Sylva's royal status. In 1892, another reviewer rationalises her work, in this instance *Edleen Vaughan*, by referencing Sylva's royal upbringing. He/she acknowledges the limitations of her work when representing everyday life, but simultaneously states that 'one is not a queen for nothing, and allowance must be made for the fetters and drawbacks of a situation which is not favourable to literary achievement.'⁷⁷

Certain reviewers did attempt to address this bias. A reviewer of Sylva's memoirs, *From Memory's Shrine*, wrote that to be objective, one 'must forget that Carmen Sylva is the Queen of Roumania.'⁷⁸ Whilst an admirable sentiment, it is fundamentally at odds with the work being reviewed: as a genre, autobiography is dominated by personal experiences and a royal upbringing is an undeniable part of

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Helen G. McKerlie, 'Elizabeth: Queen of Roumania,' *National Review*, June 1888, p. 486.

⁷⁷Anonymous, 'Novels of the Week,' *Athenaeum*, 7 May 1892, p. 598.

⁷⁸Anonymous, 'Carmen Sylva's Early Reminiscences,' *Academy*, 8 April 1911, p. 419.

Sylva's life. Nevertheless, the reviewer perseveres, noting the stylistic flaws of the work, as many reviewers have done before. By the end of the review, however, the critic inevitably returns to Sylva's status, noting that it was a 'privilege to stand by her shrine of memory.'⁷⁹ The suggestion that it was an honour simply to read her work and that Roumania is a 'fortunate country' under Sylva's rule, is an abrupt disavowal of the integrity that was initially called for.⁸⁰

This level of contradiction is also present in Professor Gerothwohl's keynote address to the RSL. Gerothwohl also discussed her memoirs and stated that it is difficult to discern whether public interest is a result of the 'merits of the writer,' or the 'glamour of the mighty events.'⁸¹ Despite his apparent treatment of Sylva as 'a colleague and co-worker, not a queen,' Gerothwohl inevitably contradicts himself.⁸² Having said that he would not dwell on Sylva's life, he promptly does so, aligning her partiality for poetry with the intense emotions she had experienced through revolution, war and the loss of her loved ones. This example supports the argument that critics, reviewers and biographers alike found it difficult, if not impossible, to separate Sylva's life from her work. This can be viewed positively, especially with regard to Gerothwohl's address to the RSL, because it indicates that people were still interested in her work, despite her German allegiances and the imminent outbreak of war – a reminder that even during World War One, there were many pro-German sympathisers in Britain. However, it also seems that her queenly role retained a strong hold over the minds

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 420.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Gerothwohl, p. 3.

⁸²Ibid., p. 2.

of the RSL members who had inaugurated her, despite the fact that ‘Carmen Sylva’ was the name added to the roll of fellows.

The idea of praise being determined through status may also explain why some of the positive reviews consist of vague descriptions of her work. Adjectives such as ‘powerful’ are used, but there are no concrete examples to defend the description.⁸³ Again, this may have impeded the development of Sylva’s lasting literary reputation since the praise she received in this context appears unwarranted. It has not been earned on the basis of her literary merit, but stems from luck – her birth into a social sphere of power and privilege. Thus, whilst ostensibly presenting Sylva in a positive light, these reviews are damaging to her literary reputation and may have resulted in her marginalisation, inducing readers to dismiss her work. These reviews imply that nineteenth-century critics did not necessarily see Sylva as a ‘serious’ writer and some state this explicitly. One, ostensibly discussing Roosevelt’s biography and the two short stories by Sylva that it contains, digresses into a general review of Sylva’s literary talent, declaring that ‘her services to the Roumanians [*sic*] as a leader of society and promoter of good works gives her a higher claim to honour than the literary talents that are chiefly obtruded on the European public.’⁸⁴ In keeping with the other reviews, the critic’s remarks are then tempered by their consideration of Sylva’s royal background. He/she attempts to appear more balanced by commenting that ‘to her credit it must be remembered that Queen Elisabeth’s authorship is but a pastime,’ and having reduced Sylva’s literary productions to a hobby, the reviewer goes on

⁸³See, for example, a review of Sylva’s poem ‘Die Hexe’ (‘The Witch’) in anonymous, ‘German Literature,’ *Saturday Review*, 17 February 1883, p. 224.

⁸⁴Anonymous, ‘Our Library Table,’ *Athenaeum*, 27 June 1891, p. 827.

to suggest that the chief attraction for British readers lies in her depictions of Romanian life.⁸⁵ This topic will be explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

One critic, writing for the *National Observer*, criticises the apparently weak translation of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*, but nevertheless remains ‘thankful for it as giving us a glimpse into a living world where the poet is the folk itself.’⁸⁶ This elevates the content of Sylva’s works, allowing the representation of Romania to overshadow the reviewer’s initial criticisms of form and language. Unfortunately, the overall tone of this review does not support these sentiments. The anonymous reviewer states in his/her opening lines that ‘it can only be by chance that, when Carmen Sylva has been rather prominently before the world, a book by her or relating to her should always appear in time to catch what popularity newspapers can give to literature,’ before making veiled reference to the Ferdinand-Vacaresco scandal.⁸⁷ These sarcastic lines suggest that Sylva is using her fame to manipulate the literary market and again indicates that she was not seen as a professional writer by British reviewers. Instead, she is shown to rely on her personal popularity to become commercially successful – a negative judgement not only of Sylva’s work, but also Sylva herself. She becomes an individual who slyly orchestrates her publication dates around peaks of public interest in her personal life, pursuing commercial gain rather than literary prestige.

Despite these judgements, there is also recurring praise of Sylva’s work, including her depiction of certain protagonists, such as Robert Gwynne in *Edleen Vaughan* and the allegorical characters in *Suffering’s Journey on the Earth*. Although perhaps guilty of the unsubstantiated claims I have already noted,

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Anonymous, ‘Reviews,’ *National Observer*, 12 December 1891, p. 93.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 92.

through the vague descriptions of some ‘admirable pages,’ the reviewer nevertheless notes that the characters in *Suffering’s Journey on the Earth* ‘appeal most strongly to the feeling and conscience of Everyman,’ in terms of their originality and dramatic content.⁸⁸ This judgment is repeated by other reviewers when referring to the sincerity of Sylva’s ideas and expression, even if they then discuss the work’s stylistic flaws. A good example comes from the author and journalist G. Barnett Smith (1841-1909), one of the few named reviewers of Sylva’s work. Barnett Smith wrote a review of *Edleen Vaughan* in 1892 and another for *Shadows on Love’s Dial* (1895). Both were mixed, with Barnett Smith primarily criticising the ‘defective’ wording and expression.⁸⁹ The content, however, is viewed more favourably. *Edleen Vaughan* is written with ‘power, and with considerable effects of what may be called literary chiaroscuro’ – an Italian Renaissance term which in this context most likely refers to Sylva’s presentation of contrasting situations and characters or the light and shade of daily life.⁹⁰ Despite disappointments in terms of style – which could be attributed to translators, rather than Sylva – critics like Barnett Smith were keen to define the quality of her work in terms of characterisation and plot.

One notable aspect, specific to the positive and mixed reviews, is that of comparison. These can be European-based comparisons of Sylva’s work – with other authors or styles of writing – as well as specifically British comparisons. Most concerned *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* and focused on how the content of the folksongs, the written form and the style, resembled earlier literature in the

⁸⁸ Anonymous, ‘Suffering’s Journey,’ *Academy*, 27 January 1906, p. 88.

⁸⁹ G. Barnett Smith, ‘New Novels,’ *Academy*, 8 February 1896, p. 114.

⁹⁰ G. Barnett Smith, ‘New Novels,’ *Academy*, 18 June, 1892, p. 586.

same genre, such as Celtic folksongs. Unfortunately, these are generalised comparisons, without reference to specific examples. Other comparative reviews for this collection establish a link with Lewis Carroll. One reviewer, discussing the word ‘Dimbovitza’ and how British readers might find the Romanian language and culture particularly unusual, suggested that the language ‘has a savour of the strange monsters of Lewis Carroll, a *je ne sais quoi* of the Bandersnatch.’⁹¹ This refers to one of the fantastical creatures depicted in ‘Jabberwocky,’ the nonsense verse in *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871) – the sequel to the novel that has forever linked Carroll to Llandudno.

Another review of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* references two plays by the Belgian playwright and future Nobel prize-winner, Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), comparing the dramatic sketch at the end of the first series of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* with *Les Aveugles (The Blind)*, a one-act play first performed in 1890 as a study of the human condition, and *L’Intruse (The Intruder)*.⁹² The fact that work associated with Sylva should be placed and discussed in a broader context is important in terms of her recuperation, as it suggests that reviewers did not always dismiss Sylva’s writing as a queen’s hobby, but sought to categorise it within the history of literature. Her work was not only being contextualised within her lifetime, but it was also seen as of literary value by some of these critics, who deemed it worthy of comparison with a number of male ‘greats’.

This method of comparative reviewing is not limited to *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* but is also apparent with regard to works Sylva wrote herself: *Edleen*

⁹¹ Anonymous, ‘Reviews,’ *National Observer*, 12 December 1891, p. 93.

⁹² Anonymous, ‘Recent Verse,’ *Saturday Review*, 2 January 1892, p. 22.

Vaughan, *A Real Queen's Fairy Book*, the short story 'In Fetters,' and her German-language collection of poems, *Stürme (Storms)*, are all discussed in the context of 'great' writers from the nineteenth century as well as from earlier centuries. As with the reviews of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*, however, some of the comparisons remain vague. For example, an early review of *Stürme*, praising the lyrical form of the poems, states that 'Byron would seem to be the author's model,' yet provides no further information as to which poems might be most worthy of comparison, either for Byron or Sylva.⁹³ This also occurs with regard to *A Real Queen's Fairy Book*, which the reviewer links to the work of one of the most celebrated authors of fairy tales, Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), but without further explanation.⁹⁴

More detailed comparisons are provided for 'In Fetters'. Here, in a favourable review from the *National Observer*, the story is termed 'a sort of modern *Werther*,' a reference to Goethe, one of Germany's most critically acclaimed novelists – and one of the most prominent German authors in British literary culture – and his epistolary novel, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers (The Sorrows of Young Werther)* (1774).⁹⁵ Although the critic qualifies his/her comments through the adverbial phrase 'sort of,' which reduces the intensity of the comparison, Sylva's work is still being linked to a novel that is celebrated as one of the finest in European literature, both in the nineteenth century as well as in later criticism.

⁹³ Anonymous, 'German Verse,' *Saturday Review*, 18 February 1882, p. 218.

⁹⁴ Anonymous, 'The Chronicle of Art – January,' *Magazine of Art*, January 1902, p. 144.

⁹⁵ Anonymous, 'Carmen Sylva Up To Date,' *National Observer*, 30 May 1891, p. 46.

This method was continued in G. Barnett Smith's review of *Edleen Vaughan*. Although, as I noted, he was critical of the written style, Barnett Smith links Sylva's writing to two well-known and highly regarded authors. Notwithstanding the exciting nature of the plot, Barnett Smith discusses one of the characterisations he finds less successful – Ulla the witch – but in doing so, he suggests that she 'could give points in horror to her weird sisters who so exercised Macbeth.'⁹⁶ This is something of a backhanded compliment. Barnett Smith feels that Ulla intruded into the narrative, yet implies that her characterisation is even more terrifying than the three witches in Shakespeare's Scottish play. Ulla may not be a necessary feature of the plot, but Sylva's characterisation is worthy of comparison with England's most celebrated writer, possibly even surpassing him, if this critic is to be believed.

Barnett Smith's other literary allusion is equally supernatural in nature, describing one of the novel's principal protagonists, Tom, as 'rejoicing like Mephistopheles,' at the destruction he has wrought on those around him.⁹⁷ This reference is at once specific and insubstantial: whilst Mephistopheles is an allusion to the demon summoned by the eponymously named character of the German legend *Faust*, Barnett Smith does not attribute a specific author to this work. This could reflect the ambiguous nature of the legend itself, first published in written form in 1587 by an anonymous German author. It could refer to Christopher Marlowe's (1564-1593) version, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1604) or Goethe's 1808 play. Neither play is explicitly mentioned by Barnett Smith, but both are called to mind, given that they remain the most

⁹⁶G. Barnett Smith, 'New Novels,' *Academy*, 18 June 1892, p. 586.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

famous authorial associations with this legend. Again, this comparison intentionally creates links between Sylva's work and that of recognisably 'great' works of literature – a connection that reflects positively on Sylva's literary achievements, even if the reviewer also includes more critical judgements. Comparison as a method of establishing Sylva's writing as part of British literary culture will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

3.4. Articles on or that mention Carmen Sylva.

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, a large proportion of the articles written about Sylva in the 1890s chronicle her visit to Britain, her sojourn in Wales and her participation in the Eisteddfod. However, articles solely dedicated to, or referencing Sylva, had been part of the British periodical press since she began to publish in the late 1880s. The articles discussed here reveal the varied ways in which British journalists discussed Sylva's life and literary work. This ranged from society gossip to Romanian politics and the apparent phenomenon surrounding royal writers.

Biographical articles predominantly focus on Sylva's early life, reworking the anecdotes found in larger biographies. Some of the authors, like Sarah Catherine Budd, acknowledge that their work stems directly from these biographical accounts and are similar in information as well as style.⁹⁸ In keeping with the larger biographies, these articles exaggerate and mythologise Sylva's youth to present her as a gifted child of nature. Their praise of her creative abilities, which bear the traces of 'her life's sorrow,' do not necessarily benefit her

⁹⁸Sarah Catherine Budd, 'Early Days of Carmen Sylva,' *London Society*, July 1897, pp. 64-78.

literary reputation, and, as I argued in Chapter One, may in fact have contributed to her eventual marginalisation.⁹⁹ In praising her indiscriminately, without engaging in detail with her literary output, they become the hazardous hagiographies that Badea-Păun is so wary of. They describe Sylva's work as having achieved European fame and bearing the 'trademarks of genius,' and also note that her pen-name has 'completely superseded her baptismal name [...] proof in itself of the celebrity she has gained as an author.'¹⁰⁰ My findings, both here and in Chapter Two with regard to the memorial markers in Llandudno, challenge this argument: Sylva's royal title was, for the most part, always used in conjunction with her pen name. This seems to have been designed to boost interest and create a larger potential readership. Furthermore, as reviews have indicated, celebrity status could be more of a curse than a blessing. Critics either trivialised and dismissed her work as a hobby, or praised it because better could not be expected of royalty. Consequently, while biographical articles in the periodical press are evidence of the continuing tradition of interest in Sylva's personal life, they also contribute to an image of Sylva as a gifted royal, which had the potential to negatively affect her literary reputation.

Other articles are equally biographical in nature, but focus on current events and social developments, rather than her childhood. Some report on Sylva's fundraising efforts, such as the doll show and auction she hosted in Neuwied to raise money for disadvantaged children, emphasising her personal connection with her subjects, her popularity and her skill as a writer. They note that she is 'known to lovers of literature as Carmen Sylva,' and proudly assert that

⁹⁹E. Saxton Winter, 'Roumania and its Royal Family,' *English Illustrated Magazine*, February 1903, p. 479.

¹⁰⁰Alice King, 'Carmen Sylva,' *Argosy*, November 1890, p. 386.

the photographs featured in the article were produced ‘under her Majesty’s supervision.’¹⁰¹ The focus of these pieces is on Sylva as a queen, but much like some of today’s gossip-based magazines, they also depict her as a celebrity figure, whose movements and relationships are the subject of conjecture and admiration.

One might, for example, consider the phrasing found in the society pages of the *London Reader* in 1886, where it is stated that ‘the birth of an heir to the throne of Roumania is anticipated with much pleasure, not unmixed with anxiety [...] the forthcoming event creates much interest and excitement.’¹⁰² The date of this article, coupled with its context, makes it clear that it is Sylva who is believed to be pregnant, for ‘although the King and Queen have been married sixteen years, they have as yet had no children, and her Majesty is now in her forty-third year.’¹⁰³ Her successor, Princess Marie, did not marry Prince Ferdinand until 1893 and did not have her first child until 1899, which further supports this argument. Yet the content of the article can be easily challenged, primarily due to its assertion that the couple have no children: their daughter Marie, who only lived for a few years, is not mentioned. Since it is discussing the potential heir to the Romanian throne, it is possible that the article was focusing on male children, but the clear omission of facts calls into question the validity of the entire piece. This particular magazine also speculated on the state of her marriage, noting the ‘decorous temporary separation,’ between Sylva and her husband in the summer of 1888 and that Sylva would ‘doubtless write some stanzas’ on the subject before returning to Bucharest.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ A.B. Henn, ‘Carmen Sylva’s Doll-Show,’ *Strand Magazine*, December 1898, p. 682.

¹⁰² Anonymous, ‘Society,’ *London Reader*, 27 February 1886, p. 431.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous, ‘Society,’ *London Reader*, 25 August 1888, p. 431.

The nineteenth-century rumour-mill returned to Sylva in the wake of the scandalous relationship between Prince Ferdinand and Hélène Vacaresco. Many journalists reported that if Sylva did not directly orchestrate the affair, she certainly encouraged it, fuelled with the desire to ‘play the part of dynastic Destiny.’¹⁰⁵ Her so-called ‘impertinent interference in matters beyond her province and concern,’ has, according to the unnamed journalist in the *National Observer*, created a political mess that her husband now has to clean up.¹⁰⁶ Whilst other articles on the subject merely mention the literary collaboration between Sylva and Vacaresco – *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* series – Sylva is depicted here as a hopeless romantic, a scheming match-maker and a melodramatic queen who took to her bed as the scandal worsened, leaving her husband to deal with the repercussions. Whatever the truth might be, these critical depictions of Sylva might also negatively affect her literary reputation, both during her lifetime and directly after it, as she appears to break the boundaries of feminine decorum. There is a clear association between her apparently melodramatic personal life and the criticism of her work as overly emotional. Here is another example of Sylva’s lack of restraint and its detrimental effects. As a result, Carmen Sylva would be remembered for the wrong reasons: for dramas in her personal life, rather than those in her stories.

There are, however, a large number of articles that are far less critical of Sylva, discussing her in the context of Romania’s political climate and in articles on writers and their pseudonyms.¹⁰⁷ She is also mentioned in articles on German literary culture, in which Robert Zimmerman feels she has ‘won a creditable

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, ‘The Prince and the Maid of Honour,’ *National Observer*, 11 July 1891, p. 189.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Harry Smith, ‘The Science of Anonymity,’ *Good Words*, January 1898, pp. 99-104.

place.¹⁰⁸ In a style reminiscent of the comparative reviews I have noted, Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill (1864-1926) draws attention to the ‘affinities’ between the prolific Liverpoolian poet and essayist Richard Le Gallienne’s (1866-1947) *Prose Fancies* (1896) and Carmen Sylva, in a list which also includes Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859) and Zangwill’s brother, the author Louis Zangwill (1869-1938).¹⁰⁹

Other articles return to a royalty-based theme. W.H. Davenport Adams’s article on royal authors from all over the world mentions Sylva very briefly on the last page, as having ‘sought the suffrages of the reading public.’¹¹⁰ For Mary E. Garton, discussing royal hymn writers, religious literature gives readers a more intimate knowledge of the author and she argues that a queen’s religious writing was often produced during periods of personal bereavement or persecution. Given the biographical association of Sylva’s early writing with the loss of friends and family members, it is unsurprising that the first section of Garton’s article is focused on her, ‘that most gifted and interesting of contemporary sovereigns.’¹¹¹ The poem Garton includes was written by Sylva at the time of her confirmation – approximately 1860 – and in its praise of God is ‘truly inspired.’¹¹² The article then goes on to discuss other royal hymn writers, including Maris, Queen of Hungary (1371-1395), and Princess Elizabeth (1596-1662), the daughter of James I (1566-1625). It also includes a printed picture of Sylva and an apparent facsimile

¹⁰⁸Robert Zimmerman, ‘Germany,’ *Athenaeum*, 30 December 1882, p. 879.

¹⁰⁹I. Zangwill, ‘Without Prejudice,’ *Pall Mall Magazine*, September 1894, p. 173.

¹¹⁰W.H. Davenport Adams, ‘The Sceptre and the Pen,’ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, August 1889, p. 176.

¹¹¹Mary E. Garton, ‘Queens as Hymn-Writers,’ *Quiver*, January 1897, p. 803.

¹¹²*Ibid.*

of her signature.¹¹³ As discussed with regard to reviews of her work, Sylva is compared to these other writers and is seen to be their equal. This is an important factor in her recuperation as it indicates that during her literary career she was recognised as a ‘worthy’ writer by her peers and by literary critics. Her work was not disregarded during her lifetime but was recognised as part of British, and indeed international, literary culture.

Brief references to Sylva can also be found in articles focusing on Romanian history and governmental elections. There is no overt criticism of Sylva or her husband here; indeed, an article by James D. Bouchier, mentions Sylva only in the context of her marriage. Bouchier also states that she is ‘more Roumanian than the Roumanians,’ but does not provide further explanation.¹¹⁴ Connected to this political focus, however, is the so-called ‘Jewish Question’ and Romania’s role in it, which is often related to Sylva. As with all articles concerning Sylva, some are more detailed than others. E. Saxton Winter’s article, for example, briefly references ‘the so-called “persecution” of Romanian Jews,’ and concludes that it is an issue the British cannot fully comprehend.¹¹⁵

An article on the anti-Semitism associated with the composer, music critic and clergyman John Frederick Rowbotham (1854-1925) is also linked to Sylva. Rowbotham is repeatedly described as Sylva’s ‘protégé’ and his anti-Semitic statements are often closely linked to Sylva’s name: “spawn of Swabian

¹¹³The signature is likely to be inauthentic, as it spells her name ‘Elizabeth’. The German spelling replaces the letter ‘z’ with an ‘s’.

¹¹⁴James D. Bouchier, ‘The Fate of Roumania,’ *Fortnightly Review*, December 1888, p. 802.

¹¹⁵E. Saxton Winter, p. 478.

peasantry” – here spoke the aristocratic *protégé* of the Queen of Roumania.’¹¹⁶ It is unclear how Sylva and Rowbotham were connected and the article itself provides no explanation. However, there may be a number of reasons for emphasising this personal connection: the author may be questioning why Sylva would associate with such an individual, or suggesting that she is guilty by association. There is nothing to overtly accuse Sylva of anti-Semitism, but juxtaposing examples of Jewish persecution with her name implicates her in it.

Fred C. Conybeare makes a similar association, chronicling the numerous governmental laws that were passed during Sylva’s reign, which, according to Conybeare, were designed to be anti-Semitic. These include making Jews pay for their education (when their Romanian counterparts do not), enforcing anti-Semitic statements within their educational textbooks and excluding them from certain professions:

In December, 1883, a law was passed forbidding Roumanian aliens (*i.e.*, Jews), but no others, to hawk goods for sale or barter in any town. [...] The new law came into operation early in 1884, and over 20,000 Jews suddenly found themselves debarred from making an honest livelihood. The poor wretches petitioned the King, a humane man as a rule, whose Queen is the well-known poetess, Carmen Sylva. [...] The petition was ignored.¹¹⁷

Although Sylva is only referenced indirectly here, the phrasing implies that her usually ‘humane’ husband intentionally ignored the petitions from his Jewish subjects, a subtle hint at anti-Semitic sentiments.

Emma Lazarus’s 1888 poem, ‘To Carmen Sylva’ – mentioned in Chapter One – also engages with anti-Semitism in Romania. After hearing of Russian

¹¹⁶C.L.G, ‘Mr Rowbotham’s Bitter Cry,’ *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, May 1891, p. 272.

¹¹⁷Fred C. Conybeare, ‘Roumania as a Persecuting Power,’ *National Review*, February 1901, p. 828.

pogroms in the 1880s, the Jewish-born Lazarus began to write articles and poems on the subject. The Jewish focus of 'To Carmen Sylva' is not explicit, but is subtly interwoven through the poem, beginning with the speaker's desire to possess the 'golden lyre' needed to sing 'the old song-enchanted spell/ Of Israel!' and command the attention of the world.¹¹⁸ Having described Sylva as talented, sorrowful, and the 'Mother, Mother, Mother!' of her subjects, Lazarus then includes the following stanza:

Yet who is he who pines apart,
Estranged from that maternal heart,
Ungraced, unfriended, and forlorn,
 The butt of scorn?
An alien in his land of birth,
An outcast from his brethren's earth,
Albeit with theirs his blood mixed well
 When Plevna fell?¹¹⁹

The image of Sylva as a mother figure links her personally to the treatment of the Jews. Paradoxically, her 'maternal heart' does not care for all her children – it is closed to her Jewish subjects. As Lazarus continues, this treatment is shown to be unwarranted and the poem becomes a subtle critique of Sylva's apparently negative attitude. The Jewish people have been transformed into 'aliens' – a term that Conybeare used five years earlier – despite their allegiance to their country, fighting with their fellow Romanians at Plevna. Here, Lazarus is referring to the Siege of Plevna, a major battle in the Russo-Turkish War fought by Russia and Romania against the Ottoman Empire in 1877. In emphasising the patriotism and sacrifice of the Jews, Lazarus implies that they have been abused by those with power, such as Sylva, who are happy to let them fight for Romania, but discard them once war is over.

¹¹⁸Lazarus, 'To Carmen Sylva,' in *Everyday in the Year*, p. 419.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

There is, however, little evidence in Sylva's literary endeavours to indicate that she had anti-Semitic beliefs. Her work could not be compared to anti-Semitic novels of the period, such as George du Maurier's (1834-1896) *Trilby* (1894) and his characterisation of Svengali. Indeed, Sylva wrote an article, 'In Praise of the Jews' in 1907. Although noting, somewhat bafflingly, that it will be Judaism's 'unhappiest day' when their persecution ceases, her opinions are largely positive, concluding that Judaism is superior to Christianity because it is 'free from superstition' and dogmas.¹²⁰ It is, of course, possible that her ideas are an example of the 'positive prejudice' that Eliot exhibits in *Daniel Deronda* (1876), where, in attempting to dispel anti-Semitism, she adopts an idealised and overly sympathetic view of Jewish identity.¹²¹ Sylva's literature may contain didactic sentiments and references to God, but it exhibits no obvious bias against any religion. However, such accusations would tarnish her literary reputation. Accusations of anti-Semitism could have had a detrimental effect on critical consideration of her work, as is exemplified in the case of T.S. Eliot, who has been accused of anti-Semitism by critics including Anthony Julius – although the poet and critic Craig Raine has since argued against this allegation.¹²²

Sylva's reputation was further developed as a result of what I call 'combination articles' – pieces that combine information about her as a writer with direct quotes or summaries. Sylva's original articles were often published in full elsewhere, such as the French magazine *La Revue et Revue des Revues*.

¹²⁰Carmen Sylva, 'In Praise of the Jews,' *Review of Reviews*, June 1907, p. 620.

¹²¹Anne Aresty Naman, *The Jew in the Victorian Novel* (New York: AMS Press inc, 1980), p. 161.

¹²²See Anthony Julius, *T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Craig Raine, *In Defence of T.S. Eliot* (London: Picador, 2000).

Readers seem to gain access to Sylva's personal thoughts as well as those mediated through a journalist, although some have printed incorrect information. One, for example, states that *Thoughts of A Queen* was Sylva's first published work.¹²³ Yet they also reveal the 'curious arguments' and attitudes that are present in Sylva's literary works.¹²⁴ This is particularly true of her attitudes towards women, which will be explored in the following chapter. As I have noted, Sylva is more hesitant than the other authors on the topic of women playing sport. Her response contains a large number of conditional clauses, concluding that women should play sport, but only if they remain true to their femininity. She is concerned that the 'Amazon' woman will slay 'the chivalrous man' – a comment which seems to hint that sport has the potential to destroy traditional ideological boundaries and that women are fighting for roles that were not designed for them.¹²⁵ These conservative convictions were developed further in 1909, when Sylva, in an article about women and marriage, stated that woman 'is made for her home.'¹²⁶ Whilst recognising that some women have to work, Sylva sees this as a result of necessity, not a desire for independence. As a result, she wishes that society was different, envisioning a decidedly impractical future full of children, mothers, 'and no factory workers at all.'¹²⁷

This rejection of a more liberal attitude to women does not necessarily mean that Sylva wholeheartedly accepted the prevailing ideologies of womanhood. As Chapter Four will indicate, her short stories present the debate in

¹²³M. Léo Claretie, 'Carmen Sylva's Sorrowful Pilgrimage,' *Review of Reviews*, November 1909, p. 454.

¹²⁴'In Praise of the Jews,' p. 620.

¹²⁵Anonymous, 'Ought Women to Cycle, Row, Etc.?', p. 46.

¹²⁶Anonymous, 'Random Readings from the Reviews,' *Review of Reviews*, November 1909, p. 497.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*

more ambiguous terms. However, these opinion pieces expand our knowledge of her oeuvre and her non-fictional pieces. They also further our understanding of British periodicals and their readers: their levels of awareness in terms of international events and scandals as well as interest in Sylva herself. This extended to her opinions on current events as well as her personal life and literary works.

When the various articles are considered as a whole, it appears that all aspects of Carmen Sylva were worthy of note in the British periodical press, providing further indication of her popularity. Certain journalists recognised the extent of public and critical interest in Sylva, even if they considered it unwarranted. An unnamed author for the *Saturday Review* commented on

the mysterious way in which newspapers received obliging offers of articles on CARMEN SYLVA from persons who never dream of proposing themselves as eulogists of any of the scores of greater living Continental writers [...]. That CARMEN SYLVA, like every one [*sic*] else in her station who has literary or artistic pretensions, has been the prey of the pestilent tribe of flatterers and puffers, is a simple fact which only interest or ignorance can deny.¹²⁸

(Not my emphasis).

The criticism is not directly aimed at Sylva, but at journalists or critics who appear to praise her out of hand – a veiled reference to her biographers, perhaps. However, since the anonymous critic is hinting at indiscriminate flattery of Sylva, she is indirectly under fire as someone with literary ‘pretensions’ rather than proven ability. Again, this could have had a detrimental effect on a lasting literary reputation, confirming some of the criticism found in reviews of her work. It

¹²⁸ Anonymous, ‘Chronicle,’ *Saturday Review*, 27 September 1890, p. 360.

destabilises Sylva's reputation as a writer by aligning it so closely with her personal popularity.

3.5. Primary texts.

As discussed in the 'Advertising' section of this chapter, a number of Sylva's works were published in the British periodical press. These were predominantly short stories, but her novel *Edleen Vaughan* was serialised in *Hearth and Home* between May and October 1891 and a selection of poems, aphorisms and non-fictional articles were also published in the final years of her career.¹²⁹

All of the short stories published in British periodicals are in some way focused on Romania, in terms of the setting, plot or characters. This is also true of 'Gypsy Song' and 'The Soldier's Tent,' both published in the *New Review* in June 1890 and later incorporated into *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*. It seems likely that this desire to publish work Sylva had produced about Romania was connected with the growing British interest in the country, as well as nineteenth-century perceptions of it as an exotic and dangerous location. In publishing such stories, British magazines and newspapers were providing their readers with insight into a country largely unconnected with their own and one with which, as most non-fictional accounts of Romania attest, readers would be largely unfamiliar, given that diplomatic relations between the two countries began only in the 1870s. As has been noted, later articles written on Romania and Carmen Sylva were

¹²⁹See Appendix Five.

politically orientated, focusing on the persecution of the Jews, but earlier anthropological accounts, to be discussed in Chapter Five, provide more details.

Increasing interest in Romania may explain why so many of Sylva's short stories were printed in the British periodical press before being published in larger collections. For example, five of the ten folktales in *Legends from River and Mountain* appeared in British periodicals between 1887 and 1896. This is the largest number of stories from one of Sylva's volumes to appear in British periodicals. It is likely that this is also connected to the revival of interest in folklore and folktales in Britain, which began in the eighteenth century and had reached its peak by the time Sylva began to publish, as evidenced through the work of Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats (1865-1939). Like the fairy tale, the folktale was deemed 'uncivilised' by British society and inappropriate for the moral education of children, despite flourishing in France, Germany and Scandinavia. The 'denigration' of this genre, as Jack Zipes has noted, began to be reappraised during the course of the nineteenth century and eventually became a recognised, accepted and popular form of literature.¹³⁰ Folktales, and short stories more generally, were often published singly in a newspaper or journal prior to being collected in a single volume and many of Sylva's stories appeared in this format. However, there is a degree of difference between the magazine editions and those which were published in book form. Sylva's work appears to have been altered to suit the different readers of magazines and of books, changes which may have had a bearing on her literary reputation.

¹³⁰ Jack Zipes, *When Dreams Came True. Classic Fairy Tales and Their Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 113.

Stylistic changes to the stories could have been a result of editorial decisions as well as different translators. This is exemplified by the textual variants within ‘The Peak of Longing.’ It was published in 1891 in *Good Words* and republished five years later as ‘Virful Cu Dor’ in *Legends from River and Mountain*. An obvious similarity between the two – other than the general plot – is that both have incorporated illustrations, albeit based on different scenes from the story.¹³¹ There are, however, more differences than similarities, including the fact that the 1891 version contains no references to the illustrator, or indeed the translator, unlike the 1896 version, which lists Alma Strettell and T.H. Robinson (1869-1950), respectively. Unsurprisingly, given the limitations of the magazine format and budget, which would have a certain number of pages allotted for individual pieces, the 1891 version of the story is also much shorter than its 1896 counterpart. The latter includes a longer account of Jonel’s journey to the mountaintop in order to prove his love and constancy to Irina.¹³² Further magical elements, including an encounter with the king of the dwarfs and fairy-like spirits are also narrated before Jonel perishes on the mountain. The longer structure provides readers with a deeper insight into the trials he faces, as well as the magical properties of the Carpathian Mountains, something that is not developed in as much detail by the version in *Good Words*.

Variation in length is a common feature of all the short stories published in the periodical press and is particularly evident in ‘A Story of Vengeance,’ published in the *London Journal* in 1911. This tale had been previously published as ‘A Roumanian Vendetta’ in *A Roumanian Vendetta and other Stories* in 1903,

¹³¹See Appendix Three for images from each of the primary texts mentioned in this section.

¹³²See Appendix Four for plot summaries of the stories discussed in this thesis.

which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. It is the only one of Sylva's stories to have been published after the larger collection appeared. As I have noted, the rest of the short stories, as was common with the majority of short story publication at the time, appeared in magazines before they appeared in book form. This could explain the structure of the story found in the *London Journal*, which is the shortest of any of Sylva's short stories to be printed in this format: because this version was published after the single volume edition, it is possible that the editor expected readers to be familiar with Sylva, her style and the story. They therefore include summarising paragraphs, present the text in three narrow columns and do not include illustrations. The first three paragraphs act as both an introduction to Sylva's background – mythologising her writing as a result of personal tragedy – and the story itself. The first twenty pages of the story found in the 1903 version are condensed into one short paragraph in 1911, summarising the vendetta between Pâron (Părvu in the 1903 book version) and Dragomir.

Again, there may be a number of reasons for the omission of such a large amount of detail. These include the format of the journal, the amount of space allocated to the story and the financial outlay which would be involved in printing it in full. Another explanation may simply be the fact that the translators and editors deemed the rest of the story – the developing relationship between Sanda and Pâron, the violent murders of Pâron and Dragomir and Sanda's descent into madness – more interesting than the initial narrative. Ultimately, the omissions result in readers lacking information with regard to characterisation and plot. If the stories found in these magazines were recognised as the only versions, then

Sylva's work may well have been deemed underdeveloped, a factor which would hardly encourage critical interest in her work.

When the variants are compared in more detail, linguistic choices and phrasing are the most obvious differences between the magazine edition and that in book form. This is apparent on a more specific level, in terms of the use of the Romanian language. The magazine version of 'The Peak of Longing,' for example, omits Romanian terms that the version in *Legends from River and Mountain* includes – even with regard to the title of the story – and places a different emphasis on certain characters. It is not surprising that different translators produce different versions of this story: their translations are free, in that they do not reproduce the German version word-for-word (which would be classed as a literal translation). Instead, they retain the same storyline and seek to reproduce the general meaning of the original.

However, the different lexical choices may again reflect differences in intended readerships, adhering to what Susanne Stark describes as the 'extra source of creativity in the production of textuality,' whereby the translators have a role in the way Sylva's writing is presented to her readers.¹³³ The 1896 version incorporates Romanian terms such as 'hora' (a Romanian dance) and 'oitza' ('little sheep') and includes footnotes to explain them to readers. Although the 1891 version includes geographical references to areas in Romania, such as Sinaia and Prodeal, which are also included in *Legends from River and Mountain*, it does

¹³³Susanne Stark, "Behind Inverted Commas". *Translation and Anglo-German Cultural Relations in the Nineteenth Century* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1999), p. 10.

not use the Romanian language to reference cultural terms. The ‘hora,’ for example, becomes ‘a round dance.’¹³⁴

A similar technique is used in ‘The Witch’s Stronghold,’ another story from *Legends from River and Mountain* which first appeared in the January issue of the *English Illustrated Magazine* in 1894, under the slightly altered title of ‘The Witch’s Castle’. Again, the book version provides extra information for readers that the magazine does not, including bracketed explanations after characters are introduced for the first time – ‘Alba (“The White One”)’ (not my emphasis) – as well as footnotes to develop key cultural terms in more detail.¹³⁵ When describing the work of Baba Coaja, spinning golden threads for bridal veils, there is the following footnote: ‘the bridal veil of Roumanian girls is composed of a shower of loose golden threads.’¹³⁶

Whilst the translations can be attributed to Strettell, the decision to incorporate footnotes cannot: Sylva’s German version of the stories, *Pelesch Märchen*, also included explanations for readers. Footnotes are found for the same cultural terms in both the English and German-language versions of the stories. They also take the same format. For example, in ‘Virful Cu Dor,’ the ‘hora’ is explained in the footnotes as ‘ein Tanz’ (‘a dance’) and ‘oitza’ is ‘Schäfchen’ (‘little sheep’).¹³⁷ Similarly, Alba’s name in ‘Die Hexenburg’ (‘The Witch’s Stronghold’) is translated as ‘die Weiße’ in the main body of the story.¹³⁸

¹³⁴Carmen Sylva, ‘The Peak of Longing,’ *Good Words*, January 1891, p. 89.

¹³⁵Carmen Sylva, ‘The Witch’s Stronghold,’ trans. by Alma Strettell in *Legends from River and Mountain* (London: George Allen, 1896), p. 104.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*

¹³⁷Carmen Sylva, ‘Virful Cu Dor,’ in *Pelesch Märchen* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich, 1883), p. 9; p. 15.

¹³⁸Carmen Sylva, ‘Die Hexenburg’ in *Pelesch Märchen*, p. 158.

With this in mind, it is likely that the lack of footnotes in the magazines is again connected to space. Incorporating footnotes would result in the story spanning more pages in total. In order to conserve money – and to maintain a wider range of material in its issue – the magazine has therefore omitted these details. This decision could also be a reflection on the intended readership: it is possible that such terms were seen as potentially confusing for readers. This is supported by the fact that these short stories were published in a number of magazines that were primarily aimed at the so-called inferior sex, including the *Lady's Realm*, the *Queen*, the *Woman's World* and, in this case, *Good Words*.

Readers' perceived comprehension levels might also explain why the names of the main characters have been altered. In the 1891 version of 'The Peak of Longing' the principal protagonists are Ionel and Irena, but in the 1896 version they are Jonel and Irina. The name 'Irena' in the 1891 edition is closer to the anglicised version of the name ('Irene') whereas 'Irina' from the 1896 version is the traditional Romanian spelling. Interestingly, the characters in the German version of the story in *Pelesch Märchen* are also called Jonel and Irina. As with the removal of the Romanian language, this detail further supports the argument that the periodicals wished to downplay the Romanian emphasis of the story. Although this would not reflect the aforementioned revival of interest in folktales, the removal of cultural references and elements of the Romanian language might have been designed to encourage British readers to engage more deeply with the story by making it appear more closely connected to their own society. By implication, therefore, the reader of *Legends from River and Mountain* has an alternative motive for buying the collection. The inclusion of notes presents the

stories in a more scholarly context and the reader who could afford to buy this edition was clearly interested either in Sylva, Romania and/or folktales in general. They would actively want to learn about the culture and its traditions, which were laid out in footnotes for their perusal.

This might also explain why the 1896 volume is more archaic in terms of language. A good example of this is the comparison of 'The Witch's Castle' with 'The Witch's Stronghold'. When Baba Coaja discovers that her daughter Alba has woven only good thoughts into the golden thread, she reacts violently:

[...] when Baba Coaja returned she became wild and furious. Beating her daughter mercilessly she cried, 'Never shall you wed until you find the threads you spun yourself.'¹³⁹

But when Baba Coaja came home she was very *wroth*, and beat her daughter unmercifully, saying, as she threw the thread upon a heap with the rest, '*Thou shalt* never wed until *thou canst* tell *thine* own spinning apart again!¹⁴⁰ (My emphasis)

The italicised words in the second example indicate the level of antiquated language which has been incorporated into the 1896 version of the story, in sharp contrast to that from 1894. It is possible that Strettell's decision here is connected to the folktale genre: the language may be a reflection of the fact that these folktales are describing the ancient myths and legends of Romania. The collection is marketed as part of the folktale tradition and thus attempts to create a sense of authenticity through its linguistic style.

Linguistic choices also affect the way in which readers engage with the text and the characters. For example, in describing Irena's encounter with Ionel at the beginning of the story, the 1891 version states that she 'feigned to be wholly

¹³⁹Carmen Sylva, 'The Witch's Castle,' *English Illustrated Magazine*, January 1894, p. 354.

¹⁴⁰Carmen Sylva, 'The Witch's Stronghold,' p. 104.

unconscious of his ardent gaze.’¹⁴¹ This implies a degree of manipulative agency in Irena – she is aware of his affection but is pretending to be oblivious. The 1896 version is more subtle in this respect: Irina ‘did not seem to notice him at all.’¹⁴² The insincerity implied through the use of ‘feigned’ in the 1891 version is not emphasised as strongly here. Instead, Irina simply did not see him. Variants such as this affect the reader’s comprehension of characters and understanding of the story. Readers must now question whether Irena was intended to be a manipulative and ultimately destructive female, or whether she is innocent of such accusations. This distinction may have ramifications for the reception of Sylva’s work and in this instance, her engagement with the ‘Woman Question,’ to be discussed in Chapter Four.

Differences in approach to translation across multiple versions of a story may thus present a contradictory view of Sylva’s work. Certain elements have been downplayed during the process of translation and of editing the story for publication in a newspaper or magazine, which may have resulted in Sylva’s work being viewed as less complex than was intended. It is unclear – due to the lack of available manuscripts – whether the stories were originally short and lengthened for book publication, or whether they were cut down for the periodical press. Given that the German version of ‘Virful Cu Dor’ also has a longer format, describing Jonel’s adventures with the ‘Bergmännlein’ (‘little men of the mountain’), it is most likely that the stories in the British periodicals were intentionally shortened. It is unclear, however, whether Sylva consented to this

¹⁴¹Carmen Sylva, ‘The Peak of Longing,’ p. 89.

¹⁴²Carmen Sylva, ‘Virful cu Dor,’ in *Legends from River and Mountain*, p. 40.

editing, although, as noted earlier, critics have mentioned her involvement in *Thoughts of a Queen*.

Through reassessing Sylva's work and examining the formats it took, we gain insight into the reading habits of the British public as well as the inner workings of the magazine and newspaper industry. Sylva's work was not only published frequently in periodicals, but the material was shaped in order to suit the intended audience. The removal or alteration of elements of these stories may have had a detrimental effect on her literary status, but it also reaffirms that Sylva's presence extended beyond the larger volumes she published. She was accessed and appreciated by a range of readers.

3.6. Other.

This final category is somewhat miscellaneous. It contains results of some significance, which are nevertheless limited in number. These include images of Sylva, her musical links and obituaries. Although they broaden our understanding of Sylva's presence in *fin de siècle* Britain, the amount of relevant information they contain, as well as the relatively small scale of the results returned – in comparison with advertisements and reviews – has resulted in them being grouped together here.

Images of Sylva, for example, not only indicate British interest in her, but also reaffirm the argument that emphasis on her as a well-known royal figure may have detracted from engagement with her literary works. The decision by some publications to print an image of Sylva for their readers is an interesting one, although only accounting for a small number of results. A little over a month after

Sylva's coronation as the Queen of Romania, a sketch of her appears in the *Graphic*.¹⁴³ She faces her husband across a double page spread and beneath them are a series of unconnected images: a sketch of Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames and another of soldiers digging trenches. Whilst interest in the couple did not warrant a full page spread, it was worthy of some notice for this magazine. These illustrations are a way of introducing their readers to what the magazine considers to be important international occurrences.

Three other images published between 1890 and 1899 focus solely on Sylva. The overall title for the images always includes a reference to Sylva's royal status and the pictures reflect this emphasis. The image of Sylva produced in *Tinsley's Magazine* in October 1890 is that of a well-dressed young woman with a medal pinned to her dress – perhaps the medal she received after the Russo-Turkish War – albeit without a crown or tiara. Sylva's pose in the other two images is similar, but she is significantly older and wearing what appears to be authentic Romanian dress. Interestingly, the photograph reproduced in the *Review of Reviews* in October 1890 appears identical to that shown seven years later in the *Quiver*. The periodical provides information underneath the image, which reveals that it was taken in Llandudno, clearly corresponding with Sylva's six-week stay in 1890.¹⁴⁴ The only difference between the image published in 1890 and that from 1897 is that the latter features a facsimile of her signature underneath the photograph – spelt incorrectly – and the image is attributed to a different photographer: A. Manders rather than T. Edge.¹⁴⁵ Arthur Manders (dates unknown) and Thomas Edge (1820-1900) were Llandudno-based photographers

¹⁴³ Untitled illustrations, *Graphic*, 2 June 1881, p. 12-13.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous, 'The Photographs of the Month,' *Review of Reviews*, October 1890, p. 379.

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous, 'Carmen Sylva – The Poet,' *Quiver*, January 1897, p. 770.

and the editorial decision made by the *Quiver* to print an image seven years after it had initially been taken, rather than using a more recent photograph, may be connected to this fact. As the photograph was taken in Britain, it is likely that it would be more readily accessible – and cheaper – than one that came from Romania or another foreign source. It is likely that a number of British photographers had access to Sylva in 1890, but the similarity of pose, dress and background suggests that these two images were produced at the same time, in the same place. This in turn implies that an official photograph was arranged to commemorate Sylva's time in the town, reinforcing, as I argued in Chapter Two, the significance of her visit.

There was already a British fascination with the monarchy as a result of Queen Victoria's reign: she and her husband had changed the perception of the royal family and their role in society by embracing the influence of the media and the impact of new technology. Royal images appeared frequently in journals, creating what John Plunkett has termed 'the royal culture industry': newspapers, and prints and photographs – the first of which was produced in 1860 – offered the British public unprecedented access to royal life.¹⁴⁶ This 'industry' permeated British society as the press began to shape the meaning of the monarchy. By the 1850s, royal tours and corresponding press coverage were a standard feature of British society and an accepted model for future rulers. It is therefore unsurprising that the Press's engagement with Sylva follows a similar format.

Despite these speculations, the inclusion of images confirms that the British public were aware that 'Carmen Sylva' was the *nom de plume* of the

¹⁴⁶Plunkett, p. 7.

Queen of Romania. Her royal status was acknowledged in the description of the image, as well as in the attitude and style of the photograph itself. This argument is supported by images of Sylva from the early twentieth century. *Black & White*, for example, featured a number of photographs of Sylva and her immediate family. There was a double-page spread in 1906, chronicling the ‘busy and useful lives’ of Sylva and her husband. King Carol is mentioned first, but Carmen Sylva is the dominant force. She appears in seven of the nine photographs, in contrast to two of her husband. In keeping with the ideology of ‘royal populism’ that developed around Queen Victoria as the morally upstanding centre of the community, emphasis is placed on Sylva’s charitable as well as creative work.¹⁴⁷ She is photographed visiting the peasants and talking with a blind child in her palace. There is also a photograph of a statue dedicated to Sylva’s involvement in the Russo-Turkish War. The photographs show her at work at a desk, practising the piano and making time for ‘the more essentially feminine occupation of needlework.’¹⁴⁸ These images serve an ideological function – the woman whose work and life were seen to lack decorum has been reconfigured as the ideal woman. Although her literary capabilities are mentioned, they are again subsumed by her status as a royal figurehead.

Three years earlier, another revealing image had been published, this time of Princesses Elizabeth (1894-1956) and Maria (1900-1961) of Romania. The particularly interesting feature of this photograph is its title: ‘Carmen Sylva’s

¹⁴⁷Plunkett, p. 10.

¹⁴⁸Anonymous, ‘T.M. The King and Queen of Roumania. Their Busy and Useful Lives,’ *Black & White*, 29 December 1906, p. 845.

Grandchildren.’¹⁴⁹ The title is misleading, as Sylva’s daughter had died in early childhood. The children in the picture are the daughters of Prince Ferdinand and his wife, Marie, making them Sylva’s great-nieces. However, the significance of the photograph stems from the connection to Sylva. Rather than describe the children through their connection to the British monarchy – their great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, had died only two years previously – this magazine aligns them with Carmen Sylva. This decision implies that their connection to Sylva is more noteworthy than their British relations, or even that of their own parents, whose names are simply listed at the bottom of the page. The prominence of Sylva’s connection indicates not only the interest of the magazine, but also of their readers: the British public were more intrigued by relatives of Carmen Sylva – who at this point had not visited Britain for thirteen years – than the links to their own royal family.

Another set of results worthy of note, albeit less relevant to this study, is in the context of music. References of this nature predominantly occur in the first three decades of Sylva’s British literary career. Then, as with all other relevant references to her, the number of results drastically reduces. They are primarily found in publications that have a musical focus, such as the *Musical Standard*, the *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* and the *Musical World* and fall into two categories: references to the librettos that Sylva wrote, or poems by, or associated with her, that were set to music. It is important to emphasise that most of the poems set to music were not written by Sylva – despite the descriptions

¹⁴⁹ Anonymous, ‘Carmen Sylva’s Grandchildren,’ *Black & White Illustrated Budget*, 8 August 1903, p. 595.

used by the authors of the articles – and were often taken from *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* series.

The beginning of musical references to Sylva is approximately March 1893. The poems initially mentioned were originally written by Sylva and were set to music by German composer August Bungert, who became acquainted with Sylva in 1889. An article from the *Magazine of Music* references Sylva's 'Rhein-Cyclus' having been set to music by Bungert and performed in Berlin by Lilli Lehmann (1848-1929), 'Germany's greatest dramatic singer.'¹⁵⁰ The author also passes critical judgement, commenting that some of the songs 'deserve to rank high.'¹⁵¹ These songs likely stemmed from Sylva's volume of poems about various locations and towns along the Rhine: *Mein Rhein*.¹⁵² Whilst the poems in *Mein Rhein* were never published in English, they could be accessed by the British public, albeit in an alternative format: set to music and performed at concerts around Britain, particularly in London. In February 1899, for example, an unnamed critic describes a concert at St James's Hall in London, where three songs by Sylva were performed.¹⁵³

This is continued in later years. In 1900, musical references to Sylva are connected to the English composer Sir Hubert Parry (1848-1918) and the 'new song' he composed for a Birmingham music festival. Parry's music was in fact composed around 'The Soldier's Tent,' which, as previously mentioned, had been published in the *New Review* in 1890 and was part of the first series of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*. Crucially, this poem was attributed to Sylva: the anonymous

¹⁵⁰Berolinensis, 'Music in Berlin,' *Magazine of Music*, March 1893, p. 69.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*

¹⁵²Carmen Sylva, *Mein Rhein* (Leipzig: Adolf Titze, 1884).

¹⁵³Anonymous, 'London Concerts,' *Musical News*, 18 February 1899, pp. 175-6.

author states that ‘Sir Hubert Parry has composed an “orchestral song” to words by the Queen of Roumania [...] Entitled “The Soldier’s Tent,” it is translated from Carmen Sylva’s “Bard of the Dimbovitza.”’¹⁵⁴ Every article discussing Parry and this poem credits Sylva with its authorship. In doing so, they undermine the advertising produced by British publishers for *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*, which cite Sylva as a translator, rather than author.

Over twenty years later, Alfred Kalisch makes the same association. His article discusses a concert at the Queen’s Hall in London, where five poems from ‘Arnold Bax’s song-cycle from Carmen Sylva’s “Bard of the Dimbovitza,”’ were performed.¹⁵⁵ Again, Kalisch overlooks the decades of advertising for this volume, yet makes no mention of the fact that ‘Carmen Sylva’ is a pen-name. Nor does he give any indication of the royal personage behind it. It is possible to infer that Sylva is now such a recognisable figure that further explanation is not necessary. However, Kalisch’s article was written five years after her death and it seems peculiar that when Sylva was alive and actively producing new material, critics stressed her royal status alongside her pen name. It is perhaps more likely that Sylva had started to be forgotten by this point and that Kalisch simply did not realise that ‘Carmen Sylva’ was a pseudonym.

These articles provide evidence of Sylva’s work – and work she had collaborated on – reaching a wider audience through the medium of music. This is supported by the fact that her musical endeavours were consistently recognised by British critics, writing about concerts both at home and abroad, even if they falsely attributed authorship to her in certain cases. This is furthered by the

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, ‘Musical Gossip,’ *Athenaeum*, 8 September 1900, p. 322.

¹⁵⁵ Alfred Kalisch, ‘London Concerts,’ *Musical Times*, 1 May 1921, p. 338.

knowledge that Sylva's poems, once transformed into songs, were then published in collections for the pianoforte or for singing. Sylva's writing, albeit in an alternative form, was thus made accessible to the British public. However, it is also possible that the oversights in such articles contributed to her eventual obscurity: if Sylva's contemporaries could not decide which works were originally hers, then a literary reputation could not be maintained.

The remaining musical references concern Sylva's libretto-writing and collaboration with composers. The majority found in the 1880-1889 period are about her work with the Swedish composer Ivar Hallström (1826-1901) and their opera, *Neaga*. These references always acknowledge that 'Carmen Sylva' is the pseudonym of the Queen of Romania, thus maintaining the overall impression that the British press and, by extension, the British public, were aware of Sylva's status. The title of this particular opera appears to be Romanian in origin and, as later references reveal, the work was translated into Swedish before being performed at the Stockholm Theatre Royal. It is therefore likely that Sylva wrote the libretto in Romanian or in her native German.¹⁵⁶ Sylva also wrote a short story by the same title in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories* and it seems likely that there is a connection between the two, with the libretto being based on the short story, or vice versa.

The opera was reviewed favourably in 1885, with an anonymous critic complimenting the melodies and commenting that Sylva's libretto was 'understandable to the people' – contradicting earlier criticisms of Sylva's work as out of touch with the common man.¹⁵⁷ These articles reveal that Sylva travelled

¹⁵⁶In Romanian, 'Neagă' refers to a stubborn person, or refuter.

¹⁵⁷Anonymous, 'The Continent,' *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review*, 1 April 1885, p. 322.

to Stockholm in November 1884 to witness the first performance and that it was still being performed in 1889. These later references also hint that Hallström and Sylva collaborated on another opera, based on a Swedish legend. Unfortunately, none of the articles provide the name of this new collaboration or state whether it was ever performed. Nine years later, an article from the *Musical News* refers to the performance of an opera by Sylva and Hallström entitled *Sfinxen*, which may be connected to this, but provides no further detail.¹⁵⁸

Other musical collaborations describe Sylva working alongside Prince Alfred (1844-1900), the Duke of Edinburgh and the father of her eventual successor, Princess Marie, on an ‘interesting piece of joint-royalty’ in the 1890s.¹⁵⁹ She is also reported to have collaborated with Prince Ludwig Ferdinand of Bavaria (1859-1949) on a piece entitled *Ullranda* in the early twentieth century as well as with American-born composer, violinist and child prodigy Florizel von Reuter (1890-1985) in around 1904. Unlike the references to Hallström and *Neaga*, however, no further information is provided about performance dates or reviews. This indicates that these collaborations may have been limited to rumours and speculation and never came to fruition. That Sylva was the subject of such articles, even when the authors were not sure of their facts, nevertheless indicates the extent of her popularity and presence in British literary culture.

The importance of these musical references thus operates on a number of levels. Simply put, they show that Sylva’s creative interests did not lie solely with short stories, novels and poetry, but also extended to librettos. They also reinforce information that has already been gleaned about Sylva’s working practices: she

¹⁵⁸ Anonymous, ‘Foreign Intelligence,’ *Musical News*, 12 February 1898, p. 162.

¹⁵⁹ Anonymous, ‘Foreign Notes,’ *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, September 1892, p. 553.

would collaborate with other artists and, with regard to August Bungert in particular, would produce poems designed for him to set to music.¹⁶⁰ They also indicate the alternative ways that the British public could access and enjoy Sylva's work: listening to it at concerts or learning to perform it for themselves. On a larger scale, these results reflect the sustained interest of the British press in international events. The British reading public was not insular in its interests: European figures and events constituted a significant part of the content of British publications and Carmen Sylva was one of the frontrunners.

This suggestion is given further weight when reports of Sylva's death are considered. Obituaries are another useful way of investigating British perceptions of Sylva and how she was discussed immediately after her death. They may also provide insights into why she and her work faded from recognition in later years. Sylva died on 2 March 1916 and one of the first British obituaries appeared in the *Athenaeum*'s 'Notes and News' column on 16 March. This early obituary, however, is not as clear as the more traditional obituary for public servant and folklorist Sir Lawrence Gomme (1853-1916), as shown below:

¹⁶⁰*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, ed. by Warrack and West, p. 100.

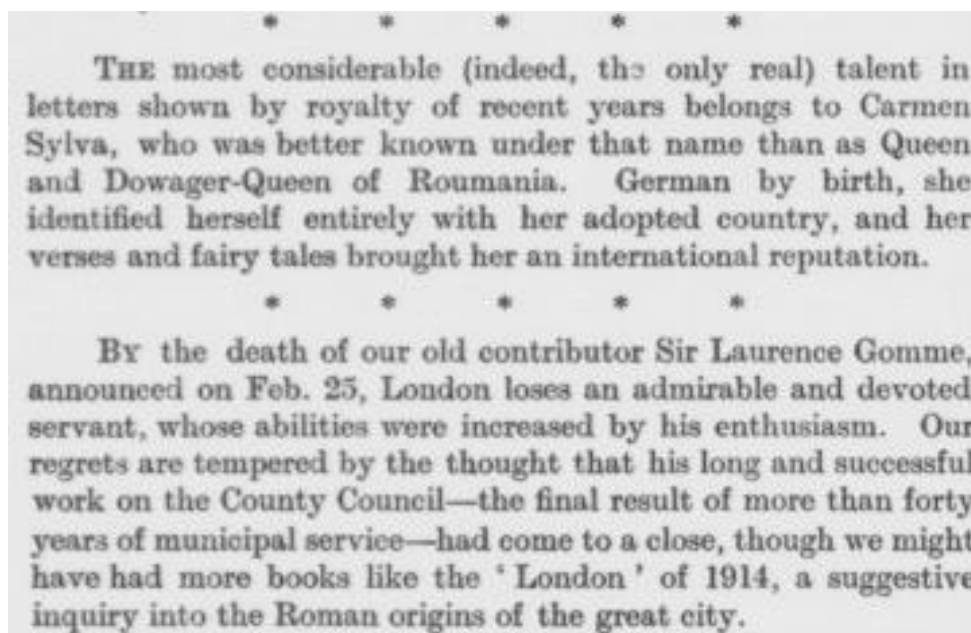


Fig. 5. Anonymous, ‘Notes and News,’ *Athenaeum*, 16 March 1916, p. 107.

The author only hints at Sylva’s death by referring to her in the past tense. This is an obvious contrast to Gomme’s obituary, where the death is made explicit and includes a date.

A month later, two obituaries were published in the same issue of the *Review of Reviews*. One is a simple list of the people who passed away between 24 February and 23 March 1916, of which ‘Queen-Dowager Elizabeth [*sic*] of Roumania (“Carmen Sylva”),’ was one.¹⁶¹ The other is more detailed, including an image as well as a commentary on her life, work and death.¹⁶² Yet, in a similar manner to Fig. 5, this is also included as part of a larger article. ‘The Progress of the World,’ was a regular feature that discussed international events and current affairs; that Sylva’s obituary is included in this and also ends the article, seems worthy of note. Her death is marginalised and incorporated into the broader category of recent European events, even if these were incidents that had been

¹⁶¹ Anonymous, ‘Diary for March,’ *Review of Reviews*, 16 April 1916, p. 379.

¹⁶² Anonymous, ‘The Progress of the World,’ *Review of Reviews*, 16 April 1916, p. 291.

deemed particularly significant. It seems that the limited engagement with Sylva after her death marked the beginning of her marginalisation in Britain: interest faded once she was not physically visiting the country or publishing new material.

‘The Progress of the World’ highlights Sylva’s charitable work and is cautious about her literary capabilities, commenting that her ‘literary gifts have been widely recognised and, although perhaps in a lesser personage they would have been less highly praised, they undoubtedly raised the literary standard of contemporary royalty.’¹⁶³ This critical judgement has already been mentioned with regard to the reviews of Sylva’s work and, as with many articles that recognise the bias surrounding her royal status, this particular reviewer also succumbs to contradiction in his/her final lines, stating that ‘to be known to the world as Carmen Sylva and not as Queen Elizabeth of Roumania [*sic*] was the surest sign of her greatness.’¹⁶⁴ As has been argued throughout this chapter, the unavoidable link between Carmen Sylva as a writer and her royal status has constituted a large part of the engagement with her. At times it has been suggested that interest in her would have lessened had she not been a high society figure, with equally high society acquaintances. For one of the final references to Sylva to imply that she was primarily known as a writer, rather than a queen, is a contradiction that summarises the inconsistencies and confusion that have surrounded Sylva’s work since the beginning of her literary career.

This chapter has shown that Carmen Sylva was a figure who divided critics. They were at odds over defining her place in literary culture – in Britain

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

and on an international level – as well as when engaging with her work itself. Their inability to differentiate between queen and writer, or to distance her status from her literary productions, may have affected her eventual marginalisation: she faded from interest because nineteenth-century critics could not decide how to categorise her within their literary culture. Whilst highlighting factors in her marginalisation, this chapter has also shown that Sylva had a substantial literary presence in Britain. Reviews and advertisements were not limited to specific volumes or genres, but considered the full range of her oeuvre. Her work was not discussed in isolation, but was compared – often favourably – with other writers.

Recuperation should therefore occur as part of a reassessment of a well-known and popular writer, who may have caused disagreement amongst critics, but who was an obvious part of British literary culture. Sylva was a writer whose personal life at times overshadowed her writing, but whose work still merited critical consideration. The following chapter will develop this argument in more detail, focusing specifically on her short stories – the genre in which she was the most prolific. Considering the ‘Woman Question’ as one of the most prevalent themes in Sylva’s work will indicate not only further arguments in favour of recuperation, but also how the content of her work may have contributed to her currently marginalised status. Sylva may have divided critics, but she also appears to have divided herself when attempting to engage with topical issues. Her literary endeavours, like aspects of her life, continue to defy categorisation.

Chapter Four. ‘There is a repulsive goodness as well as an attractive wickedness’: Carmen Sylva and the ‘Woman Question.’

Simon Eliot, discussing the serialisation of the novel, notes that ‘Victoria’s reign was not, in publishing terms at least, going to be characterised by the book, but rather by the newspaper or magazine.’¹ For many if not most writers, as I have noted, the periodical press was the first step in presenting their work to the public. This was not just common practice for novels. The short story, an increasingly popular genre in the later decades of nineteenth-century Britain, was also well-suited to publication in periodicals. Although it did not originate in the *fin de siècle*, it was in these decades that short fiction reached new heights of popularity and began to attract serious critical attention.²

The increasing popularity and prominence of this genre should be viewed in conjunction with the commercial expansions, technological improvements and legal changes that occurred during the period. Developments in print technology resulted in the production of machine-made paper, which in turn reduced the production time and costs for both the newspaper industry and the book trade. Repeals of the mid-Victorian taxes on paper meant that newspapers and magazines were cheaper to produce and to buy. This resulted in a rapid expansion of the magazine market. Magazines increased in frequency as well as number, with many monthly magazines becoming weeklies or even dailies. As a result, there was a higher demand for literary material and an increased opportunity for

¹Simon Eliot, ‘The Business of Victorian Publishing,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Deirdre David (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 48.

²Winnie Chan, *The Economy of the Short Story in British Periodicals of the 1890s* (London: Routledge, 2007), xii.

writers to make money from their work. By regularly publishing short fiction in the periodical press, writers could now sustain themselves financially whilst they worked on longer novels.³

Carmen Sylva's oeuvre is dominated by short stories. Six collections were published in English during her lifetime and at least fifteen individual stories were accepted by British periodicals.⁴ British publishers later incorporated at least seven of these stories into larger collections. As I indicated in Chapter Two, these stories were rendered into English by a number of translators, which resulted in linguistic variants between the version published in the periodical press and its counterpart in book form. However, given that the focus of this thesis is Sylva's recovery in terms of British culture, this chapter will focus solely on the English-language stories and will not compare them with German or Romanian versions.

Given Sylva's predisposition to charitable projects, it seems likely that her preference for the short story was strategic: the popularity of the genre provided an ideal opportunity to generate funds that she could then reinvest in the institutions she had founded. It would also prove a useful genre within which to forge a career and literary reputation, providing access to what Winnie Chan has described as a 'community of taste.'⁵ By this, Chan refers to the large readerships cultivated by the magazines and periodicals themselves. Should the stories prove popular, readers might then be more inclined to purchase her work as a self-contained volume. If this was indeed the plan for Sylva's publications, then it seems to have proved successful. Of the stories she submitted to the periodicals,

³Joseph M. Flora, 'Introduction,' in *The English Short Story 1880-1945. A Critical History*, ed. by Joseph M. Flora (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), xv.

⁴See Appendix Five. I have concentrated on British publications, but stories I have found in American periodicals have also been listed.

⁵Chan, xix.

five, as I noted in the previous chapter, became part of *Legends from River and Mountain*. Another two can be found in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*.

Publishing a short story in a periodical thus allowed a hitherto unknown writer or, like Sylva, a writer known more for her personal celebrity than her literary endeavours, to reach a range of readers. Although Chan states that ‘the average short story could not, by virtue of its increasingly specialised publication format alone, presume a common reader,’ consideration of these various magazines might help to ascertain the implied reader.⁶ For example, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, the majority of Sylva’s short stories were published in periodicals with a predominantly female readership: the *Queen*, the *Woman’s World*, *Belgravia*, *Good Words* and the *Lady’s Realm*. These were popular periodicals, aimed at the respectable, church-going, middle-class family and the ‘genteel lady’. Recognition of this readership might allow us to ascertain both the reasons for her success in this genre, as well as the reasons behind her eventual marginalisation. Her readership expanded as a result of publication in these periodicals, but her association with ‘Lady’s Magazines’ may have contributed to her endeavours being dismissed by authors and critics who expected the short story to be more experimental in approach and content.

Adrian Hunter, for example, notes that ‘later Victorian authors began to think more strategically about the art of writing “short”. [...] Out went traditional methods of plotting and characterisation, and in came a new roster of narrative concepts: implication, ambiguity, suggestion, dilation and, above all,

⁶Ibid., p. 8.

plotlessness.’⁷ Hunter equates ‘plotnessness’ with art and literariness, but, as I argued in the introduction to this thesis, the subjectivity associated with terms such as this, tied to the value placed on Modernist short fiction, makes this link tenuous. The ability to create plots and characters is arguably part of the ‘art’ of fiction and the mark of a successful narrative, whether that is within a novel or a short story. Furthermore, if we define ‘plotlessness’ as the absence of a sequence of events within a story, then the idea becomes more problematic and is not applicable to all late Victorian writers, Carmen Sylva included. Consider Vernon Lee’s ‘Lady Tal’ (1896) or Kate Chopin’s (1850-1904) *The Awakening* (1899): there may be experimental aspects to these stories, but there are also characters, events and developments within the narrative. Whilst it is certainly true that the development of the short story led to changes in style and technique as a result of the genre’s new-found brevity, the suggestion that this was at the expense of characterisation and plot is too simplistic. These features may not be as developed as in a triple-decker novel, but they are undoubtedly present and, with regard to Sylva’s work and recuperation, are pivotal in understanding her short fiction, her readership and how her literary presence developed in Britain.

Sylva’s work also appeared in magazines designed to appeal to middle class readers, such as *London Society*, the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Strand Magazine*. The last, under the editorship of founder and publisher George Newnes (1851-1910), broke with the tradition of serializing novels and restricted its fiction to short stories. The issue of May 1896 included Sylva’s ‘Fidelity’. The magazine initially published translated stories from the continent, which may have been one

⁷Adrian Hunter, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 7.

of the reasons why Sylva's work was accepted, alongside that of German Romantics such as Clemens Brentano (1778-1842) and Wilhelm Hauff (1802-1827). However, popular British authors such as E. Nesbit, L.T. Meade (1844-1914) and Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) also looked to the magazine to make a living, due to its liberal treatment of contributors and high rates of pay.⁸ Having published Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, the magazine proved popular with the reading public, particularly the middle-class audience. Having a story accepted by the *Strand* came to be regarded as a remarkable professional achievement and as such, it was a way for Sylva to forge a reputation as a professional writer, rather than solely as a royal celebrity figure.

The appeal of Sylva's stories also stemmed from her depiction of Romania. As was mentioned in the previous chapter and will be discussed in Chapter Five, most of the stories that Sylva published in the periodical press could be viewed under the subheading of exotic short fiction, which developed as a result of the work of writers such as Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) and Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894). Their stories, themselves part of a wider literary movement and tradition of romantic adventure narratives, were set in locations that would be unfamiliar to readers and aimed to dramatise the 'indisputably strange' countries and cultures experienced by their largely male travellers.⁹ Sylva's stories do not always have this male focus, but in focusing on Romanian legends and customs, as well as the exotic dangers of the country, her work becomes part of this tradition. Exotic folktales are, however, not the only subgenre within Sylva's short stories. When a range of her stories are considered,

⁸Chan, p. 4.

⁹Robert Gish, 'The Exotic Short Story: Kipling and Others,' in *The English Short Story 1880-1945. A Critical History*, p. 2.

including those published solely in book form, there are a number of ways in which further to define her work. She wrote fairy tales, some of which appeared in the periodical press as well as *A Real Queen's Fairy Book*, as well as allegorical short stories such as 'Puiu' or those found in *Pilgrim Sorrow*. There are also stories with sensational or gothic elements, including 'Nine Days,' and what might be termed social-problem stories, such as those contained in *Shadows on Love's Dial* and *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*.

Yet there is a unifying thread in Sylva's stories: the role of women in society. This coincides with the insights of the Anglo-French journalist and writer William Le Queux (1864-1927), who met Sylva in Bucharest. According to Le Queux, Sylva once explained that "“next to poetry, I love a real love-and-crime romance. [...] I detest books that deal with sex-problems. They are better left unwritten. And, really, your [English] women authors are the worst offenders.”"¹⁰ The following chapter will unravel this preoccupation, providing literary links with Sylva's contemporaries, as well as her predecessors, in order to indicate how her reputation and popularity were established.

The term New Woman first entered our popular vocabulary in 1894, a year before Sylva published *Shadows on Love's Dial*. Yet the position of women within society had long been a topic of discussion and Sylva's work was no exception. Her short stories, both in this collection and others, reflect the heterogeneous nature of this debate, both in her depiction of strong-minded women and their desire for education beyond their current means, as well as in those elements of stereotypical, feminine ideals. Female characters are the focus

¹⁰Carmen Sylva, cited by William Le Queux in *Things I Know About Kings, Celebrities, and Crooks* (London: Eveleigh Nash and Grayson Limited, 1923), p. 93.

of her stories, with male characters having a more limited, albeit influential, role. The majority of Sylva's stories also centre on a marriage plot. These marriages are subject to numerous trials and tribulations, including adultery and addiction as well as injuries and illness.

It is due to the scale and diversity of the stories Sylva wrote and published in Britain, as well as this interlocking theme of the role of women, that this chapter is focused on short fiction. Although Sylva wrote and was published in other genres, such as poetry, these volumes are less indicative of her popularity. Poetry did not sell as well as fiction, despite being well-respected in terms of literary 'greatness'. Furthermore, the most popular collection of poetry from her oeuvre – *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* – was translated by Sylva into German. She had no involvement with the Romanian or the English version and thus had limited creative responsibility. In contrast, her short stories, although often translated into English, were written by her alone. This agency, coupled with the number of stories she produced, suggests that it was Sylva's preferred method of literary expression. As such, focusing on her short fiction provides the strongest case for her recuperation on literary grounds.

Considering Sylva's work in this way also contributes to our understanding of critical debates about sex and gender in nineteenth-century fiction. Modern criticism in this field has developed to the point where issues of gender are no longer seen as a set of oppositional clichés but a series of blurred definitions. It is now accepted that gender ideologies were not polarised extremes and the same argument can be applied to individual authors and their works. Within one author's oeuvre or within individual works, is the capacity for both

tradition and transgression – a grey area that creates, in the words of Ann Ardis, the ‘boomerang plots’ of nineteenth-century fiction.¹¹ As Sylva summarised in *Thoughts of a Queen*: ‘there is a repulsive goodness as well as an attractive wickedness.’¹²

The following chapter will attempt to unravel these complications, considering Sylva’s engagement with the roles of women and the ‘Woman Question’. Rather than the accusations of authorial confusion and inappropriate content that characterised many contemporary reviews of her work, this chapter will argue that Sylva’s recognition of the problematic nature of *fin-de-siècle* gender debates is evidence of the complex and controversial nature of this area of contemporary discussion.

4.1. Carmen Sylva and the ideal woman.

In order to detail the more radical aspects in Sylva’s writing, it is necessary first to consider her engagement with a more conventional and conservative view of femininity. This involves two broad and recurring themes: the dangers of female sexuality and the emphasis on the domestic sphere, where women are simultaneously subservient to and dependent on their male counterparts.¹³

All of Sylva’s female characters are blessed with beauty, but her more ‘dangerous’ women also possess a darker, shadowy nature, which is only revealed

¹¹Ann Ardis, ‘Organising women: New Women writers, New Women readers, and suffrage,’ in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, ed. by Nicola Diane Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 190.

¹²Carmen Sylva, *Thoughts of a Queen*, trans. by H. Sutherland Edwards (London: Eden, Remington & Co., 1890), p. 80.

¹³See Appendix Four for plot summaries.

at certain stages in the narratives. Largely unnoticed by other characters, this secretive side of their personalities is aligned with the negative events that follow, which are equally unexpected and out of place. Readers' introductions to these aesthetically pleasing characters are often qualified by hints at a more dangerous internal makeup. This is most obviously seen in 'A Broken Statue' where Marina, a manipulative and seductive young woman, ingratiates herself with a young artist named Arnold. She sows the seeds of doubt in his mind in order to separate him from his fiancée, Lia, and marry him herself. Whilst her initial grace and poise are noted by the narrator, as well as the 'perfection' of her golden-brown hair, these are juxtaposed alongside hints at her cruelty, shown in her 'somewhat malicious smile,' and the 'harshness' of her voice.¹⁴ In emphasising the speed at which these traits vanish – they hover around her face only 'for a moment' – Sylva plants the ideas of deception and concealment in the minds of her readers.¹⁵ Marina's beauty is a mask, hiding her true nature from other characters in order to manipulate them. With this in mind, Marina's decision to sing in the forest would be an innocent act of communion with nature, were it not for the narrator's suggestion that this 'game [...] was played perhaps with more self-consciousness and affectation,' than the watching Arnold realises.¹⁶ The knowledge that Marina is more self-aware than it might otherwise appear enhances the idea of deception: she has orchestrated the situation, created this image of purity and beauty and derives pleasure from playing this part.

¹⁴Carmen Sylva, 'A Broken Statue,' in *Shadows on Love's Dial*, trans. by Helen Wolff (1895; London: Henry Bumpus, 1905), p. 231.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 232.

The deceptively beautiful woman had a prominent role in Sylva's other short stories, most notably 'The Peak of Longing.' As mentioned in Chapter Three, the shepherd Ionel forsakes his duties in order to prove his love for the tantalisingly beautiful Irena, whose beauty is emphasised alongside her manipulative nature. She pretends not to notice him, but her eyes 'sparkled with mischief,' as she manipulates Ionel into making the rash promise to remain on the mountaintop without his flock.¹⁷ There, he experiences temptation and suffering alike. Although he remains true to his love for Irena, this cannot save him, indicating that misplaced affection can prove fatal. Ionel is the focus of this story, but Irena is the cause of it, adding weight to Auerbach's assertion that the 'female demon' generally provides the 'active momentum' in her narrative.¹⁸ It is the need to please her that sends the infatuated Ionel to his doom – Irena has indirectly murdered him. In her depiction of women who entice and then destroy the men who stray too close to them, Sylva has recreated the classic femme fatale, whose success is indicated through the immediate behaviour of the men: Ionel abandons his livelihood and perishes on the mountaintop and Arnold symbolically destroys the most cherished object in his life – his previous sculpture – to begin one based on Marina's image. His art had been modelled on Lia, but she is soon disregarded as well, in order to focus his attentions on his new muse.

After Arnold breaks his engagement to Lia, she is literally heartbroken: 'blood gushed from her lips' immediately after he leaves, marking the beginning of her slow and painful decline.¹⁹ Whilst this plot device could reflect the

¹⁷Carmen Sylva, 'The Peak of Longing,' p. 90.

¹⁸Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon. The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 101.

¹⁹'A Broken Statue,' p. 244.

stereotypical notions of female dependency on men – Lia is unable to live without him – she does not blame Arnold, but Marina:

The sick girl's nostrils dilated, and with weak, trembling lips she said 'Go away! Go and be happy; you have killed me, and all happiness is yours.'
[...]
'Model and statue both crushed, both broken,' said Lia, under her breath.²⁰

This somewhat melodramatic outburst occurs shortly after Lia becomes ill. Marina sneaks to her bedside, apparently to console the dying girl, only to be called a murderer by her unwitting rival. Here, readers receive the clearest example of the dangerous woman's power: to murder another of her sex. This behaviour is an example of Sylva tapping into literary traditions, specifically that of the Female Gothic found in the likes of *Zofloya* (1806) by Charlotte Dacre (c. 1752-1825). As Adriana Craciun has argued with regard to Dacre's fiction, 'both the virtuous and the vicious body, [...] are dangerously mutable, and the catalyst for their degeneration is most often female sexual desire.'²¹ To obtain the men that they crave – Henriquez and Arnold – Victoria and Marina must destroy the women who already possess them. In doing so, their dangerous passions cause their own downfall, as well as that of their innocent antitheses.

Edith in 'A Love's Tragedy' – Sylva's first story to appear in the British periodical press – is the only other female character in her oeuvre to die as a result of another woman's behaviour. Filled with jealousy because the man she hoped to marry, Tassilo, has fallen in love with the fair-haired, nun-like Edith, the dark and passionate Bertha seeks her revenge and poisons the wafer that Edith consumes on

²⁰Ibid., p. 245.

²¹Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 131.

her wedding day. The difference here is that Bertha – unlike Marina – soon regrets her rashness. Although she flees legal justice, she seeks divine absolution, retreating to a convent ‘where there are cells in the rock for sinners like me [...] I shall henceforth be dead to the world.’²² This symbolic and voluntary death serves as Bertha’s redemption. The same cannot be said for Marina, who does not publicly acknowledge her responsibility for Lia’s demise. Like Irena in ‘The Peak of Longing,’ Marina wields no physical weapon, but her manipulation and lies are at the root of Lia’s demise and the innocent girl summons the last of her strength to prove this to readers. Her only act of agency is to accuse Marina, although the power of this act is immediately qualified by the fact that they are alone in Lia’s bedroom. There will be no public vilification of Marina, but readers are led to associate her bewitching sexuality with the direst of consequences.

This seductive muse is also described in terms of her other-worldly nature, a technique that simultaneously distances her from the other characters and again hints at the concealment of a dangerous power. The gradual increase in negative and demonic descriptions of Marina corresponds with her increased agency and, more specifically, her responsibility for the downfall of those around her. After informing Arnold that Lia has been secretly meeting with another man – which is later revealed to be a lie – Marina’s body is described as ‘serpent-like.’²³ This image would appear again in ‘A Roumanian Vendetta,’ where Sanda, the story’s anti-heroine, possesses a ‘medusa-like aspect.’²⁴ This latent power eventually leads her to murder her own brother before succumbing to madness. The

²²Carmen Sylva, ‘A Love Tragedy,’ in *Temple Bar*, September-December 1882, p. 362.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 242.

²⁴Carmen Sylva, ‘A Roumanian Vendetta,’ in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*, trans. by Edith Hopkirk (London: R.A. Everett & Co., Ltd, 1903), p. 45.

difference here is that Sanda, whilst being the dark and dangerous beauty, is obviously human, whereas Marina's power seems to stem from supernatural origins, which are emphasised throughout the story.

These images are connected to the myth of Medusa, but also possess biblical connotations. Satan, in transforming himself into a snake, tempted Eve to sin in order to cause her expulsion from paradise, and Marina wreaks similar destruction on the innocent Lia and the easily manipulated Arnold. Like Satan, Marina has taken on the guise of another creature in order to influence those around her, but Sylva has partially subverted the biblical image, since Marina does not look outwardly serpent-like. Instead, this is her true form, symbolising the evil nature concealed within her. It manifests itself, almost subconsciously, at the moment of her success. Like the 'shrunk serpent eyes' that warn readers of Coleridge's 'Christabel' (1798-1801) that Geraldine is more dangerous than she seems, Marina is a demon in disguise.²⁵

When Lia dies, the townspeople become increasingly suspicious of Marina. Still partially enthralled by her, they nevertheless recognise an uncanny element to her nature, aligning her more obviously with evil through the term 'she-devil.'²⁶ People must beware of Marina, lest they fall prey to her, as the fisherman did 'in Goethe's poem,' a reference to Goethe's 'Der Fischer' ('The Fisherman') (1778) in which a mermaid draws a fisherman into a watery grave.²⁷ The poem ends by highlighting that the fisherman was half pulled and half sank

²⁵Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Christabel,' (1798-1801) in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, p. 674.

²⁶'A Broken Statue,' p. 256.

²⁷Ibid., p. 252.

willingly, to his doom ('Halb zog sie ihn, halb sank er hin').²⁸ Although this literary link allocates a level of responsibility to Arnold himself, who, in choosing to abandon Lia and marry Marina, has perhaps wrought his own destruction, it nevertheless associates Marina with a destructive female power. She uses her sexuality to bring ruin to those around her and although the townspeople become more aware of her dangerous nature, it is too late to stop her.

Marina makes no attempt to conceal her magical origins, contradicting Arnold at their first meeting to state that she is a 'water-nymph' and not a 'genii of the forest.'²⁹ By her own assertion, Marina is a siren, presented in Greek mythology as a seductress, whose enchanting appearance and singing voice lured sailors to their deaths. This comparison functions as a narrative hook, hinting at the outcome for the soon-to-be ensnared Arnold. Whilst Marina's admission might be part of her initial flirtation with Arnold, continuing references to her in these terms, both by the narrator and the townspeople, encourage readers to see Marina as demonic. Her humanity is gradually stripped away, both by her own admission that 'sirens have no heart' and through other characters' descriptions.³⁰ At first, they see her as a beautiful and fascinating, but she soon becomes an 'Undine who, with her demonical eyes, had lured him [Arnold] on to destruction.'³¹ 'Undine' is another term for a siren, first referenced in works of alchemy by Paracelsus (1493-1541) to describe elemental spirits of water.³² Here Sylva aligns them with evil and emphasises their potential for destruction. She

²⁸Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Der Fischer,' (1778) in *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Selected Poetry*, ed. by David Luke (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2005), p. 42.

²⁹'A Broken Statue,' p. 233.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 235.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 250.

³²*Undine* (1811) was also the title of a very popular novella by the German Romantic writer Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1843). An English edition of the story was published in 1909, illustrated by Arthur Rackham (1867-1939). It was also adapted for performance as an opera.

also adheres to the literary tradition of associating manipulative, potentially dangerous women with the lamia, or mermaid – a preternatural being that has no place in acceptable society.

Originating in Christian iconography and depicted in works including Goethe's poem 'Der Fischer,' as well as Matthew Arnold's 'The Forsaken Merman' (1849), the mermaid's power centres on enticing men in order to destroy them. A more nuanced image of the secretive mermaid, who conceals her powers beneath a veneer of human, feminine beauty, is shown through characters like Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair* (1848) and Lady Audley in *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861-1862). There are clear parallels between William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's (1835-1915) depictions and Sylva's characterisation of Marina and Irena: here are women who, in their pursuit of status, power or wealth, conspire to manipulate those around them. In the case of Lady Audley and Marina, they are also content to destroy, or attempt to destroy, those who interfere with their plans. The distinction between Thackeray and Braddon's representations and that of Sylva is that Marina actively embraces this description, whereas Becky and Lady Audley have it foisted upon them by the men attempting to control them. In the latter cases, the term is a derogatory label, a way of exercising patriarchal dominance. Marina, who describes herself in such terms and actively embraces her deviant nature, becomes all the more dangerous. She recognises limits of her power and pushes against them and as such, this woman-as-lamia reflects Auerbach's notion of the female demon as 'fathomless and changing, [...] an awesome threat to her credulous culture.'³³

³³Auerbach, p. 8.

In this respect, the recognition that Marina is the only female character in *Shadows on Love's Dial* to be fatally punished for her behaviour takes on added significance. Although Auerbach argues that literary lamias are subversive because they 'lead us out of history towards a new dispensation,' this attitude, perhaps stemming from her feminist framework, is at odds with the fate of these women.³⁴ Lady Audley, for example, is taken to Belgium and placed into a 'living grave' by Robert Audley.³⁵ Irena's actions also cause her to be excluded from the narrative in 'The Peak of Longing'. Readers receive no specific information about Irena's fate but are left to assume that her lot will be an unhappy one, given the warnings of an elderly shepherd: 'thou [Irena] thinkest that because thou art beautiful thou canst follow the bent of thy will, and that all thy daring will go unpunished; but know that whatever evil thou bringest on another will fall twofold on thy own young head.'³⁶ These women may be independent enough to obtain power and success in certain areas of their lives, but they are not subversive enough to break away from, or even survive in, their society. Once their secrets are uncovered, they are quickly brought under control.

Meeting a more violent end than Braddon's Lady Audley, Marina is exposed as a manipulative liar and is punished. Once Marina's betrayal has been revealed, Arnold commits another symbolic act: he destroys his masterpiece, the finished sculpture of Marina, and then 'the hammer was hurled at her [Marina's] head, and she lay gasping at the artist's feet.'³⁷ This behaviour mimics his treatment of Lia, albeit in a more active and violent sense. This dramatic end

³⁴Ibid., p. 108.

³⁵Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861-2) (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2008), p. 391.

³⁶'The Peak of Longing,' p. 90

³⁷'A Broken Statue,' p. 257.

appears justifiable, given Marina's manipulation and betrayal of those around her. She appears irredeemable, due to her close associations with malevolent forces and the fact that from the very beginning of the narrative, she 'sang false.'³⁸ Although she is not the only woman to find herself at the hands of a physically violent man, as will be discussed later in the chapter, she is the only character to be killed by one. Murdered by the man she has manipulated, readers could view Marina's loss of power and final submission to male dominance in symbolic terms: the dangerous aspect of her womanhood, the agency which allowed her to transgress the boundaries of normative female behaviour, must be destroyed in order to restore the natural order.

There are clear parallels between Sylva's use of the short story genre to depict the effects of the dangerous woman and E. Nesbit's short stories, to be discussed further in Chapter Five. Nesbit's short fiction also centres on a marriage plot, but usually emphasises the issues facing a newly engaged couple, or those wishing to marry. Like Sylva, she often creates a conflict of interest between a pair of antithetical women: the stereotypically angelic female and her cunning and dangerous counterpart, whose violent urges often result in destruction. Isabel in 'A Death-Bed Confession' is a prime example. She distinguishes herself from her cousin Lilian, that 'blue-and-white teacup kind of woman,' from the outset.³⁹ She is critical of her cousin's love for Edgar Linley, the artist Isabel 'ached' to be of service to when a freak accident brings him to their home.⁴⁰ His love for Lilian causes Isabel's blind hatred and desire for revenge. In describing Lilian as a

³⁸Ibid., p. 258.

³⁹E. Nesbit, 'A Death-Bed Confession,' in *In Homespun* (1896) (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006), p. 27.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 26.

teacup, she represents Lilian's affection as pristine, delicate and decorous – in sharp opposition to the passion she herself feels. This desire leads her to start a fire in an attempt to burn Lilian to death. She recognises her potential for fiery outbursts even before the arson attack: when Edgar is turned out of the house in the wake of scandalous accusations involving a married woman, Isabel does not believe that Edgar had the affair. Rather, she sees this as a result of unrequited love: 'God makes His troubles in dozens; He don't make a new patterned one for every back. I wasn't the only woman who ever loved Edgar Linley without encouragement and risked her soul because she was mad with loving him.'⁴¹ Isabel's soul, however, is tarnished by the desire for revenge, not suicide.

This detail has parallels with Sylva's pairs of antithetical women, such as Marina and Lia or Bertha and Edith. In these cases, the spurned or jealous woman attempts to destroy her rival so as to win the object of her affection. Whereas Marina does not repent her actions, Bertha and Isabel do: Isabel rushes back to the house to try to save Lilian and is badly burnt in the process. Unbeknown to her, Lilian had eloped with Edgar earlier that evening. Isabel's actions, both in the attempted murder and in trying to save Lilian, were pointless. Viewed in these terms, Isabel is clearly being punished for her transgressions. She survives, but at a price: physical disfigurement and the fear of punishment after death. Nesbit is not as sensational as Sylva, but she is still adhering to the literary cliché that demonic women – Isabel notes that her 'black heart [...] must have come from the devil' – should meet a socially appropriate end.⁴²

⁴¹Ibid., p. 28.

⁴²Ibid., p. 25.

Nesbit's first person narrations, however, which form the foundation of every story in *In Homespun* (1896), provide readers with a deeper insight into character motivation: these women, although punished, have not necessarily changed. Isabel does not mention religious fervour either before or after the fire and she does not admit her responsibility until the end of her life, when she makes a final confession to a priest. Her fear of eternal damnation forces her admission and the people that she directly affected have no idea that she committed the crime. The final lines of Isabel's story state that she 'couldn't have told it to any one as cared [*sic*], but I know you don't. So that makes it easy.'⁴³ Rather than confess to the cousin she tried to kill, Isabel takes the 'easy' option and shows readers that she has not changed. She has remained centred on her own needs, trying to save herself any heart-ache by choosing the path that will offer the least resistance. In this way, Nesbit destroys any sympathy for Isabel and creates a story that adheres to cultural expectations.

This is also true of Jane in 'Acting for the Best,' who seeks to destroy the happiness of her cousin Mattie and her lover, Jack. In contrast to Mattie's prettiness and optimism, Jane's sole focus is money and material wealth – she does not believe in love. When Jack returns from America, having made the fortune needed to marry Mattie, Jane hatches a scheme to separate them and marry him herself – actions (and repercussions) that strongly mimic that of Marina in 'A Broken Statue.' She follows Mattie when she goes to meet Jack, locks her in a church and then informs Jack that Mattie's affections have waned, offering herself as a replacement. All the while she is, like Marina, affecting a

⁴³Ibid., p. 30.

persona other than her true self: 'I've always practiced looking like what I meant, or what I wanted people to think I meant – sort of matching your looks and words, like you match ribbon and a bit of stuff.'⁴⁴ It is an act of artful window-dressing.

Yet again, this distancing from feminine norms does not result in Jane achieving her desires. After managing to manipulate Jack, she remembers that Mattie is still in the church. As she returns to release her, she hears the church bells ringing: the desperate Mattie has found a way to attract attention and is quickly reunited with Jack, who exposes Jane's manipulation. Although the innocent Mattie believes more of Jane's lies – that it was all a joke – Jane notes that 'uncle has never been the same to me since, though I'm sure I tried to act for the best.'⁴⁵ The final lines illustrate both Jane's punishment as well as insight into her personality, which again remains unchanged. She attempts to convince readers that she acted for the best, but it is obvious that this was designed for her own benefit. Yet her exposure and the suspicions cast over her by society are her punishment. The recognition that her uncle continues to treat her differently might even suggest that she, unlike Mattie, has remained at home. At home and, by implication, unmarried, readers can infer another symbolic punishment for boundary breaking – her punishment is a lack of happiness, symbolised by her being unable to achieve the feminine ideal of matrimonial bliss.

The idea that female power or agency must be punished in order to maintain the 'ideal' status quo is a key element in Sylva's other stories, including 'Shaded Canvasses,' in which a young married couple struggle to cope after the husband is accidentally shot in the face. Frosi and Matthes are the quintessential

⁴⁴E. Nesbit, 'Acting for the Best' in *In Homespun*, p. 47.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 49.

perfect couple: attractive, young and in love. As with 'A Broken Statue,' however, Frosi's outwardly pure female exterior conceals a darker nature. This is indicated through repeated reference to her eyes. Her power and resolve are emphasised through metaphorical descriptions of her dark grey 'eyes of steel' and even before their marriage and his injury, Matthes notes that Frosi's eyes contain 'the ice of our glaciers.'⁴⁶ Her steely eyes imply an empowered gaze; a strength which, as Daryl Ogden has noted, has been traditionally associated with masculinity.⁴⁷

If the male gaze is traditionally privileged and the female gaze is secondary and submissive, then Sylva's decision to attribute such a discerning, powerful gaze to a female character is initially a subversive one. But the imagery of metal and ice hints at the darker nature within Frosi, which is at odds with the knowledge that she is the 'prettiest girl in the country of the Oberrhein.'⁴⁸ This reference to hard, unyielding substances reaffirms Frosi's strength, but is qualified by the negative connotations of the comparisons, such as the coldness of ice. Like the heartless Marina, Frosi cannot completely conceal her true nature and her eyes, the windows to her soul, make it clear to readers that this strength is not beneficial.

Frosi's 'danger' is not based on supernatural desires, but her pride and quick temper: her eyes 'flashed' with anger and she is soon dissatisfied with life alongside her newly-disabled husband.⁴⁹ This behaviour distances her from the stereotypical notions of nurturing femininity. Although she continues to care for him, she admits that she does not love him and asks the priest to legally separate

⁴⁶Carmen Sylva, 'Shaded Canvasses,' in *Shadows on Love's Dial*, p. 74; p. 69.

⁴⁷Daryl Ogden, *The Language of the Eyes* (New York: State of New York Press, 2005), p. 1.

⁴⁸'Shaded Canvasses,' p. 68.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 72.

them with an ‘unchanging, hard, cold look.’⁵⁰ The priest can only persuade her to stay by appealing to her pride and this, combined with the emphasis on darkness and coldness, elevates inner pride to the level of sin, cemented by Frosi’s determination to ‘keep aloof from everybody.’⁵¹ She avoids contact with wider society to prevent their inevitable gossip, but this emotional distancing is portrayed as her fundamental flaw, for which she must be physically punished. Here we can see Sylva making another biblical reference: ‘pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.’⁵²

Yet Frosi’s ‘fall’ is only partial, since she is not directly responsible for the destruction in the story – her husband’s accident. Matthes is shot in the face at a wedding – an accident that Sylva implies would not have occurred had he listened to his wife, who, in a moment of apparent foresight, told him to leave his guns at home. His refusal, whilst marking a moment of tension in the otherwise perfect marriage, nevertheless relieves Frosi of any responsibility. Viewed in these terms, Frosi’s darkness is not as dangerous as Marina’s and she becomes redeemable, although she does not escape unscathed. The second time she asks the priest for a separation she is noticeably thinner, breaks down in tears and is ‘feverish,’ with ‘glittering’ eyes and ‘burning cheeks.’⁵³ The imagery of illness symbolises both her physical and emotional breakdown and indicates that the destruction of Frosi’s character is necessary to bring about positive resolution in the story. If she had not been brought physically and mentally low through Matthes’s accident and the process of caring for him, then she would have been unable to lose the cold, hard

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 91.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 84.

⁵²The Book of Proverbs, 16:18.

⁵³‘Shaded Canvasses,’ p. 101.

pride that characterised her behaviour at the start of the story. This sin must be removed in order for the marriage to be successful. Again, Sylva emphasises the negative aspects of womanhood that must be eradicated in order to achieve a positive outcome.

Success is marked by a change in Frosi's behaviour: from hating her 'repulsive' husband, Frosi finally resolves to alleviate his pain after seeing her 'lord and master humbled [...] before her.'⁵⁴ This insertion of submissive language towards the end of the story places Frosi in the domestic role of servant and elevates Matthes to the superior role of 'master' – albeit a humbled and repentant one. This parallels the end of *Jane Eyre* (1847), whereby Matthes's injury, like Rochester's, is metaphorically necessary in order to bring about what Patricia Meyer Spacks has described as 'a marriage of ideal reciprocity.'⁵⁵ However, given that Frosi herself sports physical scars from the ordeal, it is possible to argue that her marriage to Matthes becomes more balanced and equal than that of Rochester and Jane. The eyes which once contained Frosi's icy strength have been transformed into 'a wistful look of sadness.'⁵⁶ This reflects the struggle she had to endure in order to obtain happiness, now symbolised by numerous children. Nevertheless, within this apparently balanced relationship there is a pull back to tradition. Frosi's agency, like Jane's, remains focused on serving her husband and nursing him back to health. This is a symbolic return to female passivity and an affirmation of the 'separate spheres' ideology, with Frosi tied to the domestic sphere as wife and mother. As Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) wrote in the poem

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 80, p. 104.

⁵⁵Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Female Imagination* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976), p. 66.

⁵⁶'Shaded Canvasses,' p. 105.

that came to define ideal womanhood in the nineteenth century, 'Man must be pleased; but him to please/ Is woman's pleasure.'⁵⁷

Recurring imagery of dark female eyes is also seen in 'A Stray Leaf.' This story is dominated by revelations of adultery, illegitimacy and bigamy, which destroy the happiness of Isa and her brother, Wolfgang. The story revolves around Isa, who is depicted in very similar terms to Marina in 'A Broken Statue': beautiful even as a child, but with physical features that inadvertently betray her inner thoughts. She possesses a mouth that was 'one minute smiling in beautifully carved lines, the next betraying an expression far from pleasing, almost disagreeable.'⁵⁸ The potentially disturbing aspects of Isa's personality are qualified by the use of adverbs, but still give the impression of another woman intentionally concealing her thoughts behind an attractive outer shell. Isa's eyes are a focal point, defined in violent and dangerous terms as 'suicidal eyes.'⁵⁹ Since this description comes from her would-be lover, Herr von Rense, readers are left to infer that the figurative suicide would be enacted by a man looking at Isa and being both attracted to and destroyed by her beauty. Isa's eyes symbolise her sexuality and power to entice – evidence that Sylva is again straying from the traditional discourses surrounding female vision, which had the didactic function of teaching women that their gaze should be confined to the domestic sphere and should be sexually deferential if they wanted be seen as respectable.

⁵⁷Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: John West Parker and Son, 1854), Canto IX, I – 'The Wife's Tragedy,' p. 125.

⁵⁸Carmen Sylva, 'A Stray Leaf,' in *Shadows on Love's Dial*, p. 5.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 57.

It is Isa's mother, however, who is the darkest and most dangerous female in this story. Louisa had a detrimental effect on Isa and Wolfgang's lives since she separated from their father, a man, it is later implied, who is not biologically related to either child. Louisa is responsible – and therefore reprehensible – throughout the story and central to this depiction is 'the story of the apple.'⁶⁰ Although never explicitly stated, this detail recalls the proverb 'the apple never falls far from the tree' – a saying of Eastern origin, but with roots that extend into sixteenth-century German.⁶¹ This reading is supported by descriptions of Isa, her mother, and the perceptions of them both within wider society. In this way, Sylva continues to discuss the wide-reaching, negative consequences associated with the dangerous female and, more specifically, the dangerous mother. Readers can only infer the kind of behaviour that caused Isa's mother to be separated from her children, based on suggestions threaded throughout the narrative. For example, Isa is told by her new step-mother that "“your mother is a wicked woman,”" and it is left to readers to link this outburst with an earlier conversation where, after Isa remarks that her father loves his son Wolfgang unconditionally, Isa's stepmother responds with a 'contemptuous curl of her lip.'⁶² This scornful reaction implies that Isa is ignorant of the truth and that Wolfgang is not the biological son of Isa's father. Isa herself comes to this conclusion soon after being reunited with her mother, instantly noticing an 'unmistakable likeness' between Wolfgang and her mother's second husband, a realisation which solves the 'inexplicable enigma' of

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹John Simpson, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 6.

⁶²'A Stray Leaf,' p. 16; p. 7.

her childhood.⁶³ Her mother's infidelity and sexual desires not only caused the break-up of the traditional family unit, but destroyed the lives of her children. Wolfgang and Isa's relationship with their mother is fraught with tensions and neither child has a secure home. Both, but particularly Wolfgang, are mistreated by the parental authority that they look to for affection.

The scandalous behaviour of their mother is cemented by the suggestion that she had not one, but at least two affairs, resulting in both Isa and Wolfgang being illegitimate. Isa herself notes, somewhat naively, that she was 'born too soon and Wolf too late,' and her aunt, wondering whether she can trust Isa to behave decently, murmurs, "'if you were only your father's child.'" ⁶⁴ The realisation that the family scandal is common knowledge has a profound effect on Isa, especially since the townspeople expect her to replicate her mother's behaviour. The proverb of the apple implies that an individual's behaviour is fundamentally tied to inherited characteristics and this is emphasised by the reaction of Frau von Rense, who will not sanction her son's marriage to Isa on the grounds that Isa is a 'public beauty.'⁶⁵ The connotations of 'public' suggest a woman whose beauty is freely available to all. By extension, she is a woman of easy virtue. This is tied to Isa's suicide-eyes, drawing on the existing discourses of vision which taught women that the angelic female kept her eyes lowered and waited patiently to be approached, whereas the demonic woman actively sought to attract male attention. As Isa's situation indicates, women possessing these sexually charged eyes were ostracised by respectable society. Her enthralling eyes and apparently 'public' vision align her with the fallen woman, given that one of

⁶³Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 30; p. 39.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 54.

the stereotypical markers of female prostitution was the woman's gaze focusing unashamedly on potential clients.⁶⁶

Isa's reputation is constructed around the knowledge that her mother's reputation has been sullied by sex outside marriage and symbolised in the birth of two illegitimate children. Isa realises that she is expected to replicate this behaviour when she overhears Herr von Rense's friends encouraging him to make Isa his mistress, rather than his wife, and describing her as a 'coquette.'⁶⁷ Even Isa's sensible aunt, the strictest, but arguably most caring character, suggests that her niece cannot help her apparent vanity: 'it's in the blood.'⁶⁸ This idea of inherited behaviour, of 'bad blood,' thus ties Sylva to another contemporaneous debate: whether nature or nurture determines a person's behaviour.

Isa appears to be a combination of both nature and nurture. Like Marina in 'A Broken Statue,' she is described in supernatural terms. A 'dark, sinister, almost demoniacal expression, very strange to see in so young a face' appears when she is angry and this behaviour is further developed during her father's second marriage.⁶⁹ Here, instead of witnessing the wedding ceremony, she turns to the windows, watching the rain and the flies on the window pane. There is a moment of pathetic fallacy here, but the reference to a creature that symbolises pestilence, corruption and disease takes it one step further, distancing Isa from the stereotypically emotional, ineffectual woman.⁷⁰ Her facial expressions and the negative associations connected to this behaviour are linked to the demonic

⁶⁶Ogden, p. 140.

⁶⁷'A Stray Leaf,' p. 56.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 47.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁰See Tova L. Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2008), pp. 143-146.

female stereotype, but because of what readers understand about her parentage, Isa becomes the vessel for her mother's sinful past rather than a reflection of her own subconscious desires. There is an innate darkness in Isa that, as with Frosi and Marina, bubbles to the surface at certain stages in her story. However, in keeping with the proverbial apple, Isa appears to have inherited these characteristics. As will be mentioned at a later stage in this chapter, I argue that Isa is, in fact, the only example of successful female power – a woman who manages to resist outside influences and perhaps the inherited aspects of her own nature, in order to achieve some semblance of purity. This would explain why she escapes punishment and achieves a level of success.

Isa is another victim of the dangerous woman, whose selfish desires and sexual freedom have dire consequences for those closest to them. Isa is forever tarnished with the shameful stain of association. This is evidence of Sylva reflecting upon contemporary debates about child custody, whereby the father was traditionally deemed most suited to caring for children in the event of a separation, despite women being portrayed as their moral guardians.⁷¹ Sylva's mother-figure is no responsible parent and there is a wider implication that women, specifically mothers, have a responsibility to be morally upstanding in order to avoid negatively influencing their children in later life. This emphasis on

⁷¹The first bill to be passed in favour of female custody rights was the 1839 Infants and Child Custody Act. This was greatly influenced by the campaigning of Caroline Norton (1808-1877), who obtained a divorce from her violent husband but lost access to her three children. The bill granted less than Norton had asked for, but allowed women (importantly, women who were not proven adulteresses) to petition the court for custody of children under seven years of age and for access to their older children. In practice, fathers continued to be favoured. In 1873, women's rights were extended: they could now obtain custody of children up to the age of sixteen and women convicted of adultery could also seek custody. The 1886 Custody of Infants Act assigned guardianship to the mother in the event of the father's death, but while he lived, he still controlled the education and religion of the children. Equal parental rights were not achieved until 1925 and the Guardianship of Infants Act.

the mother-child bond and maternal responsibility was part of the ideology of domesticity that governed nineteenth-century discussions of the woman's role.⁷² Although it came under more sustained debate in the later decades of the century, the woman's role in nurturing the family continued to be exalted as the cornerstone of society.⁷³

The traumatic and fatal effects of parental abandonment are also at the root of 'Two Waifs from the Taygetos,' which focuses on the short lives of two 'foundlings' named Soare and Evangelhelù. Despite growing up on opposite sides of the river and never speaking to each other, the two fall in love, eventually deciding to marry. However, the priest will not sanction the marriage and reveals the secret he has hidden until now: Soare and Evangelhelù are siblings. Although it is undoubtedly strange that the villagers concealed this secret from the two lonely children, the discovery that they are related and thus cannot act on their feelings, proves fatal. Soare, possessed with a 'strange inward fire,' wastes away and after his untimely death, Evangelhelù lies down in a corner and quietly joins him.⁷⁴ Although an apparently penitent, weeping figure – presumably their disgraced mother – visits their grave for a number of years, the moral message remains clear: parents who abandon their children are responsible for the disasters that

⁷²There were a number of myths that pervaded nineteenth-century society, most notably the female angel, which represented women as dutiful, self-sacrificing and the moral centre of the home. Sarah Stickney Ellis was a strong advocate of this concept, producing a large number of stories, pamphlets and poems on female improvement and their moral education. In her most famous and successful work, *The Women of England* (1839), she established what Coventry Patmore would later characterise as 'The Angel in the House' in his poem of the same name (1854). Stickney Ellis also advocated practical and domestic skills and established a girls' school at Rawdon House in Hertfordshire in order to put these ideas into practice. The ideas found in literary works were also cemented by scientific studies, which stressed women's biological inferiority and argued that they were unsuited to intellectual pursuits.

⁷³ Martha Vicinus, 'Introduction. The Perfect Victorian Lady,' in *Suffer and Be Still. Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. by Martha Vicinus (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), x.

⁷⁴Carmen Sylva, 'Two Waifs from the Taygetos,' in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*, p. 99.

befall them. In this case, this includes attempted incest and untimely death, reminiscent of the relationship between Cathy and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* – although the two are not biologically related.

Sylva also hints at the importance of moral motherhood in ‘Shaded Canvasses,’ where Frosi refuses to have children whilst her marital situation is so dire, stating firmly ‘no children – better death.’⁷⁵ This is an element of maternal responsibility articulated by Frosi even before conception. *Edleen Vaughan* is also focused on this topic: the eponymous character would have a relatively minor role in the novel were it not for the suggestion that she is responsible for the extreme and melodramatic events that occur. Edleen’s fundamental weaknesses when raising her son Tom are the cause of his moral and later physical degradation. His behaviour becomes increasingly violent and affects the wider community, as shown in his impregnation of Temorah – who becomes mentally unstable after a fire kills her illegitimate baby – and the thinly veiled implication that he rapes Kathleen, to be explored at a later stage in this chapter.

Working in conjunction with the depiction of dangerous female sexuality and the negative effects it has on both the individual and their families, is the notion that acts of positive female agency are fundamentally tied to self-sacrifice. As numerous critics have discussed, the ideology surrounding the woman’s role centred on maternal responsibility within the domestic sphere, but it was also characterised by female dependence, with self-denial ‘almost invariably prescribed for women in conjunction with the *passive* virtues of patience,

⁷⁵‘Shaded Canvasses,’ p. 85.

resignation and silent suffering.’⁷⁶ As previously mentioned, Frosi in ‘Shaded Canvasses’ undergoes a physical and mental transformation before returning to the role of the traditional, submissive wife and this emphasis placed on female duty is also shown by Augusta in ‘A Pen and Ink Confession’. In composing a letter to a friend, Augusta reminisces about her marriage and includes a number of interjections. Here, she details her husband’s vice, violence and debilitating illness, the birth of her disabled daughter and Augusta’s own love-affair. Its epistolary form gives it a unique status, as Sylva’s short fiction is primarily written from a third person perspective. This detail, coupled with its content, creates literary links with Anne Brontë’s (1820-1849) *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), in which the diary-form is used to convey a young wife’s tumultuous marriage to an alcoholic, abusive husband. The fundamental difference is its ending: where Brontë symbolically destroys Arthur Huntingdon, allowing Helen to escape and achieve lasting happiness with another man, Augusta’s husband recovers and she returns to the role of contented carer for both him and her daughter.

Augusta is constantly described as an ‘angel’ by her troubled husband Reinhold and exemplifies the stereotype in various ways.⁷⁷ Like Frosi in ‘Shaded Canvasses,’ she nurses her husband when he becomes ill (suffering from epileptic fits, seemingly brought about by anxiety and mounting debts) and is subservient to the extent that she ‘would stand silently an hour or two and wait silently in the room till it should please him [Reinhold] to turn round and look at me.’⁷⁸ Augusta

⁷⁶Carol Dyhouse, ‘The role of women: from self-sacrifice to self-awareness,’ in *The Victorians*, ed. by Lawrence Lerner (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1978), p. 175.

⁷⁷Carmen Sylva, ‘A Pen and Ink Confession,’ in *Shadows on Love’s Dial*, p. 130.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 137.

abandons her own opinions in order to please her husband, sacrificing her own free will to Reinhold's control. This is taken to an extreme later in the story, when Augusta suffers a mental and physical breakdown as a result of caring for Reinhold. The strain placed upon Augusta by her sense of duty, coupled with the fact she is pregnant with his child, causes her to fall apart. After placing her husband into an asylum she goes into labour and succumbs to illness at the same time. Augusta's reaction to this experience is particularly important:

I was, however, quite unconscious, and for many weeks hovered between life and death. It was a blessed time for me, one of absolute forgetfulness, out of which I slowly awoke to the necessity of again taking up my heavy burden.⁷⁹

The somewhat paradoxical notions of death as 'blessed' and life as a 'heavy burden' are a clear indication that her current role is unbearable – women cannot be expected to function under such an extreme form of submission. It can only result in suffering. Yet this apparently progressive suggestion is instantly refuted within the narrative through the portrayal of wider society, epitomised by the respectable doctor. When Augusta realises that her daughter is physically disabled, the doctor informs her that she 'must learn to be as submissive under this as under [her] other trials.'⁸⁰ Here, readers gain some insight into patriarchal expectations: it is the duty of women to suffer in silence. Women must have a certain degree of power and agency, but ironically, this is only to be exercised in acts of submission, dealing with the trials they face and not inconveniencing those around them. Aligning this view with an educated doctor adds the weight of scientific authority to this conservative expectation and is furthered by Augusta's

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 153-4.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 163.

recognition of her contained power, describing herself as ‘like a caged lion.’⁸¹ Augusta’s agency is only used to keep others happy, or to deny herself. Her hair prematurely greys as a result of her ordeal, symbolising, as with Frosi, her physical decline. She also suffers a period of depression that is only lifted by the company of Herbert Krause, with whom she soon falls in love. It is in this relationship that the undercurrent of female self-sacrifice and martyrdom is most evident.

Although initially unexpected, the feelings Augusta develops towards Herbert are strong. Indeed, she describes him as ‘more than my husband.’⁸² Yet Augusta simultaneously acknowledges that her love for Herbert must be buried ‘deep down in the innermost recesses of my soul,’ due to the marital – and perhaps moral – obligation she feels towards Reinhold.⁸³ Like Frosi, Augusta has lost her love for her husband, but remains by his side as a result of her overriding sense of duty, which is most evident when she describes her life in terms of deprivation:

It was my last spring, and although it was a season of storm, tempest and threatening clouds, with only now and then a ray of sunlight and small buds of hope, I felt almost young again when I think of it. It was as if I had to test the full extent of my sacrifice.⁸⁴

The use of pathetic fallacy here reflects the nature of her trials. Although Augusta has suffered, she feels invigorated by the ‘ray of sunlight’ – a veiled reference to Herr Krause. The ‘last spring’ thus symbolises her final taste of freedom before her husband returns. In recognising her present happiness,

⁸¹Ibid., p. 178.

⁸²Ibid., p. 181.

⁸³Ibid., p. 181

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 179

Augusta must also acknowledge her future, which she defines in terms of sacrifice. She is unable to conceal her disappointment concerning Reinhold's recovery and imminent return home. After receiving his letter, she notes that 'everything around me seemed to become dreary as a great desert, overpowering in its never-ending sameness' – the freedom of springtime has now been replaced with the endless monotony of care.⁸⁵

Augusta's dissatisfaction with her marriage and societal role is obvious, yet paradoxically, she vehemently opposes change. When Herbert suggests that Augusta separates from Reinhold, she reacts in unexpectedly strong terms: "don't say that, or all must be over between us. I could not love you any longer if I were faithless."⁸⁶ This is a somewhat contradictory outburst, as by admitting her love for another man, Augusta is already being 'faithless' to the marital vows to love, honour and obey. This is in keeping with Zimmerman's argument that she is 'zwischen ehelicher und mütterlicher Verpflichtung, zwischen individuellem Freiheits- und Liebeswunsch und der Qual durch ihren psychisch kranken Mann hin- und hergerissen,' ('torn between marital and maternal obligation, between a desire for personal freedom and love and the torment of her mentally ill husband').⁸⁷ As a result, 'faithlessness' takes on dual-meaning, as it is connected to Augusta's marriage and her religion.⁸⁸ The Church thus becomes connected with female self-sacrifice: Augusta cannot go against the wishes of her religion and so suppresses her own desires in order to remain honourable and faithful. As

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 180

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 172.

⁸⁷Zimmerman, *Die dichtende Königin*, p. 78.

⁸⁸Divorce is portrayed as sinful in a number of Biblical books, most notably Leviticus 21:14: 'A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.' Also Matthew 5:32: 'But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.'

Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair have noted, secular attitudes and discourses in the nineteenth century had their roots in the mid-eighteenth-century period of Enlightenment, which ‘privileged female religiosity.’⁸⁹ If women were seen to be biologically inferior to men, they made up for it in terms of morality. Augusta’s recognition of this imperative explains why she turns away from the ‘un-Christian’ path of divorce and remarriage and remains with her family.

Religious influence is a recurring theme in *Shadows on Love’s Dial*. Froisi in ‘Shaded Canvasses’ remains with her husband as a result of the persuasive power of her priest and is rewarded by a penitent husband and a house full of children. Augusta, too, benefits from ‘appropriate’ behaviour. Immediately after she ends her relationship with Herbert, her daughter Henny stands on her own for the first time, walks and speaks. The juxtaposition of this miracle after an act of female self-renunciation becomes a didactic message that women will be rewarded for their obedience to tradition.

This message is reinforced through Herbert Krause’s violent treatment of her daughter. Augusta does not seem to recognise that his behaviour is inappropriate, but readers become increasingly aware of his ill-treatment: unsettled by the child gnashing her teeth, Herbert ‘would often take the little hands in his strong ones and squeeze them hard so as to oblige her to be quiet.’⁹⁰ The comparison between the child’s weakness and Herbert’s strength is an indicator of aggression and dislike and his unsuitability is further cemented after Reinhold has recovered. Reinhold holds Henny in a manner ‘so different to the way in which Herbert had done it,’ which emphasises the power of biological love

⁸⁹Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives. Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 132.

⁹⁰‘A Pen and Ink Confession,’ p. 173.

over a step-father's – something that might also be applied to the treatment of Isa and Wolfgang in 'A Stray Leaf.'⁹¹ This problematises Zimmerman's assertion that Augusta was 'torn': the loss of Herbert is painful, but fleeting. His potential for violence meant that he was never a viable alternative and she is soon content with her newly rehabilitated husband. Augusta's decision to remain loyal to Reinhold is shown to be the right decision. Herbert's intolerance of her daughter means he could never be the ideal husband and now that Reinhold has miraculously recovered, his madness and violence having abated, the perfect place for Augusta is with her husband and child – a symbolic return to the traditional family unit. Although she recognises that she has 'almost become a woman of business,' by taking over from her husband to manage their finances and household affairs, this role is only a minor shift.⁹² Her agency is confined to that of a household manager, which, as Elizabeth Langland has shown, was tied to discourses of domesticity.⁹³ Augusta describes her life as 'monotonous and uninteresting,' for those reading her narrative, but nevertheless takes pleasure in it.⁹⁴ This enjoyment has only been achieved through self-denial and by embracing the role of female nurturer, in keeping with society's expectations of her.

The self-abnegating female can also be found in 'Red Leaves'. This story, ostensibly recounting how a copper beech tree acquired its red leaves, focuses on an ill-fated love affair between Yutta, unhappily married to Almann, and a travelling folksinger named Heinrich. Yutta, who writes poems and songs during

⁹¹Ibid., p. 184.

⁹²Ibid., p. 185.

⁹³Elizabeth Langland, 'Women's writing and the domestic sphere,' in *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 129-130.

⁹⁴'A Pen and Ink Confession,' p. 185.

the story, is the only example of a creative, productive female in *Shadows on Love's Dial*. Yet even here, she systematically impedes her own happiness, describing her poems as 'a lot of nonsense' and preferring to destroy them than have others peruse them.⁹⁵ She later refuses to write anything else for fear of being 'misunderstood.'⁹⁶ In doing so, she denies herself a creative outlet and orchestrates an emotional withdrawal reminiscent of Frosi in 'Shaded Canvasses'. She allows Heinrich to make some improvements to the poems, but their relationship is soon sacrificed in order to remain faithful to her husband. Like Augusta, Yutta cannot face the disapproval of the Church and will not separate from her husband by legal means. Rather than remain as a dutiful wife, however, she kills herself. This act of agency goes beyond the caged power of Augusta and Frosi due to its violent nature – symbolically stabbing herself on the banks of the river and forever staining the tree's leaves.

Much like Frosi, Yutta's path is influenced by a priest, who instils a sense of obligation in her. She is told that even a thought can be a sin and that without her purity she is 'nothing – nothing.'⁹⁷ The priest takes an inappropriate amount of pleasure in this, having 'a feeling of satisfaction to humble the girl of noble race, [...] he was pitiless.'⁹⁸ This detail again reflects the patriarchal influence on women's lives, since Yutta ingests these beliefs to a fatal degree and, as with the other women in the collection, subverts her agency by hurting herself. Combining a sacrificial suicide with religious influence is evidence of Sylva reaffirming the

⁹⁵Carmen Sylva, 'Red leaves,' in *Shadows on Love's Dial*, p. 209.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 215.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 224.

conservative associations of woman and angel, whereby ‘self-abnegation was not only prescribed as womanly, it was considered a religious duty.’⁹⁹

Suicide as a result of unrequited love was, according to Olive Anderson, made to appear conventional across Europe through literature including Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*.¹⁰⁰ Such representations also reinforced the ideology of separate spheres: ‘among women, suicide by drowning was shown as the reluctant last resort of the seduced and abandoned [...] Very rarely indeed was sexual remorse shown as prompting a man to kill himself.’¹⁰¹ Death by drowning became a popular stereotype of the suicidal woman, capturing Victorian consciousness in art and literature, including the pre-Raphaelite painter Sir John Everett Millais’s (1829-1896) *Ophelia* (1851), Mirah in Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (1876) or Edna in Chopin’s *The Awakening*. It became widely accepted that a woman depicted near large expanses of water was contemplating suicide as a result of an ill-fated love affair.

Sylva’s work also draws parallels with ‘Imelda’ and ‘Indian Woman’s Death Song’ from Hemans’s *Records of Women* (1828). In both instances, the women commit suicide near or in water as a result of unrequited or unsuccessful love affairs. Hemans emphasises the strength of both women, but tempers this with the realisation that their power is only exerted to destroy themselves. Imelda’s ‘swift courage’ is not to avenge her lover, who has been murdered by her brother, but to kiss Azzo’s breast, draw out the poison and die on the riverbank.¹⁰² Similarly, the ‘wild, proud strain’ of the Indian woman’s song and the ‘warrior’s

⁹⁹Dyhouse, p. 174.

¹⁰⁰Olive Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 193.

¹⁰¹*Ibid*, p. 196

¹⁰²Felicia Hemans, ‘Imelda,’ in *Records of Women* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1828), p. 67.

eye' that guides her and her child along the river are centred on her impending death.¹⁰³ Like Yutta, these women have been disappointed in love, but in keeping with societal expectations, they punish themselves rather than others.

Sylva further indicates her awareness and adherence to traditional representations of female suicide in 'The Cripple' and 'The Jipi'. Like Chopin's Edna, Florica in 'The Cripple' drowns herself in order to escape a husband and a life she can no longer bear, although Sylva's story is far more sensational in content. Florica had a relationship with an officer prior to her marriage, the consequences of which are jealousy, physical injury, revenge and murder, as well as her own suicide. Her husband Nicolai is maimed as a result of her previous lover's jealousy and comes to suspect Florica of being involved, especially since she is disgusted by his disability. In plotting his revenge, Nicolai forces Florica to lure her previous lover to the forest, where he is brutally murdered. Florica's suicide occurs after Nicolai warns her that she can only escape him in death. By the next morning, she has killed herself – an act which symbolises her desire to escape the confines of her marriage.¹⁰⁴ 'The Jipi,' a Romanian folktale chronicling the development of the Jipi mountain range, continues the stereotypical associations of female death and drowning, but combines it with magical elements. Rolanda, a 'wondrously fair maiden,' casts herself over a cliff and becomes a 'foaming waterfall, whose spray floated in the air like a bridal veil.'¹⁰⁵ Caring for the two brothers – who have grown jealous of each other in their love for Rolanda – she sacrifices herself rather than choose between them.

¹⁰³Hemans, 'Indian Woman's Death Song,' in *Records of Women*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁴Carmen Sylva, 'The Cripple,' in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*.

¹⁰⁵Carmen Sylva, 'The Jipi,' in *Legends from River and Mountain*, p. 6; p. 17.

Yutta's suicide is also part of this cultural trope, but Sylva's decision to provide her with a weapon, rather than depict her death by drowning, is a manipulation of convention. It shows that Yutta had in fact remained pure, despite her guilt and the priest's remonstrance. As she did not act on her feelings for Heinrich, she cannot drown her sorrows. But death in such close proximity to the river provides readers with an explanation of its cause – it stemmed from her love for a man other than her husband. Although Yutta fights against her fatal decision, describing the abbot as 'too severe' almost immediately after the fatal blow, she still cannot live with herself.¹⁰⁶ She removes the dagger from her body and expires, retaining her stereotypically prized feminine purity.

Yutta, struggling to conform to the angelic role laid out for her by the Church, seeks salvation in suicide. This is an extreme form of self-inflicted punishment because she was not 'pure in her own eyes, because she had unholy thoughts in her breast.'¹⁰⁷ Yutta, aided by the priest, becomes aware of her own sins, in this case her love for Heinrich, which goes against her marital vows. She thus perpetuates the cycle of women exercising their power through self-denial. Given the controversial nature of suicide, seen as a mortal sin in the eyes of the Church, as well as a criminal offence in Britain until the passing of the 1961 Suicide Act – although Germany had no penalty for suicide or assisted suicide from 1751 – Yutta's actions not only indicate her desperation, but also that she views the sacrifice of her own soul as preferable to the loss of her purity. By destroying herself and suppressing her desires, Yutta preserves the most important

¹⁰⁶'Red Leaves,' p. 226.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 228.

aspect of her identity: her honour as a wife and a woman. Suicide becomes a way to maintain an angelic status and to save women from succumbing to 'darkness'.

Adherence to Christian teaching and God's will is also present in 'The Story of a Helpful Queen,' first published in the *North American Review* in 1899 and later part of *A Real Queen's Fairy Book*, where it occupies an uneasy position alongside the other fairy stories. This is due to its religious focus and the lack of magical events: the queen, praying to be able to end all suffering, receives her healing gifts from God, rather than the magical means utilised in the rest of the collection. The queen is also an adult with a young son, unlike the young children or adolescents who generally take the leading role in the other stories. Whilst there may be a moral message to this story, it is far more problematic for modern audiences to accept. The queen learns that she should not want to change the world and end all hardships. When she tries to do so, the suffering not only manifests physically on her own body, but her son must be sacrificed in order to atone for her 'pious error.'¹⁰⁸

The penalty for women breaking divine laws has already been seen with regard to Frosi and Yutta and the queen's punishment again stems from stepping too far outside of her prescribed role. She is still adhering to the traditional view of the nurturing, self-sacrificing woman, but rather than limiting this to her own domestic sphere, she tries to help the world. Like the other women, she must lose health and happiness in order to be brought back into line with the traditional ideology of womanhood. Although the knowledge that the world has been intentionally designed by God as 'a laboratory, which, according to worldly

¹⁰⁸Carmen Sylva, 'The Story of a Helpful Queen,' in *A Real Queen's Fairy Book* (London: George Newnes Ltd, 1901), p. 85.

conceits, we call hell or purgatory,' brings the queen peace, this message seems more restrictive than life-affirming.¹⁰⁹ It is an extremely conservative notion that people, but especially women, should not stretch too far: 'therefore are all those blessed who help them that suffer with all their strength, with all self-sacrifice staking all they have to give. But they cannot make this world a paradise; that is not permitted to them.'¹¹⁰ Such people are pursuing the unobtainable. The queen may save some sufferers, but she cannot save all – hence her son's death – and it is morally wrong to attempt to do so. The queen had to be punished because she was interfering with God's laws and the world that He intended to be a place of constant suffering.

Continuing in this conservative vein, this moral implies that despite God creating a 'laboratory,' inventions and developments are limited to His use only. Discoveries that might benefit humanity should not be developed as they go against God's divine plan. The fields of science and religion had come more frequently into conflict from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Developing technology and scientific developments caused tensions within traditional religious thought. Most notably, *On The Origin Of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin (1809-1882), not only proposed a theory of natural selection, but also suggested that all species could be traced to a single origin. Man was no longer the special product of a divine maker. Theories of evolution, coupled with a rise in secularism, led to a decline in religious authority.

The conclusion of Sylva's story forms part of a counter narrative, which resisted and attempted to undermine scientific supremacy. Her suggestion that

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 86.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

attempting to circumvent God's authority is morally wrong is reminiscent of the conservative English bishop Samuel Wilberforce's (1805-1873) arguments. Wilberforce campaigned vociferously against Darwinism in the 1860s, stating that 'few things have more deeply injured the cause of religion than the busy, fussy energy with which men, narrow and feeble alike in faith and in science, have bustled forth to reconcile all new discoveries in physics with the word of inspiration.'¹¹¹ Nevertheless, Sylva's attack on scientific and medical investigations, alongside the other conservative aspects of her stories, which argue that women should know their place and should stay there, become a problematic pill for *fin-de-siècle*, as well as modern readers, to swallow.

4.2. Carmen Sylva and the New Woman.

The focus on the positive outcome of female self-sacrifice, and women overcoming their sins in order to become the ideal woman, might initially lead to the conclusion that Sylva, despite the reviews she received to the contrary, was a deeply conservative writer. Yet there are nuances within her depictions of stereotypical femininity that correspond with elements of the New Woman. Like the interest in Sylva and her work, this debate reached its peak in the mid-1890s. Sylva's complicated engagement with the marriage-plot, her destruction of the woman-as-victim archetype and her recognition of the need for female education become part of the discourse calling for change and equality for women.

¹¹¹Samuel Wilberforce, 'Art VII. – *On the Origin of Species, by means of Natural Selection; or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. By Charles Darwin, M.A., F.R.S. London, 1860,' *Quarterly Review*, July 1860, p. 257.

Female education as a means of personal improvement is the foundation of 'The Gipsy's Love Story' – a story set in Romania's feudal past. Sylva combines female duty with class obligations, depicting the ill-fated relationship between Cassandra, a gipsy serf working for an aristocratic family, and Didica, a 'Lautari' or travelling musician. Didica's lifestyle means that they are forbidden to marry and Cassandra is forced to marry another man. Whilst she vows that she will never love another man, both she and Didica realise their situation is 'a matter of course.'¹¹² Due to their social position – or lack thereof – they are without rights, meaning that Cassandra can be given away as a 'dumb, soulless creature.'¹¹³ Whilst Didica's profession allows him to escape – leaving soon after the wedding never to be seen again – Cassandra is trapped in a loveless marriage. She does so without complaint, standing at the wedding party 'with no more life and animation than a statue.'¹¹⁴ She becomes the faithful wife and mother, but 'all happiness had departed for evermore.'¹¹⁵

In contrast to the angelic women mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, conforming to societal expectations causes Cassandra to be frozen in time as a living statue. She becomes the metaphorical creature that Sylva wrote of in her aphorisms: 'deprive a butterfly of its beautiful, radiant wings, and nothing remains but a vile reptile.'¹¹⁶ The loss of freedom – importantly, this attribute is taken from the butterfly and is not a change that it seeks or embraces – results in monstrosity. There is a loss of self here, a metamorphosis into something restricted and unnatural. Cassandra, however, never reveals this secret sorrow, but

¹¹²Carmen Sylva 'A Gipsy's Love Story,' in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*, p. 157.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹¹⁶*Thoughts of a Queen*, p. 133.

suffers in silence. This is a reflection of her social position as servant and as a woman: unhappiness and misery are the result of forcing women to adhere to societal expectations and traditions.

The unnamed female narrator, recognised as such through the story's subheading – 'Told by the Daughter of a Boyar' – is a woman of high status with more access to education than the servants employed and controlled by her family.¹¹⁷ Yet the opportunities she receives have not reaffirmed the status quo. Instead, she has fundamentally altered her beliefs, as is made clear in a short aside. The narrator interrupts the flow of Cassandra and Didca's story at the point where Cassandra refuses to speak to Costaki – the man she is being forced to marry – and receives 'due chastisement for her obstinate self-will.'¹¹⁸ The boyar's daughter debates Cassandra's punishment with her father, representing a symbolic conflict between Old and New, between patriarchal dominance and a new wave of feminine thinking:

'Who, I should like to know, has put all these crazy modern notions into your head? Have you never heard that a gipsy who has not yet tasted the stick is as worthless as a mill without a wheel? And tell me, if you please, how you propose to manage the whole crew without distributing a few blows among them now and then?'

My answer was prompt: 'By setting them free, father!'

But I had not yet come back to disturb existing ordinance with my new-fangled ideas and prejudices.'¹¹⁹

This excerpt both reinforces and challenges traditional ideas. It perpetuates ideas of 'otherness' associated with Romania by emphasising the barbarity of their

¹¹⁷This is inferred through the term 'boyar'. This description was used until the seventeenth century to describe members of the highest ranking aristocracy in feudal Russia and Bulgaria, as well as Wallachia and Moldavia – the two principalities that would be unified under Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza in 1859 and formally recognised as Romania when King Carol I and Sylvia became the first King and Queen in 1881.

¹¹⁸'A Gipsy's Love Story,' p. 156.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 157.

customs and treatment of their servants, but also professes distaste for such practices. Through the daughter's narration, the old ways represented by the indignant father are shown to be antiquated and the insertion of 'yet' into the final sentence indicates that his ideas will soon be questioned by a new generation. This story may not produce revolution or resolution since Cassandra is, after all, still forced to marry against her will, but impetus for change is beginning to take root.

As Mona Caird (1854-1932) noted in an article on marriage in 1888, 'the time has come, not for violent overturning of established institutions before people admit they are evil, but for a gradual alteration of opinion which will rebuild them from the very foundation.'¹²⁰ Sylva's story ties this argument to an aristocratic woman, one who traditionally would seek to uphold the dominant ideologies that benefited her class. In recognising the 'revolting barbarity,' and proposing radical change through the liberation of the serfs, she undermines tradition to advocate both female and class-based emancipation.¹²¹ This story also indicates the positive influence of western thinking, seen as more enlightened and progressive, since 'it had never occurred to anyone to protest, until I, having completed my education under West-European influences, returned home from France with a host of new ideas considerably at variance with prevailing institutions.'¹²² Given the historical specificity of the term 'boyar', it is unlikely that the story is set during the French Revolutions (1787-1799), but the reference to a French education may have been used to allude to a more liberal and democratic nation. Since this story is set in Romania's historical past, it is also

¹²⁰ Mona Caird, 'Marriage,' *Westminster Review*, July 1888, p. 200.

¹²¹ 'A Gipsy's Love Story,' p. 156.

¹²² *Ibid.*

possible that Sylva is hinting that progress has now been achieved: Romania may have been old-fashioned and underdeveloped, but change has now been realised.

If access to education gives women – admittedly upper class women – the chance to open their eyes to society's problems, then a restricted education leaves women in darkness. In 'A Stray Leaf' and 'The Rod that Spoils the Child,' Sylva depicts the negative consequences surrounding the lack of education for women. In the latter, she illustrates that there is some opportunity for young girls to learn, but severe punishments for not adhering to the rules put in place by educators. 'The Rod that Spoils the Child' centres on Heidi, who is punished for idleness by her English governess. Forced to undress and remain in bed, Heidi is plagued by her conscience and the onset of a fever that causes her room to come to life. The story holds a unique position in *Shadows on Love's Dial* due to its focus on a young child, rather than a 'coming of age' narrative and marital plot. Whilst Heidi's story cannot engage with the themes of marital discontent, dangerous women or female self-sacrifice, it reflects upon the treatment of women with regard to education, thus linking the narrative to the rest of the collection. Heidi is punished for not learning her lessons, but by focalising the story through her, readers can comprehend the reason behind it. Her transgression is a temptation brought about by restriction, rather than laziness or inability.

Heidi wants to play with the children outside, but has been forbidden to do so by her mother. The unknown pleasures in the garden render her too distracted to learn. The use of the garden to symbolise Heidi's temptation could be another biblical reference to the Garden of Eden, where Eve was enticed to go against God's will. However, the educational context of the story allows Sylva to go

beyond a conservative comment on women who overreach their capabilities. Instead, she is reflecting on women's limited social sphere and how this is defined from childhood. The association of the garden with pleasure and the fulfilment of Heidi's desires thus becomes a metaphor for her independence and maturity, which are denied to her. There is some opportunity for women to learn, but they are still confined in the home, away from natural experience. By being detached from society, they become dissatisfied with their lives, unable to complete the tasks that have been set for them. This leads to a number of conclusions: it was wrong for Heidi to ignore her education, but it was equally wrong for her to be so severely punished for wanting to experience wider society. The implication is that if she had not been prevented from experiencing simple, childhood pleasures, she would not have neglected her work – an argument that Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) had raised over a century earlier when she highlighted that 'the sedentary life which they [women] are condemned to live, whilst boys frolic in the open air, weakens the muscles and relaxes the nerves.'¹²³

The punishment Heidi receives has psychological effects on her both at the time of her indiscretion as well as in later life. Prison-like imagery, akin to solitary confinement, is evoked when Heidi is confined in her room with a diet of bread and water. Heidi quickly develops feverish symptoms. She feels hot and cold and is unable to eat. Confinement disturbs her emotional wellbeing and Heidi is plagued by her conscience, which reminds her of every ill-mannered move she has ever made. It becomes so extreme that she begins to see the furniture in her

¹²³Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 55-6.

bedroom moving, reminding readers of the unnamed female narrator in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1890) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935).

Like Heidi, the narrator in that story had been confined in her bedroom and begins to see malevolent forces coming to life beneath the wallpaper. The unnamed woman had also been placed in her room for health reasons – 'a temporary nervous depression.'¹²⁴ Heidi's situation, however, is more overtly oppressive. In Gilman's story, readers must infer the symbolic patriarchal dominance that restricts the woman and causes her mental decline – 'John is a physician, and *perhaps* – [...] – perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster' – whereas Heidi's treatment is more obviously aligned with punishment.¹²⁵ Her governess informs her that "if children do not do their lessons they must be ill," but this is juxtaposed mere sentences later with the threat that "you [Heidi] know that you will be punished, punished in such a way that you will remember it."¹²⁶ She does indeed remember it: the mental torture had 'stamped itself so forcibly on her mind' that she considers it worse than being beaten.¹²⁷ Punishment masquerades as illness in order to convince the young girl that it is for her own good. The effects of this punishment should be viewed in conjunction with the ambiguous end of the story:

The door opened. Heidi shut her eyes tight.
 'She is asleep,' she heard a voice say. The veins
 swelled on her neck. Again there was a whisper.
 Heidi did not stir. At last they went away – at last.
 And there was no need for Heidi to beg pardon. How
 could she?¹²⁸

¹²⁴Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' (1890) in *The Yellow Wallpaper and Selected Writings*, introduced by Maggie O'Farrell (London: Virago Press, 2009), p. 4.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹²⁶Carmen Sylva, 'The Rod that Spoils the Child,' in *Shadows on Love's Dial*, p. 113.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 120.

Heidi's physical reaction to the unnamed voices suggests an element of terror, brought about by her confinement. Shutting her eyes and pretending to be asleep indicates her desire not to engage with her visitors, but the swollen veins hint at repressed emotion or anxiety. There was, therefore, no need to apologise, since the impact of her experience is so obvious – Heidi would not dare to behave in such a way again. Her attempted rebellion – her 'illness' – has been corrected. Similarly, she could not apologise for her behaviour, because of the effect such treatment has had on her psyche, as well as her physical body.

In this way, we see Sylva's fiction representing what Elaine Showalter has described as the 'domestication of insanity' and the 'moral management' of women, which 'substituted close supervision and paternal concern for physical restraint and harsh treatment, in an effort to re-educate the insane in habits of industry, self-control, moderation and perseverance.'¹²⁹ There were more women than men in public institutions from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and women were seen as more susceptible to insanity because of their reproductive and nervous systems. This was often used as justification to keep them out of professions or restrict their rights – a way of silencing women. They could also be confined to institutions due to epilepsy or the wish to divorce, as well as for mental health problems. In line with this practice, Showalter notes that a young girl's increasing awareness of her social dependence – in comparison to men – may well have resulted in an emotional crisis.¹³⁰ Heidi's treatment clearly adheres to Showalter's definitions: Heidi recognises her limitations and attempts a child's rebellion. Due to society's restrictions, however, she cannot hope to succeed and

¹²⁹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady* (London: Virago, 1985), pp. 28-29.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

is physically restrained as a result of her impudence. She is treated like a prisoner in order to make her more industrious and focused on her education. Many male psychologists and doctors believed that mental illness was post-pubescent and that children could not suffer from such conditions, but Sylva's story indicates that women of any age can be driven to madness as a result of oppression.¹³¹

The setting takes on added significance in this respect. 'The Rod that Spoils the Child' is the only story set in an obviously British location. More specifically, given the references to the Great Exhibition, the Zoological Gardens and Sussex Place, where Heidi's family live, it is based in London.¹³² The governess who punishes Heidi so severely is also English, but she 'is not really a governess, and she only teaches other people's children because she has a large number of children of her own to look after and provide for.'¹³³ The governess's lack of professional credentials calls into question her treatment of Heidi. More importantly, it indicates that whilst Britain may be a place of increased opportunity for young women, there are still restrictions in place. Paradoxically, these are enforced by women themselves. This clearly differs from everyday practice and the management of women in public asylums, where the doctors in charge of the patients would be male. Yet as a literary motif, it further demonstrates the double-standards in nineteenth-century society and the degree to which women themselves continue this cycle of victimisation.

Heidi had the opportunity to learn, even if her stifled existence caused her to lack the inclination. The same cannot be said for Isa in 'A Stray Leaf,' where

¹³¹Rick Rylance, *Victorian Psychology and British Culture 1850-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 123.

¹³²'The Rod that Spoils the Child,' pp. 106-108.

¹³³*Ibid.*, p. 110.

female influence is again employed as a method of restriction. Isa did not have a comprehensive education, receiving lessons ‘from time to time [...] but only when there was time left to be filled up,’ and this is aligned with her mother’s lack of care and attention.¹³⁴ Whilst Isa finds her ‘ignorance [...] a constant source of trouble,’ her mother considers it irrelevant, informing her daughter that “‘you have plenty of money and will marry soon. It’s stupid of you to talk so.’”¹³⁵ Ironically, it is the fact that Isa complains about her lack of education that makes her appear idiotic in her mother’s eyes. Here readers gain insight into traditional ideas of womanhood, where marriage is seen as the optimal female achievement and education is deemed unnecessary, but again Sylva shows that when women perpetuate stereotypes of female behaviour, it may land a young woman in dire straits.

When Isa moves in with her aunt, her limited education continues and Isa is at pains to conceal her ignorance. She receives tuition in English and French, but ‘no other lessons were thought of as Isa was grown up, and, naturally, supposed to have finished her education, and the girl herself did not dare to confess her ignorance.’¹³⁶ It is here that Isa becomes part of society, attending parties and falling in love with Herr von Rense. His betrayal eventually results in Isa marrying a bigamist. The close correlation of such events with her educational ignorance suggests that if Isa had been more aware of the world, her life would have followed a different path. Again, there is a clear link to Wollstonecraft’s polemic, where she argued that because women are ‘taught from their infancy that beauty is a woman’s sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and, roaming

¹³⁴‘A Stray Leaf,’ p. 30.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 31; p. 32.

¹³⁶Ibid., pp. 44-45.

around its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison.’¹³⁷ This sentiment was reworked a century later by Sarah Grand, who argued that men had ‘cramped our minds so that there was no room for reason in them, and then made merry at our want of logic.’¹³⁸ Through these critical perspectives we can see that Sylva is continuing to discuss an unresolved, topical issue – inequality and its effects on the female psyche.

Education, both intellectually and emotionally, would produce women better equipped to cope with the pressures of societal life, where passivity results in destruction. Submissive women are shown to be the victims of men, as well as members of their own sex, as is exemplified by Lia in ‘A Broken Statue.’ Here, as previously mentioned, Lia is destroyed by the woman who wishes to usurp her, Marina, as well as by Arnold, who casts her aside as both his muse and his fiancée. Lia is characterised in angelic terms from the outset. She is ‘fawn-like,’ with a quavering voice and long golden hair.¹³⁹ Yet this pure but timid exterior does not benefit her. Lia is a mere muse. She influences Arnold’s creativity, but passively, as a result of her beauty. She is objectified under the male gaze, but even this form of approbation cannot be maintained and she is cast aside in favour of her antithesis, the confident, seductive and determined Marina. Her angelic nature causes her undoing: unable or unwilling to fight back, she relinquishes her ties to Arnold and, in doing so, her desire to live. Her passive acceptance of his decision to break off their engagement is the catalyst in her destruction, hence it

¹³⁷Wollstonecraft, pp. 58-9.

¹³⁸Sarah Grand, ‘The New Aspect of the Woman Question,’ *North American Review*, March 1894, p. 272.

¹³⁹‘A Broken Statue,’ p. 236.

being so closely juxtaposed with the gush of blood spurting from her lips and her gradual transformation into a ‘living skeleton.’¹⁴⁰

Other than one act of emotionally-charged agency, accusing Marina of her murder, Lia retains this fatal passivity. She becomes ‘incapable of speech’ and dies ‘without a word of complaint.’¹⁴¹ Through Lia, Sylva is able to critique the tradition of angelic female invalids who are content to suffer in silence, as epitomised by Beth in Louisa May Alcott’s (1832-1888) *Little Women* (1868/1869). In contrast to Zimmerman, who argues that Sylva had ‘Vorliebe’ (‘fondness’) for the selfless woman, I argue that she is instead indicating the futility of such behaviour.¹⁴² Lia and Beth are eventually confined to their beds and their lack of physical movement or speech becomes a symbol of women trapped by their passivity. They have no effect on society and fade from recognition.

An extreme version of this idea is found in ‘A Funeral in the Carpathians’. Although Clarisse is the focus of the story, the irony is that she has been removed from it. She is dead before the narrative begins and buried within a few pages. Other than a few words, which are focalised through her husband Paul as he recounts their previous conversations, Clarisse has no voice at all. She is the epitome of selfless womanhood: her delicate form and ‘untiring devotion’ to the family leads her to fall ill and die.¹⁴³ Passivity is ingrained to such an extent that even though her death triggers the plot, she remains in the background. Similarly, Lia’s martyrdom does not bring any rewards, merely a slow and painful death in

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 244; p. 247.

¹⁴²Zimmerman, *Die dichtende Königin*, p. 83.

¹⁴³Carmen Sylva, ‘A Funeral in the Carpathians,’ in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*, p. 231.

the shadow of her rival, who spreads rumours about Lia to damage her reputation. Even at the end of the story, Arnold's only act of contrition is to send a statue for her grave, years after Lia died. Such women achieve nothing and suffer in vain. As such, Sylva indicates that their behaviour is not to be emulated.

Alba in 'The Witch's Stronghold' who, like Lia, is beautiful, 'white as snow' and golden-haired, meets a very similar fate.¹⁴⁴ Although these descriptions act as an expression of her grace and purity, her naiveté results in her being unable to comprehend the world, once she has escaped the clutches of her over-protective mother. She has been sheltered to the point of ignorance, uneducated in societal expectations and even basic vocabulary, turning to her lover, Porfirie, for a definition of 'proud'.¹⁴⁵ This virginal, unworldly 'doll' is Porfirie's ideal woman, yet Sylva indicates that she, like Lia and Clarisse, is too sweet to live.¹⁴⁶ Alba becomes disenchanted with a sheltered life in her mother's castle – hence her decision to leave and marry Porfirie – but this does not result in lasting change or emancipation. Instead, she continues to be dominated by Porfirie and his mother. Initially, they are her rescuers, but they soon disregard her beliefs and physically restrain her. She is in love with Porfirie, following him to her mother, Baba Coaja's, castle, but when she is too late to help him, she dies at his side. In this way, Sylva reworks the mantra that permeated 'The Rod the Spoils the Child' and applies it to adult women, reaffirming that women who are confined in their early lives will try to escape, but ultimately will be unable to do so. Their enforced ignorance, often as a result of the actions of older women, creates a vicious circle, whereby women like Alba and Lia are drawn to men who profess to love them,

¹⁴⁴ 'The Witch's Stronghold,' p. 104.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 112

¹⁴⁶ Wollstonecraft, p. 57

but who in practice degrade them. This situation can result in nothing but death and destruction. Change can only occur in stories like ‘A Gipsy’s Love Story,’ when women are given the intellectual tools with which to orchestrate change.

In depicting such meaningless lives, Sylva counteracts traditional discourse about the roles of women, subtly critiquing the women who have ingested these ideas to such a degree that they reinscribe patriarchal norms upon the next generation. She indicates that these ideas are antiquated and, although they appear to protect innocent adolescents, such treatment does more harm than good: Alba and Lia are doomed to die and Heidi undergoes severe psychological trauma. That Sylva destroys both extremes of stereotypical femininity – the naive and unworldly women die alongside their demonic antitheses – suggests that she advocated a middle ground, where women can achieve a greater degree of independence in some spheres, even if they return to tradition in others. This argument will be explored in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

The notion that the apparently ideal woman is too weak to survive in society is further developed with regard to the depiction of physical violence. Whilst male characters suffer violent deaths within the stories, it is the depiction of gendered violence – specifically male violence against women – that is evidence of the ‘private rod’ in nineteenth-century fiction and society. Such violence was concealed from public view and remained outside of legislative and cultural authority.¹⁴⁷ Many of Sylva’s female characters suffer at the hands of violent male counterparts. As I noted, there is the almost justifiable murder of the

¹⁴⁷Marlene Tromp, *The Private Rod* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 83.

dangerous siren, Marina, in 'A Broken Statue,' but less dangerous women receive similar treatment. Matthes, for example, becomes increasingly violent towards Froisi in 'Shaded Canvasses.' He shakes her, tries to hit her with his stick and holds onto her tightly as 'punishment.'¹⁴⁸ Florica in 'The Cripple' suffers in a similar fashion: Nicolai drags her to a chair and holds her in a 'merciless iron grip' in order to force her compliance.¹⁴⁹ Later, when she reaches the forest where her husband has orchestrated the murder, he envelops her with his mutilated arms, suffocating her screams and 'almost choking her.'¹⁵⁰ Even in 'Puiu,' an allegorical story about the formation of Romania, the eponymous female heroine is victimised by her 'brother' countries, who chain her and hold her 'in their painful iron grip.'¹⁵¹

Consistent abuse is also shown in 'A Pen and Ink Confession' where, almost from the beginning of their marriage, Augusta's husband Reinhold is physically and mentally abusive. His potential for violence is hinted at through Augusta's references to his 'wild passion' and this manifests itself in his later behaviour, angrily throwing plates at the servants and, in a pivotal scene, attempting to strangle their dinner guest, Herbert Krause.¹⁵² Mere sentences later, Reinhold attacks his wife:

I do not know rightly what happened next. I have an indistinct recollection of bells ringing, of Reinhold beside himself with fury. I think he struck me.

Then all of a sudden his rage turned to terror. He clutched at my dress till he tore it, fell on his knees,

¹⁴⁸'Shaded Canvasses,' p. 85.

¹⁴⁹'The Cripple,' p. 188.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹⁵¹Carmen Sylva, 'Puiu,' trans. by Helen Zimmern, *London Society*, January 1884, p. 71.

¹⁵²'A Pen and Ink Confession,' p. 130.

begging me to protect him and save him from the people
who were trying to capture him.¹⁵³

At this stage of the story, Augusta is pregnant with a child that, once born, is quickly revealed to be physically and mentally disabled. Given that the incident takes place shortly before Henny's birth, the implication is that Reinhold's violence is responsible for her condition. Reinhold falls to his knees, which implies that Augusta was on the floor too, thrown there by the force of his attack. This would also explain why she hears 'bells ringing' – damage to her head as a result of his hand striking her face as well as the impact of hitting the floor. Reinhold's violence, coupled with the intense strain on her body as a result of caring for him, has dire consequences for the submissive Augusta. It affects both her health and that of her unborn child. Here, even though it is not explicitly stated, we have the strongest indication from Sylva about the dangers of extreme passivity and the horrific effects it has on the women involved.

There is an important correlation between these depictions of violence: female infidelity is the underlying cause. Arnold, for example, discovers that it was Marina, not Lia, who had been Hubert's lover. Here, patriarchal violence is also shown to have defensive purposes: Marina must be destroyed in order to protect innocent women like Lia, who suffer when Marina is permitted to flourish. Matthes, brooding over his injuries, believes Frosi is having an affair with the man who accidentally shot him and in an almost identical vein, Nicolai decides that his wife Florica must have conspired with his superior officer to let him freeze to death. Augusta also suffers as a result of Reinhold's constant accusations of infidelity. These allegations form the justification for abuse. The constantly

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 148.

terrified Anca in 'A Roumanian Vendetta' is mistreated by Dragomir for the same reason. She rarely leaves their home, but is beaten when he 'had taken it into his head her eyes had strayed for a moment from him.'¹⁵⁴ As a result, readers can see Sylva's stories working within traditional discourses, whereby marital violence, 'elsewhere called "extreme aggravation" or "brutal violence," was frequently perceived as the natural outcome of a woman's behaviour, especially if her husband believed she had been unfaithful.'¹⁵⁵ By recognising that Sylva's female characters were debased or 'fallen', her nineteenth-century readers accepted violence as a justifiable punishment for unacceptable behaviour.

Zimmerman has also discussed the violence in Sylva's fiction and suggests that there is a discrepancy within her representations, connected to Romanian culture. She argues that 'während die deutsche Frau unter der Gewalttätigkeit des Mannes leidet und sich gedemütigt fühlt, betrachtet die rumanische Frau die Gewalttätigkeit des Ehemannes als Zeichen seiner Eifersucht und sie legitimiert diese als Liebesbeweis des Mannes' ('whilst the German woman suffers her husband's violence and feels humiliated, the Romanian wife considers the violence to be a sign of her husband's jealousy and she justifies this as a token of his love').¹⁵⁶ In contrast, I argue that closer inspection of the stories reveals a more subversive rendering of gendered violence. The irony of this ideology of infidelity and violence was not lost on Sylva, who noted that 'a woman is stoned for an action which a perfect gentleman may commit with impunity.'¹⁵⁷ As I noted with regard to 'The Cripple,' Florica's suicide is the outcome of Nicolai's

¹⁵⁴'A Roumanian Vendetta,' p. 49.

¹⁵⁵Tromp, p. 74.

¹⁵⁶Zimmerman, *Die dichtende Königin*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁷*Thoughts of a Queen*, p. 29.

violence. There is jealousy here, but no token of love. Instead, it is a desire for revenge against her for, as he sees it, treating him badly and having a prior relationship with another man. Here we have a Romanian setting and a vengeful husband, but the violence is in no way justified. Florica does not see it as a sign of love, or element of their courtship, but as abuse that she must escape.

Furthermore, none of the other female characters warrant the accusations they receive, thus undermining the patriarchal norms that punish them. Augusta's love for her husband might wane, hence her newly developed feelings for Herbert Krause, but she never acts on these feelings and reacts violently to the suggestion of legal separation. Even Marina, whose death seems almost justified as a result of her lies and malevolent associations, is faithful to Arnold during their marriage. Like Florica, she had another lover prior to her marriage. The violence these women suffer is a product of fiction, not fact, a result of their husbands' jealous, vengeful minds. This plot device is reminiscent of Anthony Trollope's (1815-1882) *He Knew He Was Right* (1869), in which Louis Trevelyan becomes convinced that his wife Emily is having an affair. His jealousy and accusations are unfounded and lead to the deterioration of their marriage, whereby 'she by her step, and gait, and every movement of her body showed to him that she was not his wife now in any sense,' as well as his own premature death.¹⁵⁸

Similarly, whilst it is not possible to ascertain whether Sylva was aware of the controversy surrounding Mona Caird's essay, 'Marriage,' the sentiments she expresses are in keeping with it. Comparing women's lives to those of chained dogs, Caird notes that the emphasis on chastity as a woman's chief virtue is a

¹⁵⁸ Anthony Trollope, *He Knew He was Right* (1869) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 57.

result of ‘man’s monopolizing jealousy, through the fact that he desired to “have and to hold” one woman as his exclusive property, and that he regarded any other man who would dispute his monopoly as the unforgiveable enemy.’¹⁵⁹ Sylva’s fiction reaffirms this view: the pressure on women to be faithful stems from male desire to control them and the fear that other men will try to take their ‘property’. Violence against women becomes a product of fear. Indiscretions are invented and women are attacked in order to mask male flaws.

Sylva adheres to a traditional representation of domestic violence on the surface of her stories, but is in fact subverting the notion that women deserved the violence they received, using, as Michael Wheeler suggests, plots ‘concerned with private lives, and particularly love lives, as vehicles for some kind of social message [...] domesticating large social issues in personal terms.’¹⁶⁰ Although Wheeler is discussing English social-problem fiction here, the sentiment seems particularly appropriate to Sylva’s work. Since the doubt and mistrust of the male aggressors is entirely unfounded and the women she depicts are victims of a male desire to injure in order to control, Sylva’s stories become part of the discourse of resistance that developed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, one that challenged prevailing ideological assumptions.

Another important link between these representations of domestic violence against women is that the aggression is rarely described in detail. This is in contrast to violence by men against other men. For example, Reinhold’s violence towards Herbert Krause focuses on the contrast in colour during the strangulation: Reinhold’s ‘white hands [...] clutched tightly round his [Herbert’s] neck till the

¹⁵⁹Caird, p. 193.

¹⁶⁰Michael Wheeler, *English Fiction of the Victorian Period* (Harlow: Longman Group Limited, 1985), p. 41.

blood rushed into his face.’¹⁶¹ As I have noted, Reinhold’s act of violence towards his wife is less explicit and partially dependent on the interpretations of the reader. The contrast between these attacks is indicative of Sylva’s adherence to a common depiction of domestic violence against women, where physical violence by a man towards another man can be described, but the equivalent against a woman can only be hinted at. She continues this pattern in her other stories. When the unnamed officer in ‘The Cripple,’ or Pârvu in ‘A Roumanian Vendetta’ are murdered, the descriptions are far more gruesome:

His [Dragomir’s] face was so pale and distorted with passion that for the moment [*sic*] they took him for a ghost. But with the cry, ‘I have you at last!’ he sprang on Pârvu, and stabbed him in the throat and eyes again and again, only withdrawing his dagger to plunge it in deeper still [...] he trampled on his prostrate foe, disembowelling him, and cutting off his nose and ears – each pause succeeded but by a more savage onslaught still – the murderer taking care through it all that not one of his deadly thrusts should reach the heart, lest it should curtail his victim’s agony.

When at last all was over, and the mangled body no longer gave signs of life, Dragomir, dripping with blood, turned to his sister with a fiendish grin.¹⁶²

Sylva even informs her readers that vultures later arrived to eat the dead man’s flesh, a macabre level of detail that does not extend to her engagement with violence against women. There may be a number of reasons for this apparent restraint. On an obvious level, since her female characters – with the exception of Marina – are not murdered, there is no opportunity for such descriptions. This lack of detail also symbolises the nature of the ‘private rod’: it occurs behind closed doors and, as a result, lengthy descriptions are kept under lock and key, even to those reading about fictionalised cases.

¹⁶¹ ‘A Pen and Ink Confession,’ p. 147.

¹⁶² ‘A Roumanian Vendetta,’ pp. 67-68.

The cultural context might also provide further explanation. Explicit depictions of violence against women were seen as more taboo than violence against men. In-depth descriptions of attacks on women were often perceived as too horrific for delicate female sensibilities. Many were fearful of the effects such fiction would have on the biologically inferior female brain.¹⁶³ This was cemented by scientific case studies, which asserted that men possessed a greater intellectual capacity than women, who were biologically ‘nearer to the child-type’ and thus limited to practical preoccupations.¹⁶⁴ If Sylva wanted to sell her work, she had to make it socially acceptable. She may not have been entirely successful in this respect, hence, as I noted in Chapter Three, reviewers debating the most appropriate audience, but there may have been an underlying impetus to maintain a level of propriety suitable for her middle-class readership.

However, some more graphic depictions of sexualised violence by men against women can be found in Sylva’s stories. ‘Carma, the Harp-Girl,’ a fairy tale about a beautiful girl drawn away from her village by a manipulative and dangerous prince, is a good example. When Carma refuses to marry him, the angry prince begins to ‘torment her,’ and this vague suggestion of abuse becomes more explicit when the local children arrive to return her to their village.¹⁶⁵ As Carma begs to be set free, the prince’s ‘rage knew no bounds and drawing his dagger he plunged it into Carma’s bosom, exclaiming: “There is your Carma!

¹⁶³ Among others, Charles Darwin had detailed women’s mental inferiority to men in *The Descent of Man* (London: John Murray, 1871).

¹⁶⁴ Havelock Ellis, ‘Man and Woman: A Study of Human Secondary Sexual Characters,’ (1894) in *The Victorian Age. An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, ed. by Josephine Guy, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 488. Havelock Ellis may refute the notion of female inferiority but, as these citations indicate, his work still reaffirms fundamental difference and the separate spheres ideology.

¹⁶⁵ Carmen Sylva, ‘Carma, the Harp-Girl,’ in *A Real Queen’s Fairy Book*, p. 38.

Take her then, since she will not stay with me.’”¹⁶⁶ The children frantically carry her back to the forest, but blood ‘burst forth in a purple stream’ and stained their handkerchiefs.¹⁶⁷ The dagger acts as a phallic weapon, an emblem of male dominance. Although it is removed and Carma recovers, she is never as content as she was before: ‘whenever she saw the mark the dagger had left, then she sighed softly to herself.’¹⁶⁸ There is an element of regret there, but more importantly, given the focus of so many of Sylva’s stories, it has little to do with marriage or love. Instead, it appears connected to the divine mission Carma received. Carma had ‘come into the world to make others happy,’ and whilst she achieves this in her village, her abilities do not extend to the world of the dominating powers: the adults, the monarchy and the men.¹⁶⁹ She can transform the objects of their dominion – she plants the dagger in the ground and it becomes a beautiful rose tree – but she cannot bring about long-lasting change.

Carma’s story again complicates traditional discourses surrounding domestic violence, since she, more obviously than the female characters previously mentioned, is undeserving of the violence she suffers. There is not even a hint of infidelity with which to tarnish her name. This challenges the ideologically accepted notion that a woman’s moral failings cause violence: should we assume that Carma has failed in her moral duty because she refuses to marry a man who tricked her, disregarded her wishes and stabbed her in a fit of pique? That seems too much of a stretch for nineteenth-century and modern readers alike. Unlike the women in other violent situations, Carma does not

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 43-44.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 22.

escape through extreme measures such as suicide, but she does have to suffer. She differs further from the other female protagonists because she has the strength to remain aloof from a traditional role as wife and mother, rejecting the Prince's apology and his entreaties for her to return as his bride: "“You stabbed me for love and you deceived me with your falsehoods, never will I go with you again!”¹⁷⁰ This rejection is most likely connected to the magical element of the story. Although in this instance, Sylva is deviating from the fairy tale convention concerning marriage as the 'happy ever after' state, the genre provides the opportunity for a magical recovery and an escape from suffering – something the majority of Sylva's women are denied in her more realistic stories. So the good are rewarded and Carma, who possesses the preterhuman powers of beauty and song, is one of the best. Yet she still cannot permanently change society.

The violence in 'A Roumanian Vendetta' also has a sexual undercurrent, but is very different from Carma's story. It is not only more graphic, but has more disturbing consequences for all involved. The behaviour of the principal protagonist, Sanda, problematises gender stereotypes from the outset. She is characterised by her masculine energy and strength, possessing the same dark eyes and hair as her brother, Dragomir. Moreover, her 'hasty temper, her sharp tongue, and the strength of her shapely arm – that arm that had once lifted a wagon right out of the furrow in which it stuck,' have made her infamous in the village.¹⁷¹ It is precisely these 'non-feminine' qualities that cause her undoing. Her insolent response to Pârvu's accusations – he accuses her and Dragomir of skinning his cow alive – causes him to vow revenge. In keeping with the

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁷¹'A Roumanian Vendetta,' p. 26.

treatment of unfaithful women, Sanda's disrespect and break from traditional female obsequiousness acts as justification for the violence to come.

Pârvu achieves his revenge in an altercation charged with sexual violence. His actions are premeditated, something which does not feature obviously in the other stories. He creeps up on Sanda 'noiselessly [...] stealthily as a huntsman in pursuit of game,' deals her a 'sharp blow in the bend of the knee,' and kneels on her back to hold her down.¹⁷² Like the attack on Carma, Pârvu uses a knife in his assault, but rather than stabbing Sanda, he cuts off her hair and beats her with the braids, informing her that 'you might as well have lost your honour as your hair' – a link to female virtue, so prized within nineteenth-century society.¹⁷³ By his own admission, Pârvu has violated Sanda, even using her own femininity as a weapon against her to administer 'sharp, stinging cuts' to her face.¹⁷⁴ He enacts a symbolic rape. This sexual violence, more explicit than that pertaining to Carma, has a similarly patriarchal undertone, connecting with Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver's argument that 'rape and the threat of rape are a major force in the subjugation of women.'¹⁷⁵ Pârvu achieves his vengeance by proving his physical power over Sanda, dominating and destroying her body with his own. Sylva has partially deflected the sexual violence in the story – it is not a literal act of rape, but a symbolic one – but in her decision to include language stained with sexual connotations, she returns to the issue of patriarchal dominance and the ways in which it is enacted upon the female body in order to gain mastery.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁷³Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁷⁵Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver 'Introduction: Rereading Rape,' in *Rape and Representation*, ed. by Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 1.

This behaviour parallels the rape scene in *Edleen Vaughan*. Having carried Kathleen to a cave, thrown her to the ground and held her there with his knee, Tom asks her whether she was responsible for the fire at Temorah's cottage. The arson attack had killed Temorah's newborn baby, which Tom had fathered. As the lying Kathleen protests her innocence, Tom's tone becomes threatening: "if fear cannot extort the truth from you, love will," hissed Tom, and then Kathleen knew that she was lost.¹⁷⁶ As this is a physical rather than a symbolic rape, Sylva conceals it behind layers of suggestion and omission, ironically juxtaposing 'love' with the obvious anger in Tom's 'hiss' to indicate that this emotion is a euphemism for the sexual violence that is revealed a few pages later. The chapter swiftly focuses on another character, returning to Kathleen only after the act has been completed. Sylva becomes part of 'the paradigm of rape and silencing,' that can be seen in Thomas Hardy's (1840-1928) *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891).¹⁷⁷ Alec's rape of Tess is configured in similarly intangible terms, such as the oblique reference to 'sobbing one night last year in The Chase.'¹⁷⁸

The imagery Sylva evokes after the event, however, clearly indicates a non-consensual sexual assault: Kathleen lies 'like a broken, torn, and trampled flower, from which all life and fragrance have passed, of which no one will know henceforward how fair and proud a flower it has been [...] her dishevelled black hair was grey with dust.'¹⁷⁹ The dust in her hair is evidence of a struggle, whilst the metaphor of a flower indicates her fragility and femininity – a popular

¹⁷⁶Carmen Sylva, *Edleen Vaughan: or Paths of Peril* (London: F.V. White & Co., 1892), 3 vols, II, p. 210.

¹⁷⁷Higgins and Silver, p. 5.

¹⁷⁸Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman* (1891), ed. by Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 103.

¹⁷⁹*Edleen Vaughan*, II, p. 220.

association in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European culture.¹⁸⁰ Given the theories of flower-symbolism that Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) would later develop, arguing that ‘sexual flower-symbolism [...] symbolises the human sexual organs by flowers,’ we can push the metaphor further to consider what he termed the ‘violence of defloration’ and how that is implicit in Sylva’s description.¹⁸¹ The biological function of a flower is to facilitate fertilisation and reproduction and referring to Kathleen as a broken flower indicates that she has lost her virginity in a violent manner. This description of her as ‘broken’ also leads readers to infer that she may now be useless in reproductive terms, having been spoilt for any future husband by Tom’s actions. She is initially too weak to move and when she eventually stands, she ‘crept along the rocks’ to the river, where she attempts suicide.¹⁸² The consequences of rape, rather than the event itself, are described in Sylva’s novel, but by engaging with such taboo subjects, Sylva is traversing the boundaries of Victorian decorum and highlighting the psychological damage that stems from sexual violence.

It is in her short story, rather than her novel, that Sylva can be explicit, but also suggestive: using phallic symbols alongside violent lexical choices to unsettle her readers. Yet she also qualifies the sensationalism of the scene by reducing the intensity of the act: Pârvu does not force himself on Sanda sexually, but restrains himself to cutting her hair. In doing so, Sylva taps into the nineteenth-century preoccupation with hair – specifically female hair – and its symbolic value. Critics such as Elizabeth G. Gitter argue that ‘golden’ hair was seen as something sacred

¹⁸⁰Beverly Seaton, *The Language of Flowers. A History* (Virginia: The University of Virginia Press, 1995), p. 17.

¹⁸¹Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), ed. by Stephen Wilson (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997), p. 248.

¹⁸²*Edleen Vaughan*, II, p. 223.

and precious.¹⁸³ In Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-2), for example, Rosamond Vincy's 'hair of infantine fairness,' makes her the most sought-after woman in town, in contrast to the sensible Mary Garth, whose 'curly dark hair was rough and stubborn.'¹⁸⁴ Sylva, however, extends this symbolism to encompass Sanda's dark hair, showing the loss to be equally life-changing in terms of female strength and power. If hair is a metaphor of femininity and purity, Sanda's loss is connected to the symbolic rape: her honour is destroyed along with her hair.

After the attack, Sanda exhibits an initial degree of ambivalence about her hairstyle:

She experienced an almost pleasurable sensation in being able to shake out her locks as a young colt shakes its mane. It was as if she had been turned into a boy, as if she could venture to be all the more wild and daring now that she was no longer reminded of her womanhood by the long heavy tresses.¹⁸⁵

Nonetheless, she remains preoccupied with the shorn-off braids, wishing she had taken them from Pârvu. In describing her new appearance in terms of untidiness, the 'short thick meshes of hair which fell in disorder over her eyes,' Sanda does not embrace the freedom she initially experienced.¹⁸⁶ Instead, she sees her new appearance in traditional terms, whereby disordered hair was a sign of 'deficiency in her womanliness.'¹⁸⁷

There is an added level of complexity to the symbolism underpinning Sanda's hair. Being dark like her brother's, it is, as I noted, connected to her

¹⁸³Elisabeth G. Gitter, 'The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination,' *PMLA*, 99 (October 1984), 936.

¹⁸⁴George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871-2) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 104.

¹⁸⁵'A Roumanian Vendetta,' p. 39.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁸⁷Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), p. 148.

masculine power. Shearing off the hair thus removes her dangerous darkness to some degree. Ironically, the loss of her long hair makes her more stereotypically feminine: she cries instead of seeking revenge and feels humiliated, where she was once proud. Cutting off the hair also coincides with Sanda falling in love with Părvu. She cannot contemplate revenge against him and decides that this ‘was doubtless an evil spell cast over her by her own hair, that would give him power over her as long as it remained in his possession.’¹⁸⁸ Even without seeing him, she feels sure that he has kept it. The hair becomes a talisman and a symbol of the power that she has lost, reworking the Biblical story of Samson and Delilah. But where Delilah betrayed Samson and survived, Părvu’s treatment of Sanda proves fatal – Sanda is mad, but she lives on after the male protagonists have been murdered.

The power Sanda attributes to her hair could also be read in Grecian terms, as ‘Medusan hair’ which threatens patriarchal structures: her hair was the source of her strength, which allowed her to fight back, albeit verbally, against Părvu.¹⁸⁹ This is furthered by descriptions of Părvu and the hair. After he cuts it, he notes that ‘magnificent black tresses [...] had untwisted in his grasp,’ and he quickly hides them in his clothing.¹⁹⁰ As he takes them home, the hair is personified: ‘their youthful grace and charm [...] twine themselves,’ around his heart.¹⁹¹ The previously ‘respectable’ hair has become at once liberated and snake-like – holding his heart in its power. Sanda’s hair becomes an explicit metaphor for female sexuality. Once he reaches his home, Părvu empties a wooden chest and

¹⁸⁸ ‘A Roumanian Vendetta,’ p. 42.

¹⁸⁹ Ofek, p. 16.

¹⁹⁰ ‘A Roumanian Vendetta,’ p. 36.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

locks the hair inside, carrying the key with him – something he had never done before. He later admits to Sanda that her hair ‘bewitched’ him.¹⁹² Even when unattached to Sanda, the hair remains powerful and precious. Părvu may revere this part of her, but it was stolen and not freely given, which perhaps explains the murderous conclusion of the story – love cannot last when it has such violent beginnings. A traditional lover’s keepsake is a lock of hair, but Părvu has two long plaits that he forcibly cut from Sanda’s head. His actions are thus a way of exerting dominance and control and he keeps the hair as a perverse souvenir.

Violently cutting off her hair, then, is a way of reaffirming the patriarchal norm and to a certain extent this is successful. Părvu informs Sanda that he has gained ‘mastery’ over her, but his behaviour is not as justified as the treatment of Marina in ‘A Broken Statue.’¹⁹³ The traumatic descriptions indicate not only societal double-standards, but also the way in which female identity and behaviour are constructed by patriarchal society. The violence of his behaviour is focalised through Sanda as she relives the assault, remembering the ‘relentless grasp that had pinioned her [...] the iron fingers that had torn down her braids [...] Better, a thousand times better be dead than live on, shamed and humiliated thus.’¹⁹⁴ The aggressive verbs used here place Sanda in the role of victim, abused by a merciless torturer. Părvu is termed ‘the robber, the thief,’ which reaffirms the argument that something more valuable than hair has been stolen from her.¹⁹⁵ He has taken her virtue and has victimised her to the extent that, like Kathleen, Sanda does not think she can go on living.

¹⁹²Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 40.

Gitter argues that ‘the more abundant the hair, the more potent the sexual invitation implied by its display, for folk, literary, and psychoanalytic traditions agree that the luxuriance of the hair is an index of vigorous sexuality, even of wantonness.’¹⁹⁶ At home, Sanda’s hair is described as ‘heavy masses of black hair, that falls in dishevelled tresses down her back.’¹⁹⁷ This is her ‘private hair’ – her hair in the domestic sphere – which is loose but socially acceptable. Galia Ofek has noted that Victorian women accepted that ‘hair should not be dishevelled, but rather display the same order, neatness and cultivation which were required of them. Their “reading” of their own bodies was conditioned by the discursive environment in which their hair was constructed as a signifier, encoding and creating meaning,’ and Sanda adheres to these norms, having her hair braided and coiled around her head when she is in public.¹⁹⁸ She also wears a headscarf when she comes to the village and confronts Părvu. This reaffirms that his treatment was unjustified: Sanda, although verbally indignant, is not ‘wantonly’ displaying herself. She is in no way inviting the sexual transgressions that Gitter sees as analogous to such behaviour. As such, she has been transformed into a ‘fallen woman’ not by her own hand, but by patriarchal society. Positions of power are established between Părvu and Sanda through Sylva’s descriptions of her hair, yet the fear and abuse associated with Părvu does not indicate an authorised, acceptable exercising of power. Instead, the imagery of rape unsettles readers, instilling in them the sense that Sanda has not warranted such violent treatment.

¹⁹⁶Gitter, 938.

¹⁹⁷‘A Roumanian Vendetta,’ p. 11.

¹⁹⁸Ofek, p. 34.

With this in mind, it seems even more disturbing that Sanda develops feelings for her attacker – which he reciprocates – soon after suffering so violently at his hands. This is a masochistic emotion that modern readers might identify as a form of Stockholm syndrome. Although this much-debated theory was coined in 1973 to describe the psychological phenomenon of traumatic bonding between a victim and his/her abuser, Sylva's depiction of Sanda does conform to current definitions. Margi Laird McCue, for example, notes four key conditions that lead to the development of Stockholm Syndrome: 'the abuser threatens the woman's survival; the woman cannot escape, or at least thinks she cannot; the woman becomes isolated from others; and the abuser shows some kindness.'¹⁹⁹ We can map these features onto Sylva's story: Sanda feels threatened by Pârvu and remembers 'the touch of the cold steel upon her neck – the moment of horrible expectation of death.'²⁰⁰ Directly after the attack, Pârvu informs her that she 'must hide at home,' and Sanda herself recognises that fact, returning only under cover of darkness to recover the goods she left in the forest.²⁰¹ Finally, Pârvu not only visits Sanda at her home, where he begs her forgiveness and praises her beauty, but he also protects her from the villagers' taunts. These actions are directly correlated with a romantic relationship. Unlike other female characters such as Florica and Augusta, where love was present prior to violence, or Puiu, Carma and Kathleen, where physical violence leads to mistrust and escape, Sanda's story suggests that violence leads to love. This might adhere to Zimmerman's argument concerning, as I noted, violence as a 'love token', were it not for the ending of the

¹⁹⁹Margi Laird McCue, *Domestic Violence: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2008), p. 20.

²⁰⁰'A Roumanian Vendetta,' p. 40.

²⁰¹*Ibid.*, p. 35.

story. Given the murder and madness Sylva depicts, it seems more likely that this is again connected to her engagement with the psychological effects of violence: trauma both during and after such events can bring nothing but destruction.

The parallels between Sanda's behaviour and Stockholm Syndrome continue in terms of psychological after-effects. These include displaced rage against others (instead of the abuser), the loss of the victim's sense of self and what McCue terms 'the push-pull dynamic, in which the impulse is to push the man away and pull him towards her at the same time.'²⁰² Once Sanda has fallen for Pârvu, she empathises with him and finds her brother's behaviour too extreme. Later, when Pârvu has been murdered, Sanda attacks her brother, using all of her strength to push him over the cliff. There may be an element of the 'push-pull dynamic' here, since Sanda is horrified by her lover's murder but makes no effort to save him, merely watching her brother's actions 'as if chained to the spot.'²⁰³ She loves Pârvu, but her stillness suggests that she also exhibits a subconscious desire for revenge. Once he is dead, Sanda 'pulls' Pârvu back to her by avenging him – murdering her own brother. Sanda is one of the only characters in Sylva's short stories to be physically violent to others, rather than simply the victim of men, with her strength emphasised from the beginning of the story. Ironically, however, the strength that leads her to cast Dragomir over the cliff is fuelled by her grief and love – emotions closely aligned with female sensibilities.

The loss of self that McCue mentions could be reflected in Sanda's madness, which occurs directly after the murders. The shock and trauma she experienced causes disturbances in her mind and she no longer has a grasp on

²⁰²Laird McCue, p. 20.

²⁰³'A Roumanian Vendetta,' p. 67.

reality. The Sanda from the beginning of the story is not the character that readers are left with and Sylva returns to the common trope of women who are destroyed mentally and/or physically by violent men. Sanda survives her ordeal, but at a price. Sylva is not necessarily anticipating Stockholm Syndrome, but rather engaging with the psychological effects of victimisation in a way that provides insight into contemporary attitudes to rape and the violation of women. Sylva's response is not a critique of every male in her society, but the sadistic few who attempt to physically dominate and destroy women's bodies for their own benefit. In highlighting the catastrophic consequences of such actions, Sylva provides a stark warning to readers.

In this way, Sylva appears to be presenting the emotional inferiority of the male sex, who cannot comprehend the complexities of the women they love, marry or simply encounter. As such, her work adheres to Valerie Sanders's argument that the Victorian marriage plot, even in the writing of apparently antifeminist writers such as Margaret Oliphant, could become a 'troubled site of struggle, a place where the meaning of marriage is repeatedly contested [...]'. Moreover, their image of marriage becomes progressively more caricatured at the husband's expense, revealing a surprisingly strong undercurrent of contempt for men.²⁰⁴ In Sylva's fiction, awareness and understanding often come too late for the male characters, usually after they have mentally or physically abused their wives – a sentiment Sylva also succinctly expressed through one of her aphorisms: 'men study a woman as they study the barometer; but they do not

²⁰⁴Valerie Sanders, 'Marriage and the antifeminist woman novelist,' in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, p. 25.

understand till the day afterwards.’²⁰⁵ Matthes in ‘Shaded Canvasses,’ for example, angry about his own situation and too proud to ask for help, does not realise the effect his behaviour has on his wife until he is told by the priest. This conversation brings about the resolution in their story, but it occurs between two men, not between husband and wife.

Similarly, Nicolai realises after Florica’s death that he was wrong to be suspicious and goad her into suicide. Arnold, too, who was inconsiderate of Lia’s feelings and believed rumours of her infidelity, only comprehends the extent of Marina’s manipulation after Lia’s death, realising how he mistreated the innocent girl through his inability to ‘distinguish between true and feigned feeling and expression.’²⁰⁶ The implication is that these men do not always deserve the women in their lives, although paradoxically, the women must suffer or die before the male epiphany will occur.

4.3. The ‘grey area’ in the marriage plot.

In Germany, as in Britain, early feminist debate called for improvements to women’s status, but also ‘glorified motherhood as the basis of women’s claim to dignity, equality, or a widened sphere of action in both public and private spheres.’²⁰⁷ Even as women advocated change, they would often distance themselves from association with more radical opinions or behaviour in order to stress the respectability of their movement. Women’s writing and societal

²⁰⁵ *Thoughts of a Queen*, p. 32.

²⁰⁶ ‘A Broken Statue,’ p. 254.

²⁰⁷ Ann Taylor Allen, ‘Feminism and Motherhood in Germany and in International Perspective 1800-1914,’ in *Gender and Germanness. Cultural Productions of Nation*, ed. by Patricia Herminhouse and Magda Mueller (Providence; Oxford: Berghan Books, 1997), p. 113

constructions of the woman's role thus become less black and white than previously recognised.

The development of the New Woman stimulated serious debate about the role of women in the 1890s, more than in any other decade of the nineteenth century, without reaching a finite conclusion. As Ann Ardis has highlighted, much of the contemporary discussion could be seen as contradictory, characterised by what she has termed 'boomerang plots,' which 'catapult their rebellious heroines back into conventionality or show the next generation's backlash against their mother's feminism.'²⁰⁸ The passive Angel in the House was now joined by the independently-minded New Woman, but there was also a third woman, who might be termed the New Angel. She recognised her maternal duties, but also encouraged social change. The boomerang plots Ardis describes, pushing forward in some ways, but propelled back to tradition in others, allow this New Angel to exist.

This 'grey area' is found across Sylva's fiction. That both extremes can coexist in her work indicates a blurring of gender boundaries and the melding of the traditional with the deviant. Sylva's writing is not one-sided, in favour either of tradition or of new, radical ideas, but is a combination of both. There are some characters, as previously noted, with whom the reader feels little sympathy. Marina, for example, is the villain of 'A Broken Statue.' Others, however, are more ambiguous. By layering the progressive on top of the traditional, Sylva unsettles the image of womanhood, destabilising the boundaries not only between 'good' and 'bad' female behaviour, but also between stereotypes of masculinity

²⁰⁸ Ardis, p. 190.

and femininity. As the following section will explore, there are elements of gender equality woven into the stories: men and women can be equally responsible for the problems in marriage and for solving them. Furthermore, both male and female characters can be punished in equal measures for their transgressions.

A good example of this amalgamation of boundary breaking and almost simultaneous affirmation of tradition can be found in 'Nine Days,' published in *Belgravia* in November 1889. Here, Sylva again explores the representation of adultery, loveless marriages, madness, suicide and infanticide after a woman and her husband are bitten by a rabid dog in a Romanian town. Whilst reaffirming the dangers of exotic foreign countries for British readers, as well as the power of nature to heal and calm the troubled souls after they travel to Vienna to await their fate, Sylva provides an ironic twist: the impending death brings the characters back to life. The narrator, Anna, hints in the initial stages of the story that she and her husband possess little more than a marriage of convenience, remarking that 'years had passed since the time we had lived together in harmony of thought and feeling; all was over between us.'²⁰⁹ After many hooks and hints, she reveals the cause of this marital strife:

Since the time I discovered he was unfaithful to me I had never said a kind word to him, or tried to brighten his hard life. I took all my pleasures and enjoyment with others, at first to show him I did not care and afterwards because it amused me. Yes, I had liked them all – all the men who had paid me attentions, especially the Captain last season; but now Death had cast his shadow over me, and at this thought I forgot everything again except him, my husband, and my child.

Would I now have the courage to go to Louis, and say, 'I have never ceased loving you; I forgave your

²⁰⁹Carmen Sylva, 'Nine Days,' *Belgravia*, November 1889, p. 44.

unfaithfulness long ago; it was I who was to blame for it,
not you, I was no good wife to you?’²¹⁰

This passage emphasises that there is mutual responsibility for the breakdown of the marriage. It also indicates Anna’s complicated relationship with the Angel in the House ideology. Louis was the first to be unfaithful, which Anna sees as a justification, or at least an explanation, for her actions. The admission that she has intentionally relinquished her wifely duties and actively taken ‘pleasure’ in the arms of other men aligns her with the dangerous female demon, rather than the angel. Yet her recognition that she now only thinks of her family, coupled with the unexplained notion that she was responsible for her husband’s adultery, returns her to the role of passive, nurturing wife and mother. Her admission of responsibility, however, is confined to Anna, the reader and the unnamed ‘you’ that she addresses.

As the story progresses, Louis and Anna’s shared experience – the fatal dog bite – causes them to develop as a couple. The bite accomplishes something that neither Anna nor Louis could manage themselves: they overcome their marital issues and rekindle their love, becoming increasingly affectionate with each other as the nine days – apparently the amount of time needed for rabies to claim a victim – pass. Anna realises she could never kill her child, a murder she was initially contemplating upon hearing the fatal news, since it is now recognised as something to preserve. Although Anna can be said to return to the role of domestic angel by the end of the story, having ‘remained brave so as not to make his [Louis’s] heart still heavier,’ the story ends with mutual appreciation and

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 46.

redemption, albeit tinged with the knowledge of their impending deaths.²¹¹ As with the other stories that are structured around a central conflict and its eventual resolution, Sylva again indicates that a violent tragedy can be transformed into positive change within a marriage. This again draws parallels with E. Nesbit's adult fiction, specifically her short story 'Coals of Fire,' which will be discussed in the following chapter in more detail.

Similarly, the female characters who experience domestic violence often struggle to completely conform to the Angel in the House role. As they diverge from tradition, so do their male counterparts. The misplaced judgement of the men causes violent outbursts, but an element of divine justice also enters the narratives, resulting in them also receiving a punishment. This primarily occurs through illness or physical deterioration. The traditional image of the omnipotent patriarch is problematised here: Matthes is physically disfigured and Reinhold suffers a mental and physical breakdown, to the extent that he must be forcibly incarcerated in an asylum. Dangerous men, despite their societal dominance, are not exempt from justice in Sylva's stories and her balanced treatment of flawed characters of both genders is made most obvious in 'Shaded Canvases', 'A Pen and Ink Confession' and 'Nine Days'.

In these stories, redeemable characters are allowed to change and survive. Unlike Dragomir and Nicolai – violent men whose murderous impulses result in their own destruction – Matthes, Reinhold and Louis repent. As a result, they achieve some form of positive resolution, albeit with physical reminders of their ugly pasts. Augusta and Reinhold have prematurely aged, with greying hair

²¹¹Ibid., p. 55.

symbolising the horrific experience they have undergone – a trope Sylva also employed with regard to Arnold in ‘A Broken Statue’. She wrote that ‘white hair is the foam which covers the sea after a tempest,’ and maps this idea onto her short fiction by depicting stormy lives and the repercussions of dangerous behaviour.²¹² These identical punishments indicate that all of the characters have changed over the course of the narratives: Frosi and Matthes have overcome their vanity and pride, Reinhold has subdued his jealous outbursts and Augusta has rediscovered her strength and affection. This is, in part, a didactic message that even those with outwardly perfect outer shells are inwardly flawed. It also calls for a middle ground, whereby women, like men, can go beyond the one-dimensional ideological assumptions about gender. As Craciun argued with regard to Charlotte Dacre, her texts ‘instruct women readers not only that women’s sexual desires are capable of destroying both self and others, a conventional and often misogynist concept, but that the naturally asexual and domestic woman held up as the alternative ideal is as unnatural as her “degenerate” double.’²¹³ Unlike Dacre, who exemplifies this argument by destroying all of her female characters in *Zofloya*, some of Sylva’s women survive. These characters are neither angels nor demons, but a more ambiguous mix.

All of the gendered violence discussed in this chapter occurs in a domestic setting and the emphasis placed upon the problems within marriage is a more radical aspect of Sylva’s oeuvre, which deviates from the traditional view of marriage as an ideal state. Yet within her depiction of constrictive marriages, women can only escape their confines in limited and extremely negative ways,

²¹²*Thoughts of a Queen*, p. 73.

²¹³Craciun, p. 134.

reaffirming her ambiguous rendering of gender debates. Sylva's women have four options open to them: separate by legal means, have an affair, lose their minds, or commit suicide. All of these options involve a sin of some kind, against their husbands or against God. Their angelic reputations are fatally tarnished and these methods do not guarantee success, due to their negative associations. Legal separation, for example, does not appear to be an option, as Sylva's women either reject it themselves or are persuaded to remain with their husbands. The fictional madwoman may survive her ordeal, becoming a sensational trope of 'subversive protest against the limitations in women's lives,' yet the simple fact that these women have lost their sanity and thus their sense of self indicates that whilst society has caused women to attempt small rebellions, they cannot so do rationally.²¹⁴

The alternative to escape is to remain within an abusive situation, as Anca does in 'A Roumanian Vendetta,' believing that Dragomir's physical violence is 'perfectly natural and justifiable.'²¹⁵ Passivity makes her a perpetual victim and her husband makes no effort to change his murderous ways. As she dies alongside her child at the end of the story, Sylva reminds her readers of the dangers of adhering to all patriarchal norms of female behaviour. This indicates that Sylva is partially conforming to 'canonical accounts,' which documented women's resignation to violence: women not only deserved the violence they experienced, but endured it because that they saw no alternative.²¹⁶ However, as I have noted, women such as Frosi, Augusta and Anna remain in their unhappy marriages, but

²¹⁴Tromp, p. 215.

²¹⁵'A Roumanian Vendetta,' p. 49.

²¹⁶Tromp, p. 8.

prosper. This is because, unlike Anca's story, improvements are made by both the husbands and the wives. Mutual change brings positive resolution.

Sylva thus presents a conflicted relationship, whereby marriage can be both the ideal state and a site of conflict. Such ambiguity implies that if it is not possible to achieve some semblance of equality, then it is preferable to remain unmarried. Although this is never explicitly stated by Sylva, this argument is supported by her coming-of-age narratives and is in keeping with the rise of the 'bachelor girl' in 1890s fiction, which, as Emma Liggins has argued, sought to emphasise the 'desirability of the spinster's lot.'²¹⁷ In 'A Roumanian Vendetta' and 'Red Leaves,' Sylva uses poetry written by her female characters to communicate this message to her readers. Anca's poem indicates the negative outcome of marriage:

Green leaf of the willow tree!
Life is dark and drear to me!
Ere I left my mother's side –
Setting forth the stranger's bride –
Careless was I, blithe and gay,
Laughed and sang the livelong day!
Worn and weary, racked with fears,
Smiles have now given place to tears!
Sad and lonely here I pine;
Hear me, help me, Mother mine!
Would I ne'er had gone from thee!
What may life still bring for me?
Green leaf of the willow tree!²¹⁸

Her emotions have changed from youthful happiness to lonely tears, reminiscent of Felicia Hemans's 'The Bride of the Greek Isle' (1828), who weeps to leave her

²¹⁷Emma Liggins, 'Having a Good Time Single? The Bachelor Girl in 1890s New Woman Fiction,' in *Writing Women of the fin-de-siècle. Authors of Change*, ed. by Adrienne E. Gavin and Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 98.

²¹⁸'A Roumanian Vendetta,' p. 29.

‘sunny childhood’ and the ‘holy place of rest’ at her mother’s side.²¹⁹ Anca’s admission that she was ‘careless’ suggests that marriage should not be entered into hastily, without due care and attention. She bitterly regrets this foolishness and wishes she had stayed in the family home.

Premature death, regret and a longing to be free of marital constraints are also a part of Yutta’s song, which was not translated upon its initial publication:

Ich war so stark und frei, So wild wie Hirsch und Rehe, Nun wo ich bin und stehe Ist alle Lust vorbei.	I was so strong and free, Wild as the stag and the doe, But now where I am and where I stand, All pleasure is gone.
[...]	[...]
O schone Yugendzeit! [<i>sic</i>] Wie bist du so vergangen! Ich denke voll verlangen! Noch gestern war ich Maid!	O wondrous youth! How you have passed! I long for it! I was a maiden only yesterday!
Ich war so stolz so frei Nun muss ich dienen, dienen! Die Sonne hat geschienen, Die Frühling ging vorbei. ²²⁰	I was so proud, so free Now I must serve, serve! The sun has stopped shining, Spring is over.

(My translation)

Marriage is a trial and the poem Yutta produces is evidence to this effect. By comparing herself to wild animals, she highlights the freedom that has now been taken away from her. The sun has set on her liberty and she exists only to serve. Any love she might have had for her husband also disappears as a result. Although Helen Wolff did not translate this poem, the parallels between Yutta and Anca’s songs are significant. Both women realise that they have been stifled by marriage and that their unions have only resulted in unhappiness. Again, Sylva’s aphorisms succinctly describe the fatal outcome: ‘an unhappy woman is a flower

²¹⁹Felicia Hemans, ‘The Bride of the Greek Isle,’ in *Records of Women* (1828), p. 24; p. 25.

²²⁰‘Red leaves,’ pp. 204-5.

exposed to the north wind: she remains long in the bud, and when she should be blossoming, fades.'²²¹ Both Anca and Yutta remain faithful to their husbands, but deprive themselves of life.

With this in mind, Isa in 'A Stray Leaf' holds a unique position across all of Sylva's stories, managing to walk the line between angel and demon. Upon discovering her mother's shameful past, she avoids comparisons with her at all costs, turning away from Herr von Rense and the chance to become his mistress. Although she is not entirely successful in this respect – society continues to denounce her as a wily seductress – the dramatic irony employed by Sylva reveals the honourable motives that undercut Isa's actions. Her marriage to Herr von Rune, for example, is not, as society sees it, the act of a desperate woman, but of one who is trying to help her brother financially. In leaving that same man at the end of the story, she adheres to society's expectations of her, wryly noting that they will gossip about her departure, but again, she does so to benefit others. She has discovered that her husband is a bigamist, with a wife and children living elsewhere and so to protect them from the suffering that she and Wolfgang experienced, Isa relinquishes her ties and leaves her home to join her brother. She realises that she will sacrifice her reputation, but refuses to behave in a manner which could equate her with her mother. As a result, Isa determines her own fate and moral wellbeing – in her own eyes, if no one else's.

If Isa's behaviour is viewed in terms of self-sacrifice, she becomes one of the 'incarnations of victimized [*sic*] purity,' that Sally Mitchell has described.²²² Yet Isa is also protecting her own interests. She will not sacrifice her own soul to

²²¹*Thoughts of a Queen*, p. 31.

²²²Sally Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel. Chastity, Class, and Women's Reading 1835-1880* (Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981), p. 124.

become a ‘ruined’ woman, or one who ruins the lives of others. Unlike Lia and Edith, the quintessential sacrificial lambs, Isa leaves on her own terms. She is one of Sylva’s only female protagonists to actively pursue her future and her further experiences, developing an awareness of herself and the world as a result of abandoning her marriage. The nature of this marriage, however, may explain why Isa is permitted to break boundaries: it is not only degrading to her, but it is a sham, since her ‘husband’ is already married. The other female protagonists, caught up in lawful and legitimate marriages, must either resign themselves to their fate and hope for improvements, or seek their own destruction. Isa’s ambiguous status and the grey areas in her narrative allow her to transgress traditional boundaries to become the New Angel – a woman who helps herself, as well as others.

This chapter has shown that Carmen Sylva was preoccupied with the rights and wrongs of women throughout her literary career. She portrayed the dangers surrounding the so-called demonic woman, whose manipulation and unnatural strength lead her to be forcibly ejected from a narrative in order to achieve a positive resolution. She also depicted success for women as stemming from adherence to patriarchal norms, be that in terms of remaining with their husbands, focusing their energy on their role as carer, or even dying in socially appropriate ways – that is, sacrificing themselves rather than inconveniencing others. However, she also engaged with the inequality at the heart of nineteenth-century society, depicting the threats posed by men to women’s safety as well as their intellectual development. In her depictions of violence, as well as with

female mental illness, she indicated that madness and nervous breakdowns were not necessarily an innate part of women, but something that stemmed from ill-treatment by men who did not understand them and, more importantly, did not try to.

These apparently contrasting ideas seem initially difficult to reconcile, but when the various strands are drawn together, they present marriage as a flawed and potentially dangerous institution. Sylva's most common character is the multi-faceted female, who, in the simplest of terms, is both victim and victimiser. As she herself succinctly described it, 'women are bad through the fault of men; men through the fault of women.'²²³ Sylva adheres to the social stereotypes of the angel and the female demon, yet both sets of clichéd characters usually meet unsatisfying ends. She recognised both male and female vices and indicated that relationships can be saved when there is mutual recognition and change. There is, then, a desire for a middle ground and what I call the New Angel. This woman can expand her intellectual and emotional horizons, yet is also dedicated to preserving family life. This idea is in keeping with polemical work produced contemporaneously, such as that by Sarah Grand, who advocated female emancipation and equality but simultaneously stressed female purity, compared to their male counterparts: 'true womanliness is not in danger, and the sacred duties of wife and mother will be all the more honourably performed when women have a reasonable hope of becoming wives and mothers of *men*.'²²⁴

Sylva seemed unable to reconcile reality with the 'ideal' view of women, but this should not be taken as a sign of her ambivalence. Instead, ambiguities are

²²³*Thoughts of a Queen*, p. 19.

²²⁴Grand, pp. 274-5.

evidence of the diverse responses to the debate about women's roles across British literary culture as a whole, as well as within the work of individual authors. This is supported by the diverse range of links that can be established between Sylva's work and contemporary British writers. Brontë, Braddon and Nesbit, to name a few, highlight social contradictions without entirely capitulating to gender norms. Sylva is part of what Carol Dyhouse describes as a 'complex and often confused picture of women who were struggling towards self-consciousness,' although her work has not stood the test of time in the same way as other writers of the period.²²⁵

Many New Women writers produced ideological contradictions that resulted in their work being perceived as confused. This included Sarah Grand's exaltation of superior female purity and virtue alongside the argument that they should receive equal treatment. Ardis argues that when these works are seen to be contradictory, the messages they contain can miss the mark.²²⁶ This argument is relevant to Sylva: the gender blurring present in her stories, the 'boomerang plots,' which oscillate between traditional and progressive, were, as evidenced in her contemporary reviews, often seen as confused or contradictory as well as inappropriate. She did not choose a side and her work became difficult to categorise. Ultimately, it became too problematic to try, resulting in her marginalisation. As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, the desire to categorise a writer – something that might be applicable to much of our modern canon formation – has hindered Sylva's literary reputation by overlooking the complexities within her work.

²²⁵Dyhouse, p. 192.

²²⁶Ardis, p. 198.

With that in mind, the recuperation of Sylva as a popular, prolific writer will create a broader understanding of the literary landscape in *fin-de-siècle* Britain. Her recuperation will act as an extension of our understanding of nineteenth-century debates, highlighting how certain women writers sought to achieve a degree of balance between tradition and reform. Reassessing Sylva's place in literary history also has ramifications in an international context: the 'Woman Question' was not an issue specific to nineteenth-century Britain, but a divisive topic that spread to countries that were largely outside of the British sphere of influence. The British public sought these international opinions, viewing and reviewing them in conjunction with their own writers.

Chapter Five. Recuperation leads to reassessment: three case studies.

This chapter consists of three case studies, comparing Sylva's life, work and critical reception with three contemporary authors. Felicia Hemans, Bram Stoker and Edith Nesbit have been linked to Sylva at various points in this thesis, for reasons ranging from their representation of a specific country to their engagement with cultural debates. This chapter will explore these connections in more detail. In doing so, I argue that reassessing a marginalised writer can expand our understanding of better known authors, providing insight into aspects of their work that has hitherto remained unrecognised.

5.1. 'Visions of aspects, now loved, now strange': Felicia Hemans and the image of Wales.

In terms of commercial and reputational success, Carmen Sylva was not as profitable as the Romantic poet Felicia Hemans, who was hailed as England's 'premier "poetess,"' during her lifetime.²²⁷ Yet there are a number of parallels between them. Both women were criticised for being too prolific. Both produced a large body of work across a range of genres and had a regular presence in British magazines and journals. Their work emphasised the beauty of nature as well as the hardships, suffering and roles of women. Similarly, the reputations of both women suffered from their celebrity status, with critics such as Susan Wolfson

²²⁷Susan J. Wolfson, 'Introduction,' in *Felicia Hemans. Selected Poems, Letters, Reception Materials*, ed. by Susan J. Wolfson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), xiii.

commenting that Hemans's 'celebrity in her own day became her curse in literary history.'²²⁸

This idea of Hemans's personal popularity having a detrimental effect on critical appreciation of her work can also be applied to Carmen Sylva, given the undeniable focus on her royal background by advertisers, publishers and critics. Background knowledge of both writers reveals an underlying reason for their prolific outputs: monetary gain. Whilst Hemans was working to support her family, Sylva published in order to donate whatever profits she made from her pen to numerous charitable projects. This may not have been their sole reason for writing, but it may explain their large literary outputs, as well as hinting at why they were disregarded by some critics, both in their lifetimes and afterwards: literature, especially when it was produced by women for money rather than for literary prestige alone, could not produce 'high art.'

It is in their connection to Wales, however, that Sylva and Hemans become more closely comparable. Neither writer was born in Wales, yet both were celebrated by the Welsh people. Sylva's memoirs indicate that her interest in Welsh culture began from an early age, noting that her tutor, Herr Sauerwein, read Welsh ballads to her, little thinking 'when he recited to me some of the old Welsh songs, that one day, in the assembly of the bards, I should be acclaimed by them as one of their number.'²²⁹ Both women spent time in North Wales: as discussed in Chapter Two, Sylva's 1890 visit to Llandudno and participation in the Bangor Eisteddfod was reported nationally and commemorated by the local people.

²²⁸Ibid., xiv.

²²⁹*From Memory's Shrine*, p. 235.

Hemans, too, did not live permanently in Wales, moving with her family to the coastal town of Abergele in 1799. She lived there for nine years, until the family was evicted for not paying rent. They then travelled the short distance to St. Asaph. She lived in that town until her marriage, whereupon she relocated to Daventry.²³⁰ She moved back to Wales after her husband was discharged from the army. Later, after he left the family, Hemans lived in Rhyllon (near St. Asaph) with her mother, sister and three youngest sons. In 1828, in poor health, Hemans left Wales to spend her remaining years near Liverpool and also in Dublin. Her links to Wales have continued to be emphasised posthumously. Indeed, Peter Trinder's *Writers of Wales. Mrs Hemans* provides her with a Welsh identity in the very title, even before noting that she 'has a just title to be numbered among the writers of Wales, for here she has spent all but the first and last few years of her life, and all her happy years.'²³¹ Both Hemans and Sylva's identities are therefore complicated, since they are, to some degree, outsiders looking in at Wales, but they have also been given some semblance of Welsh identity as a result of their work and the time they spent in the country. This identity has been conferred by the Welsh people themselves – when, for example, Sylva was recognised as an honorary bard at the Eisteddfod – as well as by critics. As will be discussed below, Hemans and Sylva's works also reveal a degree to which they identify themselves with Wales.

This complex engagement with Welsh culture filtered into their literary work. Hemans wrote a collection of poems, *A Selection of Welsh Melodies* (1822) which were set to music by the Welsh harpist and composer John Parry (1776-

²³⁰Wolfson, xxxiv

²³¹Peter W. Trinder, *Writers of Wales. Mrs Hemans* (Cardiff: The University of Wales Press and the Welsh Arts Council, 1984), p. 3.

1851). Interestingly, these were largely excluded from late nineteenth-century volumes of her work as well as from modern anthologies. Susan Wolfson has discussed Hemans's connections to Wales and the 'sifting of her works' that occurred in the late nineteenth century.²³² Cheaper editions of Hemans's poems, such as W.T. Stead's 'penny poets' series, appeared in 1895, but contained only a selection of her work, published in the same volume as the patriotic poems of Eliza Cook. It largely excluded her Welsh work, the exception being 'The Harp of Wales.'²³³ An earlier volume from 1880 remained selective, but included a number of her Welsh-based poems, including the piece she wrote for the 1822 Eisteddfod, and 'The Dying Bard's Prophecy.'²³⁴ This most likely marks the beginning of Hemans's marginalisation in contemporary British literary culture. In modern criticism, Hemans's Welsh poetry has also been downplayed. Wolfson's anthology, for example, does not include any poems from the Welsh collection. Likewise, Gary Kelly's *Felicia Hemans: Selected Poems, Prose, and Letters* only contains 'The Rock of Cader Idris.'²³⁵ This is the poem that features most frequently in anthologies and is the subject of most modern criticism.²³⁶

With regard to Carmen Sylva, her poetry and short stories, as discussed in Chapter Three, were largely focused on Romania, but her novel, *Edleen Vaughan*, is set in Wales. A further link between the women stems from their interest in the Eisteddfod, for which they both wrote poems. Sylva's poem was published for the

²³²Wolfson, xiii.

²³³Felicia Hemans and Eliza Cook, *Selection from the Poems of Mrs. Hemans & the Patriotic Poems of Eliza Cook* (London: The Masterpiece Library, "Review of Reviews" Office, 1895).

²³⁴Felicia Hemans, *Poems. By Mrs Hemans* (London: George Rutledge and Sons, [1880?]).

²³⁵Gary Kelly, *Felicia Hemans: Selected Poems, Prose, and Letters* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002).

²³⁶For example, it is the only poem from *A Selection of Welsh Melodies* to feature in Duncan Wu's *Romanticism. An Anthology*.

readers of *Murray's Magazine* at the end of their 'Notes of the Month' article, only a few weeks after her visit to Llandudno:

Long Live the Bards, and long live the song,
 And the harp with the soul's own singing;
 May ever the thanksgiving Choirs throng
 Where the echoes from old are ringing;
 Where the song has a throne, and the Bards a crown,
 The sword of peace is uplifted,
 And sweet welcome sounds from the shore to the town
 To the stranger with singing gifted.
 Long live the smile, and the song, and the tale,
 That nought from the soul can sever;
 May sunshine brighten each Emerald Isle,
 Hail, Cymru, old Cymru, for ever!²³⁷

Sylva's apparently impromptu lines rework an image of Wales that Hemans had established in her much longer offering from 1822, 'The Meeting of the Bards. Written for an Eisteddfod, or Meeting of Welsh Bards.' That year, the Eisteddfod was held in London and Hemans's poem highlights this change from its traditional, rural home, to a more metropolitan setting. She highlights a sense of loss, writing that for the ancient bards, meeting in the midst of nature, 'soaring thought/ From Nature's presence tenfold grandeur caught.'²³⁸ This power does not seem possible in 'these late days,' but Hemans draws her poem to a close with the lines 'Land of the bard! Our spirit flies to thee!/ Our dreams are haunted by thy voice of song.'²³⁹ Hemans's contemporary bards are no longer directly influenced by nature, but instead receive their inspiration passively, through dreams. Yet there remains a spiritual connection and sense of continuity between past and present.

²³⁷Carmen Sylva, [untitled] in Anonymous, 'Notes of the Month,' *Murray's Magazine*, October 1890, p. 568.

²³⁸Felicia Hemans, 'The Meeting of the Bards. Written for an Eisteddfod, or Meeting of Welsh Bards,' (1822) in *Poems. By Mrs Hemans*, p. 155.

²³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 156.

In this way, both women reaffirm the strong connection between Wales and its ancient heritage. Despite a contextual difference of sixty-eight years, both women use very similar language: both refer to bards, ‘old’ Welsh ways and its musical traditions. Similarly, both elevate the status of Welsh poets: Hemans referring to their ‘noble head[s]’ and Sylva honouring them on the level of royalty through reference to a crown and a throne. Hemans returns to this image of the powerful bard in ‘The Rock of Cader Idris.’ Her speaker is visited by ‘the mighty of ages departed’ who imbue her with ‘a flame all immortal, a voice, and a power!’²⁴⁰ The ancient bards possess a degree of strength even after death. By implication, this is a desirable status – worth spending the night on a mountain summit in order to possess. The poem’s head-note furthers this idea, as Hemans describes the night on the mountain as ‘an old tradition of the Welsh bards,’ that results in death, ‘frenzy’ or ‘the highest poetical inspiration.’²⁴¹ The appeal of the bardic tradition coincided with a revival of interest in Welsh culture, accelerated by the fascination with the supposedly Irish bard, Ossian, and debates into whether the Scottish poet James Macpherson (1736-1796) had collected authentic material, or invented it. As Michael J. Franklin has noted, ‘native antiquities, textual history, the realignment of the canon, alternative classicisms, the vogue for primitivism, fascination with orality, creative genius, and the epic were all acquiring a new relevance and public interest as the multifaceted politics and

²⁴⁰Felicia Hemans, ‘The Rock of Cader Idris,’ (1822) in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, p. 1297.

²⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 1296.

poetics of Celtomania were re-examined,' and Hemans's work is part of this.²⁴² In form as well as content, she connects with the ancient Welsh world.

William Brewer argues that Hemans 'forges a connection to them [the Welsh bards] that is spiritual and aesthetic rather than ethnic. Her kinship with the bards is embodied by a natural site associated with their magic and genius rather than Welsh parents,' and it seems Sylva's Welsh identity has a similar origin.²⁴³ Aligning the bard with royalty gives the poem a self-conscious tone: she wrote a poem that she then recited out loud at the Eisteddfod, a festival for Welsh poets. She describes the bards as royalty and she herself is a royal writer. She thus draws attention to her status as a queen, but more importantly, to the act of having composed and recited a poem. As a result, she draws a parallel between the bards and herself – she too is 'gifted' with 'the smile, and the song, and the tale/ That nought from the soul can sever.'²⁴⁴

Both Sylva and Hemans also incorporated Welsh language into their works, with Sylva's final line crying out in favour of 'old Cymru,' and Hemans's poem making reference to Druidical altars ('Cromlech') and mountains ('Eryri' is the Welsh word for Mount Snowdon). Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes have discussed what they term the 'imaginative reconstructions of Wales' during the Romantic period, both by England, which constructs Wales as a colony, and Wales itself, which defines itself against England and English definition.²⁴⁵

²⁴²Michael J. Franklin, 'The Colony Writes Back: Brutus, Britanus and the Advantages of an Oriental Ancestry,' in *Wales and the Romantic Imagination*, ed. by Damien Walford Davies and Lynda Pratt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 25.

²⁴³William D. Brewer, 'Felicia Hemans, Byronic cosmopolitanism and the ancient Welsh bards,' in *English Romanticism and the Celtic World*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 176.

²⁴⁴Carmen Sylva, [untitled] *Murray's Magazine*, p. 568.

²⁴⁵Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes, 'Introduction: romancing the Celt,' in *English Romanticism and the Celtic World*, pp. 17-18.

However, they also note that ‘we hear the voice of English culture in its [Wales’s] own self-inventions,’ since English audiences and readers are the primary targets of work written about Wales.²⁴⁶ This is supported by the fact that both Sylva and Hemans published in English: they were not targeting a Welsh-speaking readership, but were shaping their representation of Wales for an English audience. By utilizing the Welsh language on a small level, however, both writers show their awareness of Welsh heritage and the ‘old’ Wales that is being celebrated through the Eisteddfod. The linguistic distinctiveness of the Welsh is emphasised, which creates a degree of distance from English culture and identity.

The individuality of Wales is furthered by Hemans through her use of natural imagery, an element that Sylva does not emphasise as strongly in her poem, but one that she draws on heavily in *Edleen Vaughan*, which will be discussed later. Trinder notes that Hemans ‘loved the scenery [...] these scenes made her a poet,’ and the power of nature is the focal point of both ‘The Meeting of the Bards’ and ‘The Rock of Cader Idris,’ where power and knowledge stem from total immersion in the sublime landscape.²⁴⁷ The ancient Eisteddfod bards met ‘where wild Nature girt herself with power,’ and the untamed landscape is connected both to the freedom experienced by the bards as well as the power of their abilities.²⁴⁸

Empowered by the ‘torrent’s rainbow spray,’ the ‘dark lakes’ and ‘th’ eternal cliffs, whose strength defied/ The crested Roman in his hour of pride,’ Hemans’s bards are part of a cycle of influence.²⁴⁹ They achieve their full

²⁴⁶Ibid., p. 18.

²⁴⁷Trinder, p. 3.

²⁴⁸Felicia Hemans, ‘The Meeting of the Bards,’ p. 156.

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 155.

potential through nature, but in death, they preserve and renew that power for future generations. The ‘green land, whose every vale and glen/ Doth shrine the memory of heroic men,’ – the men who fought for Welsh freedom as well as the ancient bards – provides a ‘green memory’ for future minstrels.²⁵⁰ Similarly, the speaker in ‘The Rock of Cader Idris’ can only find inspiration on the rock, where ‘for ever [*sic*] deep music is swelling,/ The voice of the mountain wind, solemn and loud.’²⁵¹ The wild and stormy surroundings may be fatal to some, but not to the speaker, whose ‘spirit/ Was strong, and triumphantly lived through that hour,’ to ‘inherit’ his/her poetic abilities.²⁵² Their ability to withstand the hardships of nature allows them to appreciate its ‘grandeur’ and ultimately to receive poetic inspiration. The speaker has become the connection between past and present Wales.

Edleen Vaughan, although derided on publication for its apparent inaccuracies (see Chapter Three), also paints a picture of Wales that is connected to its heritage and the stereotype of the ‘land of song.’ Sylva uses the Welsh setting to explore the life of a spoiled young man, Tom, whose steadily increasing vices ruin the lives of all around him, combining sensational storylines with the Gothic as well as elements of the social-problem novel. The novel’s setting, however, is initially unclear. Readers must infer a Welsh location through the names of certain characters, such as Gwynne, Morgan, Martyn, Una and Llewellyn. In some cases, a character’s name may be misleading: Edleen and Tom, it is revealed, have an Irish background, and the name of Harry Vaughan’s trusted steward, Owen, is in fact an anglicised version of the Welsh ‘Owain.’ This

²⁵⁰Ibid., p. 156.

²⁵¹‘The Rock of Cader Idris,’ in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, p. 1296.

²⁵²Ibid., p. 1297.

further Carruthers and Rawes's argument that representations of Wales are adapted to suit English tastes, and, in the case of Owen, it occurs on a semantic level. Topographical references, anchoring the novel to a specific location, only begin in Chapter Six, when Kathleen, somewhat melodramatically, states that "“sooner than you [Tom] touch me, the Istwith shall swallow us, Snowdon's eternal snow shall melt.”" ²⁵³ Other references are to towns and villages – specifically Carnarvon and Llanelly – rather than natural geographical markers like a river or a mountain. The novel thus stands in contrast to Sylva's Romanian short stories and folktales, which are peppered with references to valleys, rivers, cities and streets. Whilst this lack of geographical detail may have prompted her reviewers to criticise her attempts to depict Welsh life, Sylva's novel nevertheless recreates prevalent stereotypes of Wales – elements that were found in Hemans's work over sixty years earlier.

The bard Llewellyn becomes, in this respect, the epitome of 'Welshness' both in name and profession. He is also the character to explicitly reveal the novel's setting – and introduce the theme of Wales and music – as he encounters some villagers, who want to hear him play:

‘Thou land of minstrels!’ he exclaimed joyfully. ‘My beautiful, song-loving Wales, where fair girls bloom in every homestead, and melody dwells in every ruddy lip, how I love thee!’ ²⁵⁴

Here, Wales begins to be explicitly associated with music: the Welsh not only love music, but it is part of their physical bodies, resulting in the 'blooming' of beauty in every village. Physical beauty and happiness are tied to their relationship with music, as Hemans's work also suggested.

²⁵³Carmen Sylva, *Edleen Vaughan*, I, p. 155.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.*, II, pp. 126-127.

The image of the bard, which Sylva and Hemans elevated in their poetry, is developed to a far greater extent in Sylva's novel. Llewellyn interacts with all of the main characters and his songs are threaded throughout the narrative. There are planned performances and songs played to soothe those who are unhappy. Sylva also includes songs that Llewellyn composes and recites alone. The different settings for the songs thus take on slightly different purposes. For example, when he visits Gwynne (the local vicar) and his family, Llewellyn's lay recounts the story of a knight, who rescues his lover from a burning castle. After his recitation, he instantly turns to Una and comments on her sickness, thinking it strange that 'no one sees it.'²⁵⁵ This is a prophetic moment as well as a narrative hook for the reader: in a matter of pages, Una is diagnosed with 'inflammation of the lungs and pleurisy,' (the latter being an inflammation of the lung membrane) and dies.²⁵⁶

Similarly, the song Llewellyn composes by himself, in the midst of the forest and during a storm, provides him with supernatural powers – in this instance, to reveal the truth about his own past. The song develops over a series of pages. Short stanzas are interspersed with prose as Llewellyn reflects on his memories of Ulla when she was not a terrifying witch, but a golden-haired maiden. The storm swells and he remembers their last meeting, when he fainted at the sight of her 'pock-pitted, disfigured, noseless,' appearance.²⁵⁷ In questioning himself – 'what had I done? And she, what had she done to deserve that?' – he realised that it was because 'we had loved – ah me! – what a sin! A sin before men, a great wrong; but a sacred law of nature, my sacred right! She was mine.

²⁵⁵Ibid., I, p. 134.

²⁵⁶Ibid., p. 267.

²⁵⁷Ibid., p. 229.

She would be mine.’²⁵⁸ Llewellyn attempts to justify their actions as natural and in doing so, hints that their ‘sin’ was sexual in nature – a biological urge. Given the emphasis he places on his rights, the connotations of taking possession of Ulla become a veiled reference to intercourse. Llewellyn comes to a horrific realization when he finally sings a longer version of the lay:

She is so pale as through the night
 She swiftly hurries on.
 What draws she from her mantle’s folds?
 Is it some magic web she holds
 For the moon to shine upon?

[...]

Her mantle’s folds are empty now;
 She turns in pain and dread.
 The river asks: ‘What gleams so white?
 What bear I through the silent night?
 A thing alive or dead?’

[...]

‘Full many dames with faces pale,
 And many knights, I trow,’
 Replies the sea, ‘I bury deep
 Within my caves, and do not weep
 To see them laid so low.’

‘Alas! it is a sadder sight
 Than dame or knight can be –
 It is an infant!’ moans the stream –
 The moon looks down with trembling beam
 Upon the weeping sea....²⁵⁹

The details of Ulla’s situation and her descent into evil are presented to the readers at the same time as they are to Llewellyn: as a result of their illicit encounter – after which Llewellyn left to pursue his bard’s lifestyle – Ulla gave birth to a baby, which she then cast out to sea. In her ‘pain and dread,’ her love

²⁵⁸Ibid.

²⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 230-231.

became hate and she turned to sorcery. Now, secretly watching his turmoil, Ulla notes that he was ‘fain to tell the truth because it was disclosed to him. He often told it, even before he himself knew what it was that he betrayed.’²⁶⁰ This, and Llewellyn’s obvious distress, adds a magical element to the bard and the song. The song encourages readers to draw parallels between the characters: two generations of men and women who have broken society’s rules, with devastating consequences. Tom and Temorah, like Llewellyn and Ulla, also have sex outside of marriage, which results in an illegitimate child. There are some differences between the couples – Llewellyn and Ulla were in love, whereas Tom has manipulated the infatuated Temorah to satisfy his needs. Temorah’s baby is later killed in an arson attack – the house is set alight by Kathleen (Tom’s other lover) – whereas Ulla drowns her baby. Llewellyn was unaware of the baby, regrets his actions and tries to help others, but Tom’s behavior worsens and he has little remorse for the pain he inflicts on others. Despite these differences between the characters, the song is a narrative tool, intertwining various strands of the plot and indicating that the problems that occur are not limited to a particular generation.

The harp thus has the ability to bring the truth to light. Llewellyn, as possessor of the harp, becomes the wizard, wielding a musical magic wand, although he does not control all of its power. Coleridge’s ‘The Eolian Harp’ (1834) also engages with the magical properties of the instrument, noting that the ‘simplest lute’ can produce ‘such a soft floating witchery of sound.’²⁶¹ Coleridge uses music as a metaphor for creativity: there is ‘rhythm in all thought,’ which

²⁶⁰Ibid., p. 233.

²⁶¹Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ‘The Eolian Harp,’ (1834) in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, p. 621.

brings 'joyance' to the world.²⁶² The instrument creates spellbinding sounds and to align the magical properties and rhythm of music with human thought elevates the power of creative thinking. By extension, poetic genius is brought to the same level as that of the bards and their music. Sylva's characterisation of Llewellyn draws on this idea, allowing him to calm and support other characters through song, but also uncover their secrets. The harp is the source of his abilities. Moreover, the 'genius' depicted by Sylva only touches a few individuals, in keeping with William Wordsworth's ideas of the poet as 'being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility.'²⁶³ Edleen's daughter Winnie, for example, shows a natural talent for music, reciting Llewellyn's songs, which 'would not let her rest.'²⁶⁴

With Winnie, as with Llewellyn, the harp's song takes on a life of its own, drawing in the child almost against her will, but there is a break with tradition here: Sylva has clearly imbued a female character with poetic genius. She is more explicit than Hemans in this respect, whose 'I' narrator in 'The Rock of Cader Idris' is demonstrably neither male nor female, although it could be argued that the lines 'I saw what man looks on, and dies – but my spirit/ Was strong,' is an indicator of a woman's strength surpassing that of her male counterparts.²⁶⁵ Winnie's creativity, however, is that of a child and her power is not revealed to readers in as much detail as that of Llewellyn. Her 'genius' can thus be interpreted in a number of ways, the first being that it is limited to the power of the child – Winnie does not grow up and end the novel as a travelling minstrel, but as a

²⁶²Edleen Vaughan, I, p. 149.

²⁶³William Wordsworth, 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads,' (1800) in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, p. 508.

²⁶⁴Edleen Vaughan, p. 68.

²⁶⁵Hemans, 'The Rock of Cader Idris,' p. 1297.

woman engaged to be married. In keeping with the issues discussed in Chapter Four, it could also be a reflection on the limitations of the creative woman, whose powers are inevitably turned inwards to the domestic sphere. Alternatively, it could offer another ‘grey area’ that hints at the future of the bard: not only can ‘genius’ affect people of all genders, but the power of song must not, perhaps, remain in a transient, intangible state – the bard can, in effect, settle down.

The power of the harp is made further apparent to readers through Llewellyn’s discussions of music and song. The Wordsworthian idea of poetic genius – wandering lonely as a cloud in order to take inspiration from the natural world – is developed further by Sylva: Llewellyn is not only connected to nature, but he is nature. As Wordsworth wrote in the revised preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in 1802, ‘poetry is the image of man and nature,’ and the descriptions of Llewellyn adhere to this argument.²⁶⁶ His face was ‘rendered dreamy by the great misty beard that enveloped him like a snow-cloud,’ and readers are confronted with the combined image of someone who looks like one type of weather, because he is another.²⁶⁷ This adds to the notion of the fleeting, intangible bard, since mist creates an indistinct and obscure landscape. Llewellyn, too, describes himself and the process of creating songs as bound up in nature: ‘once the struggle and the transport over, the song is no longer the poet’s property; it drops from the parent stem like ripe fruit, and people may pick it up or let it lie, as they please.’²⁶⁸ Poetry comes naturally to him. Again, this detail may have a broader, more self-

²⁶⁶William Wordsworth, ‘Preface to Lyrical Ballads,’ (1802) in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, p. 538.

²⁶⁷*Edleen Vaughan*, I, p. 129.

²⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 147.

conscious meaning that extends outside of the novel – a reflection on the role of the author and the reception of their writing, once put into the public sphere.

The bard's creative dependency on the Welsh environment is further emphasised by a long list of oxymoronic comparisons, presented by the narrator soon after Llewellyn's premonition about Una's health:

The poet is like nature – creative and lavish, good and cruel, warm-hearted and chill, cold and stern, gold and adamant, and soft black soil, putrid and fruitful, a tranquil, limpid lake and a wild mountain stream, with turbulent falls and icy, passionate foam; volcano and lava, aged and youthful. Who but children, and such as have remained childlike, can understand a poet?²⁶⁹

Poetic genius is shown here to be dynamic, but temperamental. Contrasting images show the changeability of the poet but also his adaptability – he can be whatever is required of him. By including such a long list of connected comparisons, Sylva suggests that this change could occur at a moment's notice. Although the first few pairs are connected to human emotions, the majority are connected to the weather, the soil and natural occurrences. The suggestion that children are best equipped to understand the poet, however, serves to complicate the image, since there are certain emotions – passion or lavishness, for example – which children are most likely too young to have experienced. Instead, perhaps it is the malleability of the poet-bard that allows him to relate to the child-like state.

Stereotypically, the child is an uncorrupted innocent, whose mind has not yet formed concrete opinions. This is generally taken as a sign that they can take pleasure in aspects of life that adults take for granted, such as the environment that they inhabit. This is an idea that preoccupied many Romantic writers, but

²⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 130-131.

particularly Wordsworth. Although early nineteenth-century representations sought to view the child as a miniature adult, Wordsworth saw childhood as an ideal state. He argued that the poems in *Lyrical Ballads*, for example, had been written in 'low and rustic language' because 'in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language.'²⁷⁰ Although Wordsworth is also talking about peasant life here, this is applicable to the representation of the child: simpler language, akin to the childlike state, will produce a better quality of poetry. As Galia Benziman has discussed with regard to Wordsworth and William Blake (1757-1827), 'their poems suggest that the child's stance is both morally superior and artistically productive.'²⁷¹ Childlike wonder is a quality that adults should seek in order to truly understand the power of poetry.

Llewellyn's time spent in the company of wider society, however, is fleeting, and the 'misty' nature of his life is a consequence of possessing the gift of song:

I shall be thoroughly forgotten as the wave – the wave is forgotten, though it had borne and shattered a leviathan; for it is not its own doing. It is not my own doing that I must bear those songs of mine; and yet I stand apart; I wander past a cheerful hearth; I do but approach men's hearts like the rising wind – when I have passed, I am forgotten [...] a minstrel's love is like a ray of light. It wanders and cannot stay.²⁷²

Llewellyn devalues his role as a bard, recognising he will benefit society – shattering a 'leviathan' can be viewed in conjunction with his soothing of 'men's

²⁷⁰Wordsworth, 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*,' (1800), p. 507

²⁷¹Galia Benziman, 'Two Patterns of Child Neglect: Blake and Wordsworth,' *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 5 (June 2007), 168.

²⁷²*Edleen Vaughan*, I, p. 235.

hearts' – but this is not through his own volition. He sees himself as the puppet of a higher power, which, in this case, is the harp. He does, however, give himself a certain degree of unique strength: he possesses the harp's songs, but must simultaneously 'bear' them. This hints that the wandering lifestyle is a burden only certain individuals can manage, much like Hemans's unnamed speaker, who survives his/her initiation on Cader Idris, as well as the titular character in Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798).

Hemans's poems also reaffirm this notion of the forgotten bard, since her minstrels are unnamed and there is no detail of their lives – other than their connection with nature – to be found in the poems. The human lives are subsumed by the music they create. Indeed, 'The Harp of Wales,' (1832) implores the 'harp of the ancient hills' to 'be heard once more' – giving the instrument agency, rather than looking for human intervention.²⁷³ Similarly, when Llewellyn looks for his harp in the forest, speaking aloud and wondering where it is, the instrument responds: 'at that moment a faint sound of vibrating chords floated through the air [...] He started as if a tree had fallen near him, and then smiled to himself when he laid his trembling hand on his harp and saw that it was near and safe and had but answered his call.'²⁷⁴

Hemans chronicles the harp's strength throughout the ages: the Roman invasion 'could not silence thee' and the harp 'wert heard above the trumpet' of the Saxons.²⁷⁵ The harp's music, personified like Llewellyn's instrument to become a 'voice,' improves the lives of the oppressed, offering 'a gift in every

²⁷³Felicia Hemans, 'The Harp of Wales,' (1832) in *Selection from the Poems of Mrs. Hemans & the Patriotic Poems of Eliza Cook*, p. 35.

²⁷⁴Edleen Vaughan, I, p. 237.

²⁷⁵Hemans, 'The Harp of Wales,' p. 35.

chord.’²⁷⁶ Although the overall tone of the poem hints that the harp’s song is no longer as prevalent as it once was – ‘call back that spirit to the days of peace/ Thou noble harp! thy tones are not to cease!’ – Hemans continues to link the instrument to the geography of Wales.²⁷⁷ In attributing a magical and spiritual power to both, her poetry supports Diego Saglia’s argument that ‘the traditional harp and its music are the signifiers of an identity that is then deployed through and across the evocation of ancient heroic celebrations, the various invasions and the heroic resistance of the Welsh, and the sublime national landscape.’²⁷⁸ Sylva’s representation of the harp may not coincide with all of Saglia’s suggestions, but the idea of heroic celebration and the evocation of sublime nature draw parallels with her representations of Llewellyn’s songs. As previously mentioned, some of his songs feature the bravery or self-sacrifice of others – usually out of love – and, whilst something of an atypical hero himself, given his background with Ulla, he nevertheless possesses authority over other characters and gives charity to those in need, nursing Temorah when he finds her pregnant and starving.

Through Llewellyn, Sylva emphasises the spiritual connections of the bard and uses him to propel the narrative forward. The songs reveal elements of Llewellyn’s past and explain why Ulla underwent such a horrific transformation and as such, all of the magical elements in *Edleen Vaughan* are closely linked with the natural world. Ulla, too, is tied to the forest, only going to the fringes of society – such as Temorah’s house – to work evil. The novel’s gothic elements are

²⁷⁶Ibid., p. 36.

²⁷⁷Ibid.

²⁷⁸Diego Saglia, “‘Harp of the Mountain-Land’: Felicia Hemans and the Cultural Geography of Romantic Wales,” in *Wales and the Romantic Imagination*, p. 232.

thus linked to the spiritual power of Wales and its connection to its ancient heritage, whether for good or evil.

Sylva's engagement with the magical power of Wales is thus tempered with the social-problem aspects of the novel, whereas Hemans's poems focus on the spiritual connection between Wales, its music and its people. Saglia argues that Hemans's representations of Wales 'rework real and legendary histories in order to produce a multi-layered geography where human and non-human components are harmoniously blended.'²⁷⁹ However, as I have argued, Hemans's poems often exclude the human element and emphasise Wales's magical uniqueness and the power of its national instrument. It is in Sylva's work that Saglia's notion of 'blending' becomes most evident, as she combines the Gothic with sensation and Welsh myth-making, mixing the lives of her Welsh characters with the magic of the landscape that they inhabit. As was discussed in Chapter Four, this could connect to her current obscurity: like her short stories, the novel defies categorization as a result of Sylva's blurring, in this instance, of its genres. Published in the 1890s, when sensation fiction was no longer at its peak, the novel's melodramatic plot, which features illegitimate pregnancies, madness, violent sexual encounters and death, may also explain its somewhat negative reception.

The effects of alcoholism and gambling are also presented to readers through Tom's demise, albeit in limited detail. He steals from his mother and sisters, running up debts in order to fund the 'stronger stimulants' he is dependent upon.²⁸⁰ Much like Arthur Huntingdon in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Tom's

²⁷⁹Ibid., p. 239.

²⁸⁰*Edleen Vaughan*, II, p. 47.

vices soon manifest themselves physically, with ‘deep lines about his mouth, the unsteady flickering of his eyes, his hollow cheeks, and sunken temples. There were signs of decay in Tom’s pretty face.’²⁸¹ Eventually, he joins a gang of thieves, but is soon caught and sentenced to penal solitude. Tom survives his ordeals, but does not escape punishment: he ‘belonged to the dead without passing through the hangman’s hands.’²⁸²

In comparing Hemans and Sylva, it becomes apparent that certain perceptions of Wales remained largely unaltered over the course of the nineteenth century. Writing sixty years apart, both women created an image of Wales that was filled with sublime nature and individuals who take their inspiration directly from it in order to connect to their ancient heritage. Furthermore, Hemans and Sylva’s personal identities were shaped as a result of their engagement with Wales: Sylva was commemorated in Llandudno and Hemans has been appropriated as a ‘Welsh’ poet in recent years. As a result, comparing these writers indicates that issues of regional representation continued to be part of literary culture, revealing, as Damien Walford Davies and Lynda Pratt have argued, that ‘an interest in writing about Welsh culture and history reveals important connections – and sympathies – between apparently unrelated writers, thus exposing new networks of exchange, influence and dialogue.’²⁸³ Reassessing Sylva’s work in relation to Hemans, who also underwent marginalisation and reappraisal, provides further evidence of authors fading from critical consciousness as a result of the negative perceptions of the prolific, professional

²⁸¹Ibid., p. 41.

²⁸²Ibid., p. 185.

²⁸³Damien Walford Davies and Lynda Pratt, ‘Introduction: Devolving Romanticism,’ in *Wales and the Romantic Imagination*, pp. 5-6.

female author. In ‘The Land of Dreams,’ Hemans described ‘visions of aspects, now loved, now strange,’ an image that is clearly applicable to a forgotten writer and one who has been reintroduced to modern criticism. Hemans’s work, now ‘loved’ engages with the same aspects of Sylva’s, which seem ‘strange’ to modern readers, but which were in fact part of ongoing debate.²⁸⁴

5.2. Bram Stoker and Romanian ‘otherness.’

Much like Felicia Hemans, there are parallels to be drawn between Bram Stoker and Carmen Sylva even before their work is considered in more detail. Stoker joins Hemans and Sylva as another ‘author outsider,’ looking in at other countries and their cultures: Stoker was Anglo-Irish and Sylva was German by birth, but spent the majority of her life in Romania. Moreover, as part of the Romanian royal family, she was to some degree separated from the hardships she described. This status on the periphery clearly fed into their literature, particularly when writing about the East – in this case eastern Europe and Romania’s position within it. Both Stoker and Sylva are western Europeans trying to define eastern Europe. Stoker, unlike Sylva, had never been to Romania, confining his engagement with the ‘foreign other’ to the now iconic character of Count Dracula.

As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, Sylva’s short stories focused predominantly on Romanian culture. By publishing in popular magazines including *Belgravia*, the *English Illustrated Magazine* and the *Woman’s World*, as well as publishing single volumes, she ensured her work was available to a large body of middle and upper class readers. With this in mind, as well as her visits to

²⁸⁴Felicia Hemans, ‘The Land of Dreams,’ (1830) in *Romanticism. An Anthology*, p. 1366.

Britain, it seems likely that a proportion of British readers would have been introduced to Romania a number of years before one of the more famous depictions of Romanian ‘otherness’ – Stoker’s *Dracula*. I am not suggesting that Sylva was the first to introduce Romanian culture to Britain, but she represents a forgotten link to Romania, one that began before Stoker’s well-known novel. There are a number of connections between his work and Sylva’s that have yet to be recognised.

It should be acknowledged that when both Stoker and Sylva were writing, Transylvania had not been unified as part of Romania and would not become so until 1918.²⁸⁵ All three states – Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania – had been under Ottoman rule since the mid-sixteenth century and they remained so until the seventeenth century, when the Hapsburg and Russian empires began to compete for control. This resulted in a number of conflicts, most notably the Crimean War (1854-1856). After Russia’s defeat, Wallachia and Moldavia were no longer under its control and became known as the ‘United Principalities.’²⁸⁶ In 1866, the government changed the name of the two provinces to ‘Romania.’ After the Russo-Turkish War, Romanian independence was formally recognised by the Treaty of Berlin. Romania became a kingdom in 1881, with Sylva and her husband as its first monarchs.

However, the fact that Stoker and Sylva are using the same topographical references and patterns of representation positions them within the same sphere of cultural discourse: representing the East. Both are western Europeans attempting to portray eastern Europe but unlike Stoker, Sylva is writing about the East partly

²⁸⁵Niessen, p. 737.

²⁸⁶George W. White, *Nationalism and Territory. Constructing Group Identity in Southeastern Europe* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2000), p. 133.

from the inside. Her high status aside, Sylva had lived in Romania from her marriage until her death and had immersed herself in Romanian charity projects as well as the language and customs.

Whilst there is no evidence that Stoker was aware of Sylva's literary productions, the first page of *Dracula* recognises the German influence in the area. The second paragraph of Jonathan Harker's journal notes that during his travels through Transylvania he found his 'smattering of German very useful here; indeed, I don't know how I should be able to get on without it.'²⁸⁷ Attila Viragh has seen this detail as a connection to the Transylvanian Saxons, who had migrated there in the twelfth century and who numbered around 700,000 at the time *Dracula* was published, but this proposition perhaps overlooks a more contemporary influence on the Germans living in Romania and its surrounding provinces.²⁸⁸ Harker's journal is more likely to be related to the native tongue of Sylva and her husband, the latter of whom had been chosen as Sovereign Prince of Romania in 1866 after the previous ruler, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, was overthrown.

Further links between Stoker and Sylva are in terms of the cultural as well as topographical references found in their work. Both refer to specific geographical features (the Carpathian Mountains), cities (Bucharest) and rivers (the Sereth, now known as the Siret). The Carpathian mountain range is immortalised in *Dracula* as 'one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe,' and is one of the only topographical references used to locate Jonathan

²⁸⁷ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897) (Plymouth: Broadview Press Ltd, 2000), p. 31.

²⁸⁸ Attila Viragh, 'Can the Vampire Speak? *Dracula* as Discourse on Cultural Extinction,' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 56 (2013), 241.

Harker's initial narrative in Romania.²⁸⁹ Stoker's representation of Romania indicates a desire to highlight its 'otherness' and create a heightened sense of distance between Romania and western European nations, such as Britain. This feature reflects contemporary non-fictional sources – some of which Stoker is known to have been familiar with – which perpetuate the notion that British interest is established through recognition of difference. One of the earliest accounts of Romania is *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (1820) by William Wilkinson (dates unknown), who lived in Wallachia for a number of years and noted that the Ottoman Empire – which Romania was part of at the time of his study – 'offers an inexhaustible subject for investigation, and an endless excitement to curiosity.'²⁹⁰ This was an important source for Stoker and formed the basis of his research when he began to write *Dracula*, as it contained a reference to a historical figure by the same name as his eponymous villain.²⁹¹

Ideas of excitement and curiosity were reiterated over sixty years later by James Samuelson (1829-1914), who travelled to Romania during the composition of *Roumania Past and Present* (1882) and stated that 'there is no country in Europe which at the present time possesses greater interest for Englishmen than does the Kingdom of Roumania, and there is none with whose present state and past history, nay, with whose very geographical position, they are less familiar.'²⁹² Samuelson attempted to rectify this ignorance, providing detailed information

²⁸⁹*Dracula*, p. 32.

²⁹⁰William Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orm and Brown, 1820), iv.

²⁹¹Charles Boner's (1815-1870) *Transylvania: Its Products and Its People* (1865) and Emily Gerard's (1845-1905) *The Land Beyond the Forest: Facts, Figures, and Fancies* (1888), were other notable sources used by Stoker when writing and researching *Dracula*.

²⁹²James Samuelson, *Roumania Past and Present* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1882), v.

about the landscape as well as statistics to indicate the size of the country and its population. The depiction of specific cities such as Bucharest, coupled with the Carpathian mountain range and Romanian social groups like the Lautari and the boyars, familiarise nineteenth-century readers with aspects of Romanian culture that Sylva would depict in her fiction.

Consideration of such accounts provides insight into nineteenth-century perceptions of Romania. Samuelson notes, somewhat non-specifically, that English influence has benefited Romania, which imports ‘civilised’ articles from Britain – a common piece of imperialist rhetoric. The British have a duty to concern themselves with Romania, to help the people resist Russian influence and ‘Oriental despotism’ through ‘the agency of Western progress.’²⁹³ The ‘Eastern Question’ was significant to both Britain and Russia and the Crimean War, where Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire had sided against the Russians, had resulted from this clashing of interest. Their rivalry continued throughout the century through the ‘Great Game’, and the desire for control in Central Asia.

Further connections between England and Romania are established in terms of geographical size and population, as well as the recognition that current land reforms in Romania could be applied to the ‘situation’ in Ireland.²⁹⁴ Romania compares unfavourably and is seen as a primitive nation, although making progress in terms of industry and the judicial system. For example, Romanian prisoners working in the salt mines, rather than receiving the death penalty – which Sylva draws on in her short story, ‘Neaga’ – is largely viewed positively.

²⁹³Ibid., p. 256.

²⁹⁴Ibid., vi. Given that Samuelson’s work was published in 1882, this most likely refers to the Irish Land Wars (1879-1882) – a war which challenged the landlords’ authority and ownership of land, led by a tenant movement called The Land League.

Nevertheless, Romanian ‘Oriental life’ is coloured by poverty and neglect and it is here that racial stereotypes become the most frequent: the population are poor serfs with few rights, who are physically strong but prone to alcoholism.²⁹⁵ Similarly, the gipsy population, characterised as drunken, lazy thieves, is, Samuelson argues, looked upon by the Romanians ‘pretty much as the white man regards the negro’ – as an inferior race.²⁹⁶ Romania is exoticised, defined by its difference, which is emphasised in lengthy descriptions of its barbaric, savage history and how this has impacted on the ‘perverted Latin’ which now constitutes the Romanian language.²⁹⁷

Romanian history is of little interest for Samuelson. His account favours contemporary Romanian life and leaders such as King Carol and Queen Elisabeth, the latter of whom is ‘almost too well known.’²⁹⁸ This statement implies that Sylva’s literature was detrimental to her ability to be a queen, a judgement that has been complicated by my findings, which have indicated that her literature simultaneously relied on, and suffered from, her royal status. Yet some contemporary events are still neglected by Samuelson: the ‘friction’ after Sylva and her husband’s coronation is not dwelled upon, or even specifically referred to.²⁹⁹ It is possible that this is another example of self-censorship: like Sylva’s biographers, Samuelson has avoided certain topics in order to protect himself – and Sylva – from criticism.

This relationship between interest in the country and recognition of fundamental difference is also part of studies produced later in the century. Alfred

²⁹⁵Ibid., p. 14.

²⁹⁶Ibid., p. 50.

²⁹⁷Ibid., p. 153.

²⁹⁸Ibid., p. 260.

²⁹⁹Ibid.

M. Williams, for example, discussing the world's folksongs, features a final chapter on Romania, which focuses on *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*. He repeats many of the generalisations about the country, comparing Romanian poetry to its westernised counterparts and continuing to emphasise its primitive nature. 'Primitive' is a description frequently utilised by Williams, as is the connection with nature: the fiery and fresh poetry which 'stirred the blood of refined civilization.'³⁰⁰ Again, what is emphasised is the difference in approach between East and West, an attitude reminiscent of Hemans's poems about Wales and the wildness of nature that influences their song. This study was produced thirteen years after Samuelson's and seventy-five years after Wilkinson's, yet retains many of the same generalities about the Romanian population. This indicates that once formed, perceptions about Romania were difficult to alter, reflecting what Maria Todorova has termed the 'frozen image' of the Balkan states.³⁰¹

This continuing emphasis on the primitive suggests that British interest in Romania was not only imperialist in nature, but was also connected to anthropological concerns. In *Primitive Culture* (1871), one of the most influential works on the subject, Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917) argued that establishing connections between the 'savage hordes' and 'more civilised nations' was a way of understanding the present and considering future developments.³⁰² He suggested that 'survivals' – customs or opinions that originated in older civilisations yet have been retained by modern society (these could be language-based idioms, myths, or regional customs, for which Tylor lists the Breton All

³⁰⁰ Alfred M. Williams, *Studies in Folk-Song and Popular Poetry* (London: Eliot Stock, 1895), p. 314.

³⁰¹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 7.

³⁰² Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (1871) (London: John Murray, 1920), pp. 22-24.

Souls' supper) – are evidence of this link. If modern society reflects on these 'trivial details' it can determine the extent to which it is the originator of such behaviours, or whether they stem from 'long past ages.'³⁰³ The fact that these apparently primitive elements are now seen as 'sport' within more civilised society becomes proof of social evolution. With Tylor's theories in mind, scrutinizing Romanian 'primitive' culture is a way for the British to learn about themselves. As Tylor suggested with regard to the Greenlanders and the Maoris, the European – and in this case, the western European – may find 'many a trait for reconstructing the picture of his own primitive ancestors.'³⁰⁴

Dracula, with its depictions of the superstitious peasants, the sexualised – and therefore punishable – vampire women, as well as the apparently cultured, but ultimately deviant Dracula himself, continues these stereotyped constructions of the archaic Romanian provinces. For Stoker, emphasising Transylvanian 'otherness' is a technique designed to further the 'Good vs. Bad' dichotomy he has established between the central characters. The western European lifestyle epitomised by the Harkers and van Helsing is set against the East – symbolised by the Transylvanian Count. Harker makes this clear from the outset, reflecting that 'the impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East.'³⁰⁵ The majority of the novel takes place on British soil, but Stoker's narrative is framed by Romanian life. Topographical and cultural references, however, are used sparingly. They are most frequent in the final chapters, as the Harkers, Quincey Morgan, Dr. Steward and van Helsing set off in pursuit of Dracula. Towns and rivers form a catalogue within their travel-narratives; the ground they

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 17.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

³⁰⁵ *Dracula*, p. 31.

must travail in order to destroy the ultimate evil. Stoker references the Danube and the Pruth (now known as the Prut) river, as well as Bukovina, Bistritz, Bucharest and Galatz, but with a speed and lack of detail that mimic the haste and the relentless pursuit of Dracula by the European heroes.

The native people receive equally brief descriptions. The local people Harker encounters at the beginning of the novel are ‘strange’ and ‘barbarian,’ and their overtly superstitious natures exert a negative influence on Harker’s western rationality – he accepts the crucifix offered to him by an old woman and continues to wear it, even though he considers it ‘idolatrous.’³⁰⁶ Although their fear is justified, the derogatory depictions reaffirm British superiority: the native people are as wild as the landscape they inhabit. Similarly, the Count cannot conquer London, but is driven out and ultimately destroyed. The British – and Dutch – launch a swift and effective counteroffensive, invading eastern Europe and destroying the vampires with relative ease.

Stoker’s sustained stereotyping of the Romanian provinces is focalised through other western Europeans. Mina Harker notes that ‘if Jonathan and I were driving through it alone what a pleasure it would be. To stop and see people, and learn something of their life, and to fill our minds and memories with all the colour and picturesqueness of the whole wild, beautiful country and the quaint people!’³⁰⁷ Viragh sees this as Mina’s recognition of their cultural ignorance, wishing she could be a ‘cultural explorer’ rather than a destroyer.³⁰⁸ However, I argue that, like her husband, Mina takes on the role of a social categoriser: she wants to learn, but does not want to immerse herself in the culture. Her aim is to

³⁰⁶Ibid., p. 33; p. 35;

³⁰⁷Ibid., p. 401.

³⁰⁸Viragh, 241.

drive quickly and efficiently through the landscape, observing all around her in a form of cultural safari. Then there is the thinly veiled condescension undercutting her description of the people as ‘quaint,’ the connotations of which are positive but at the same time unfamiliar, old-fashioned and, by extension, underdeveloped compared to her life in Britain. Mina may be more sympathetic and appreciative than Stoker’s other characters, but her engagement with the East is very similar to her husband’s, recognising the beauty alongside the dangers and wishing to remain aloof from it. This clearly does not apply to the majority of Sylva’s characters, who are Romanian by birth and do not travel outside of their villages. Where Stoker’s characters and narrative structure try to exclude or control Transylvanian culture, Sylva provides a direct connection, often focalising through the characters themselves.

Stoker authenticates his narrative by presenting real locations to his readers, but simultaneously limits his engagement with this ‘foreign other’ to geographical markers that a number of his readers would already be familiar with. His readers’ familiarity would stem from the aforementioned non-fictional studies but also from Sylva’s works, including *Legends from River and Mountain*, published a year before Stoker’s gothic novel in 1896. Sylva’s collection is a product of the Romanian landscape: these stories did not only develop from local legends, but their focus is the environment itself. As Alma Strettell noted in her introduction to the collection, the stories are based on the landscape that surrounds Sylva’s home in Sinaia, specifically the Carpathian Mountains and ‘the districts traversed by the Pelesch river.’³⁰⁹ With this in mind, it not only contains a greater

³⁰⁹ Alma Strettell, ‘Introduction,’ in *Legends from River and Mountain*, v.

number of topographical references than *Dracula*, but also a greater degree of local insight.

Rather than referring to the Carpathian Mountain range as a whole, Sylva's collection breaks down the landscape by considering the local legends behind individual mountains. Stories such as 'The Jipi', 'Virful Cu Dor', 'Furnica' and 'Piatra Arsa,' are centred on a mountain of the same name. Each possesses a separate, mystical origin. The stories most frequently describe men and women who sacrifice themselves for others and are transformed into the landscapes they once inhabited. Yet these stories are locked into the wider landscape of Romania as a whole as a result of topographical references that run through the collection, including the Prahova valley, the Bucegi Mountain range and the Danube. Cultural terms are also threaded throughout Sylva's work. As discussed in Chapter Three, footnotes are included for certain terms and 'The Stag's Valley' and 'The Witch's Stronghold' contain translations for the Romanian names of principal protagonists, referenced in parentheses or footnotes.

That is not to suggest that Stoker's work ignores Romanian culture. Again, there is an interesting degree of cross-over between *Dracula* and Sylva's work in terms of their recognition of Romania's historical ties to the Ottoman Empire, which controlled Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania until the end of the Russo-Turkish War. Stoker acknowledges this link in his somewhat vague references to 'traditions of Turkish rule' but Sylva is far more detailed, since some of her stories focus specifically on the wars that occurred under Ottoman rule.³¹⁰ 'Vrancia,' one of the shortest of Sylva's stories, published in the third issue of the

³¹⁰*Dracula*, p. 31.

Lady's Realm, focuses on Stefan the Great (1433-1504). He was the Prince of Moldavia between 1457 and 1504, achieving fame as a result of his resistance against the Ottoman Empire as well as for protecting Moldavia's independence during periods of Hungarian and Polish hostility. Sylva's story features Stefan, alone in the Vrancea Mountains, 'seeking to hide himself from his enemies,' who had beaten him in battle and scattered his troops.³¹¹ He is given shelter by an old woman, who, unbeknown to him, has realised his true identity and is determined to help him. She dispatches her seven sons in different directions in order to recruit a new army. Revitalised, Stefan begins another battle, and, once victorious, thanks the family by giving each son one of the mountains. Whilst Sylva's final lines emphasise the 'valorous women' who are dedicated to helping their sons and leaders to achieve greatness, the story also creates a broader image of Romanian – and specifically Moldavian – patriotism: princes protecting their country and the local people who fight unconditionally for them.³¹²

It is unclear as to which battle the story refers, due to the lack of dates or a more specific reference to the origins of the enemy. It is likely, however, that it concerns the Battle of Valea Albă (or Battle of Războieni) in June 1476, waged between the Moldavian army, led by Stefan, and the Ottoman army, led by Sultan Mehmed II. It resulted in heavy losses for the Moldavian troops and Stefan was forced to retreat. Moldavian victory was finally achieved due to a combination of the resistance by the Moldavian fortresses, the outbreak of illness among the ottomans and a 'guerrilla campaign' waged by Stefan and a Prince of Wallachia –

³¹¹Carmen Sylva, 'Vrancea,' *The Lady's Realm*, November 1897-April 1898, p. 70.

³¹²*Ibid.*, p. 71

the ‘infamous’ Vlad III Dracula (1431-1476).³¹³ If this was indeed the war Sylva depicted, then it provides another interesting connection to Stoker, whose Dracula regales Jonathan Harker with stories of driving back ‘the Turks’ and has ‘a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship.’³¹⁴ But while Dracula emphasises the importance of blood, Sylva proffers a story of heroism in the face of adversity, not just from lords, but the common man (and woman), who ‘are as free as their mountains, and as wise as their heroes.’³¹⁵ In reworking centuries-old wars with legends to create an image of Romanian persistence and success, Sylva’s story becomes the antithesis to Stoker’s, whose Transylvanian terrors take delight in the destruction of others.³¹⁶

Stoker and Sylva’s references to Romanian culture are not, however, limited to historical events, but also extend into the daily lives of the Romanian population, specifically their eating habits. Jonathan Harker writes that he was served ‘mamaliga’ for breakfast, a ‘sort of porridge’ – often compared to polenta – that Sylva also references on two occasions.³¹⁷ One such reference occurred prior to Stoker’s novel. In a non-fictional account of peasant life in Romania,

³¹³ Alexander Mikaberidze, ‘Războieni, Battle of (1476),’ in *Conflict and Conquest in the Islamic World. A Historical Encyclopaedia*, ed. by Alexander Mikaberidze (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2011), p. 737.

³¹⁴ Dracula, p. 59.

³¹⁵ ‘Vrancia,’ p. 71.

³¹⁶ Sylva’s stories also feature the more contemporary Russo-Turkish War in ‘The Siege of Widin. An Episode in the Russo-Turkish War,’ which was published in the fourth issue of the *Lady’s Realm* (1898) and reprinted in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*. ‘Decebal’s Daughter,’ published in the first volume of the *Woman’s World* (1888), is also a fictional account of war, in this instance between the Romans and the Dacians, which occurred in the first century.

³¹⁷ Dracula, p. 33.

published in 1889, she stated that ‘life is extremely simple among the peasants of Roumania. The principal dish at every meal is the maize cake (*mamaliga*).’³¹⁸

Her more complicated use of the term however – beyond its traditional use as a foodstuff – is part of her story ‘A Roumanian Vendetta’. Here it is given as food, but is also used in the context of a child being spoiled by an overprotective mother. Sylva uses the reference pejoratively at the point where the principal protagonist, Sanda, is denouncing Anca’s treatment of her baby. She states that he will ‘never be one of us; he will turn mamaliga’ – to which ‘milksoy’ appears the closest equivalent.³¹⁹ This translation is also included in the English translation from 1903, which provides the added detail that it is ‘the national polenta and staple food of the Roumanian peasantry.’³²⁰ Sylva’s use of the term therefore broadens her reader’s understanding of Romanian culture. She not only introduces cultural terminology to her readers, but highlights the idiomatic resemblances between Romania and Britain. Both countries use a similar phrase to achieve the same level of derision.

To a certain degree, Sylva maintains the degree of difference found in *Dracula*, as well as Samuelson and Williams’s non-fictional accounts, but her stories, in part due to the prominence of realist features over gothic tropes, do not seem to serve the same purpose. Adherence to stereotypical ‘otherness’ and exotic dangers is initially epitomised in ‘Nine Days,’ which was discussed in Chapter Four. Being bitten by a rabid dog whilst walking in Bucharest is the catalyst for the story and for its resolution. The dog is both the angel of death and the hope of marital salvation, as Louis and Anna are able to reconcile during the nine days.

³¹⁸Carmen Sylva, ‘Peasant Life in Roumania,’ *The Forum*, June 1889, p. 462.

³¹⁹‘A Roumanian Vendetta,’ p. 46.

³²⁰*Ibid.*

Ironically, the exotic danger of Romania has the power to heal. As was exemplified through her use of ‘mamaliga,’ Sylva expands her reader’s knowledge of Romania, providing them with detailed insight into the country and its culture. Her work is more detailed than Stoker’s in this respect. Stoker had never been to Romania – had never travelled further than Vienna according to Barbara Belford.³²¹ His closest connection to Romania stemmed from his brother George, who was a volunteer with the Turkish army during the Russo-Turkish War.³²² It is, of course, not necessary to have visited a place in order to write about it – especially since it is England, specifically London, which is the focal setting in *Dracula*. It is also important to note that Jonathan Harker is a tourist in Transylvania, whereas Sylva’s characters are natives of Romania. Her stories chronicle the lives of peasant people and the monsters lurking within the human psyche, rather than the gothic terrors that people Stoker’s text. It is therefore unsurprising that Sylva, having lived there since 1869 and with this focus on traditional life and customs, would have a more detailed depiction of Romania in her work.

‘Neaga’ also adheres to a depiction of Romanian ‘otherness’ that is initially akin to the ‘barbarity’ Stoker describes. However, this again seems to be a perfunctory interpretation. Samuelson, as previously discussed, described the Romanian judicial system, changes to which involved the abolition of the death penalty and the introduction of forced labour in the salt mines. He notes that two of the five salt mines in Romania are worked by convicts and that the majority of the prisoners are illiterate, having only received religious education. He describes

³²¹ Barbara Belford, *Bram Stoker* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), p. 220.

³²² Jimmie E. Cain, *Bram Stoker and Russophobia* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2006), p. 103.

a visit to a mine, noting the ‘foul’ air but concluding that they receive ‘wholesome’ food and that Romania makes a ‘handsome profit’ from such enterprises, although the workers rarely complete their term of imprisonment, often receiving a royal pardon or a reduced sentence.³²³

Sylva’s story adds some literary colour to Samuelson’s account. It begins inside such a mine and a degree of sympathy is created through references to the ‘impenetrable gloom,’ rattling chains and the restricted movement of pale, phantom-like convicts who live and work in ‘Dante’s hell.’³²⁴ The reader’s pity is heightened through the introduction of the two main characters, Sandu and Vlad, who, unbeknown to them, are both connected to the titular character, Neaga. Sandu is her lover and committed a crime of passion for her sake – stabbing the man who insulted her. Vlad is her father, also imprisoned for murder, this time of the village tyrant who had beaten Vlad’s sister to death. Vlad, whose actions are reminiscent of John Barton’s in Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* (1848), drew lots with the other men and became the murderer. Unlike Barton, Vlad took sole responsibility for the crime as soon as it was committed and has been in the mine for sixteen years.

Sylva gives a face to the plight of the prisoner and, unlike Samuelson, never discusses the mining in the context of the Romanian economy, emphasising, if not the injustice of the system – both men have committed murder – the terrible conditions. The story’s setting, however, soon shifts, perhaps in an effort to avoid further social commentary. The newly crowned Prince and Princess visit the mine, pardon Vlad and enable him to seek out his daughter. Insight into Romanian life

³²³ Samuelson, pp. 103-112.

³²⁴ Carmen Sylva, ‘Neaga,’ in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories*, pp. 101-102.

and culture continues, as the local ‘hora’ and performances by the Lautari gypsies are described as well as the ‘Salba.’ This is a traditional necklace worn by peasant women, in this instance decorated with money provided by the princess. The story then continues to chart the reunion of Neaga and Vlad, their hardships, Vlad’s death and Neaga’s happiness with Sandu, who eventually leaves the mine. Unlike Stoker’s cultural safari, Sylva attempts to immerse her British readers in the hardships of Romanian life, but also its successes. Neaga and Sandu achieve happiness: marriage, a family, financial security and a formal pardon for Sandu, which allows them to return to their village. These are conventional successes that the British reader would not find unusual, despite the ‘oriental’ setting. Again, Sylva’s stories question the one-dimensional ‘barbarity’ found in Stoker’s narrative, drawing parallels between Britain and Romania that overcome the differences in language and environment.

Similarly, the sense of difference emphasised in the stories set in Romania’s historical past is tempered by the simple fact that due to their historical setting, this degree of difference has long since passed. Romania has changed, as epitomised by the accounts given by the boyar’s daughter in ‘The Gipsy’s Love Story’ who, as discussed in the previous chapter, objects to the treatment of Cassandra and wishes to implement new methods. Sylva is engaging with contemporary stereotypes of a polarised East and West. ‘The Gipsy’s Love Story’ presents the latter as synonymous with progress and enlightened thinking, yet Sylva also deconstructs these clichés by hinting that the barbarity associated with eastern Europe is not a permanent fixture of the landscape: the backwardness that Stoker depicts in his narrative is problematised in Sylva’s. In this way, her work

supports Todorova's argument that the East 'often invokes labels of semideveloped, semicolonial, semicivilized [*sic*], semioriental.'³²⁵ The Balkan states are a metaphorical bridge between eastern and western culture, but symbolise gradual change, rather than cultural stagnation.

Whilst Stoker's novel is more strongly orientated around the barbaric, the alien and the deviant, Romanian life is used by Sylva as the basis for a more complicated engagement with rights, female education and relationships. Sylva gives British readers a sense of Romanian life beyond the one-dimensional, superstitious peasants that Stoker depicted and which were found in non-fictional accounts. In doing so, she manipulates the cultural differences that were emphasised by other writers in order to alienate their readers from Romanian culture. There might be some differences between Britain and Romania in terms of habits, landscape and language, but Sylva indicates that the similarities far outweigh them. She reaffirmed and reworked British perceptions of Romania to provide her readers with a broader understanding of the country she would be part of for forty-five years.

What is it then, that has allowed Sylva's work to be forgotten, and Stoker's to be held up as a classic piece of fiction, despite the similarities between them? There may be a number of reasons to explain why the author who wrote about Romania in far more detail and far more frequently, has received little critical attention. This includes the popularity of the Gothic novel and status of the short story, the latter often disregarded during the nineteenth century as 'lightweight,' produced solely for financial remuneration, and lacking in literary

³²⁵Todorova, p. 16.

value. Even today, as I noted in the introduction, popular fiction is subject to literary stigmatizing. Sylva's marginalisation may also be testament to the status of women's writing: their literary preoccupations may occur before those of their male counterparts – and in more detail – but they are not remembered for it. Indeed, Talia Schaffer has shown the 'residue' of Ouida's work in Oscar Wilde's, arguing that Wilde adopted and adapted her style into his own.³²⁶ For Schaffer, male aesthetes were reacting to Ouida, but this has been forgotten due to her popularity and the scathing reviews she received from critics. Sylva and Stoker have a similar relationship: they are responding to the same topic, but Sylva's work was overlooked as a result of her personal popularity as well as negative attitudes to her work.

Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly clear that Carmen Sylva was one of Romania's most famous exports during the nineteenth century. Reassessing her literary presence and her work thus heightens our awareness of late nineteenth-century engagement with the East as well as the methods that writers like Sylva employed in order to address issues that transcended spatial boundaries and were relevant on an international level.

5.3. Edith Nesbit and forgotten short stories of the *fin-de-siècle*.

E. Nesbit, as discussed in the previous chapter, is another contemporary of Sylva with whose life and work there are number of interesting links. Both women published in *Belgravia* and *Good Words*, the *Lady's Realm* and the *Strand* – although not necessarily in the same issues – and like Sylva, Nesbit's life was

³²⁶Schaffer, p. 151.

subject to biased biographical accounts. Julia Briggs, for example, writes that one of Nesbit's early biographers, Doris Langley Moore, was obliged to 'smooth out the wrinkles,' in Nesbit's life, downplaying her somewhat unconventional family life and relationships with the likes of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), in order to adhere to Nesbit's reputation as a children's writer and maternal figure.³²⁷

Nesbit's 'unconventional feminism' – which Michelle Smith links to her short hair, smoking and cycling – could also be compared and contrasted with Sylva, whose own apparently eccentric dress sense did not always indicate radical beliefs.³²⁸ As was mentioned in Chapter Three, Sylva was often cautious when discussing the New Woman in non-fictional articles and Nesbit is reported to have expressed similar attitudes. Although she socialised with New Women such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the feminist Charlotte Wilson (1854-1944), Nesbit expressed distaste for such issues, lecturing the Fabian Women's Group on 'The Natural Disabilities of Women' in 1908 and rejecting women's suffrage.³²⁹ Both Sylva and Nesbit depicted elements of the New Woman in their work, alongside scathing views of abusive or negligent men, but their non-fictional views problematise this apparently progressive perspective. The binary blurring in their work – between female angel and female demon – extends into their personal lives as well as their literature. Public recognition of this may have resulted in both women's work being seen as contradictory or muddled.

Nesbit, like Sylva, published prolifically in a variety of genres. But where Sylva's literary productions have entirely fallen from favour, Nesbit is known for

³²⁷ Julia Briggs, *A Woman of Passion. The Life of E. Nesbit 1858-1924* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), xiv-xv.

³²⁸ Michelle Smith, 'E. Nesbit's Psammead Trilogy: Reconfiguring Time, Nation, and Gender,' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 52 (2009), 300.

³²⁹ Briggs, p. 124.

her children's fiction, including *Five Children and It* (1902) and *The Railway Children* (1906). Her reputation is centred on this genre and has been maintained by contemporary criticism. Like Sylva, it could be argued that Nesbit's reputation has caused the marginalisation of her adult fiction. It was Sylva's royal status and public celebrity that contributed to her work fading from public recognition and for Nesbit, aligned so closely with her successful children's fiction, her reputation as a more diverse writer struggled – and ultimately failed – to survive. The various collections of short stories produced during her lifetime, which range from romantic tales to ghost stories, receive little modern attention. Short story collections such as *Grim Tales* (1893), *In Homespun* (1896), *The Literary Sense* (1903) or *Man and Maid* (1906) are now largely out of print.³³⁰ Nesbit has become part of a group of 'women writers for children.'³³¹

Whilst recognising that during Nesbit's lifetime, the 'marginality of children's books kept them in low esteem,' Briggs agrees that her adult fiction – poetry, novels and short stories – have largely been forgotten. She qualifies this by suggesting that Nesbit had no 'illusions about her adult fiction, which was written in a popular, romantic style [...] primarily to pay the bills.'³³² Briggs goes on to argue that *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* (1899) is 'preoccupied with the fulfilment (or lack of it) of literary structures (much more successfully than *The Literary Sense* was to be),' and describes 'Cinderella' – taken from *The Literary*

³³⁰There have been recent reprints of her ghost stories, e.g. *The Power of Darkness. Tales of Terror* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2006) but more realistic tales of family life are now only available by 'print on demand' publishers.

³³¹Lynne Vallone 'Women writing for children,' in *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, p. 295.

³³²Briggs, p. 401.

Sense – as ‘negligible.’³³³ I argue, however, that this reluctance to discuss Nesbit’s short stories is similar to the reception of Sylva’s work: it is a result of the lack of literary value attributed to a certain style of short story. As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, it is not necessarily the genre as a whole that is seen to be insignificant, but the valorisation of modernist short fiction has led to the marginalisation of other efforts.

As discussed with regard to Sylva’s work in the final section of Chapter Four, the content of Nesbit’s stories may have also resulted in her work being seen as difficult to categorise, particularly in the context of the ‘Woman Question.’ The blurring of the conventional with more progressive elements, coupled with the ‘grey areas’ found in their non-fictional work and opinions, does not result in the narrative tidiness that seems to be prized by reviewers and critics. Subsequently, this may have resulted in the work being seen as derivative or confused. Their work exhibits a degree of ‘mixed’ feminism, which is at odds with modern views of the feminist. As this section will indicate, this attitude is an underestimation of both women’s collections.

Michelle Smith, discussing the role of Anthea in the Psammead series alongside Nesbit’s critique of imperialism, argues that her work has a feminist undercurrent: ‘through Nesbit’s focus on women’s capacity for nurturing in these adventures, she elevates the status of women and collective, supportive behaviours in direct contradiction of the phallogentric logic of male heroes on an individualist quest in which they are rewarded for violence and aggression – a compelling feminist alternative.’³³⁴ Yet Smith also appears to note the limitations

³³³ Briggs, p. 188; p. 328.

³³⁴ Smith, 301.

of Nesbit's feminism. Although not described in such terms, she notes that Anthea soon reverts to type, citing instances of her crying or placing flowers in a vase in a 'useless response to a situation.'³³⁵ When these arguments are combined, Smith is describing the same grey area found in Nesbit's adult fiction, including her ghost stories. 'The Haunted Inheritance,' for example, is the story of Lawrence Sefton, who is left a large inheritance by an uncle. However, this estate must be divided between Lawrence and his cousin Selwyn, who Lawrence assumes is a man. Lawrence returns home to find the house is in ruins, but is resolved to possess it. He encounters a beautiful lady in pink, who also wishes to look around. The two break into the house and explore, as the woman reveals the house's haunted past. Later, alone in the inn, Lawrence believes he had seen his cousin Selwyn and decides to scare him away by pretending to be the ghost, but is terrified to discover another ghost in the house. This phantom, however, is revealed to be the lady in pink. Once recovered from a fainting fit, she reveals herself to be Selwyn. She had recognised Lawrence and devised the same plan: to pretend to be the ghost so she could have the house for herself.

We might view Selwyn's actions as unconventional – a form of selfishly-motivated bravery that sees her going against the quiet Angel in the House role and masquerading as a spirit. Nesbit's choice of name supports this reading: it is gender-neutral, hence Lawrence's confusion. Nevertheless, this apparent boundary breaking is qualified by her reaction: fainting into Lawrence's arms and asking tearfully for forgiveness, whilst recognising that she can 'never respect [herself] again.'³³⁶ She quickly reverts to a childlike state: 'at first she clung to me

³³⁵Ibid., 305.

³³⁶E. Nesbit, 'The Haunted Inheritance,' in *Man and Maid* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), p. 29.

as a frightened child clings, and her tears were the prettiest, saddest things to see.³³⁷ Lawrence's affection stems from her childish – and by extension pure – actions. He then suggests that they renovate the house together. Once it is restored, Lawrence proposes to his 'piteous' cousin and concludes that 'our house it is.'³³⁸ There is an element of equality here – both wanted the house, worked on it and have now come together in a marriage that, it is implied, will also be a product of two minds, rather than patriarchal ownership. Although this idea is qualified by the knowledge that it comes from Lawrence's perspective – we hear nothing of the marriage and his idea of equality is not revealed to us – Selwyn's characterisation is a mix of dependent angel and a woman with her own mind and motivations, an element that Sylva's work shares.

Many of Sylva's women, including Frosi, Augusta, Sanda and Anna, draw obvious parallels with those of Nesbit in terms of a blending of stereotypically traditional and progressive qualities, and comparisons are not limited to Nesbit's ghost stories. 'Coals of Fire,' is a story focalised through an unnamed mother, who lives on a barge with her husband Tom and their daughter Mary, who becomes engaged to a young blacksmith, named Bill. He abandons her at the altar but sensationally – and much like Temorah in *Edleen Vaughan* – Mary is pregnant, having succumbed to 'wickedness' the night before the wedding, thinking there was no 'harm in it, and us being so nearly man and wife.'³³⁹ The family bands together, but Mary refuses to show her face among society. Bill returns one night, seeking shelter from pursuing soldiers, but when he speaks to Mary and offers to marry her, she remains aloof, standing 'like a Queen' and

³³⁷Ibid., p. 26.

³³⁸Ibid., p. 31.

³³⁹E. Nesbit, 'Coals of Fire,' in *In Homespun*, p. 69.

rejecting his advances.³⁴⁰ Despite her mother's suggestion that he make an 'honest woman' of her, Mary stands firm: "'I'm as honest as I want to be,'" says she, "and the child is all my own now."'³⁴¹

This clear avowal of independence – and recognition of child custody laws which, if they had been married, might have resulted in the loss of the child – is nevertheless counteracted by the grey area that clouds the end of the story. When Bill is found dying – of 'weakness' caused by typhoid – he proposes again.³⁴² Without a word of admonishment, she accepts. This comes at a point when Bill has admitted that he wants to be 'made an honest man of,' and the doctor has stated that in marrying Bill, Mary has saved his life.³⁴³ There is thus an element of female strength, albeit tempered by the increasingly worn-out cliché of female power tied to nurture and care – as Sylva had indicated through Augusta in 'A Pen and Ink Confession,' who eventually runs the household, but only because her husband is incapable of doing so. Like Sylva's female heroines, who undergo physical and emotional transformations in order to be rewarded, the once cold queen in Nesbit's story has fundamentally altered: Mary is 'cryin' all over 'er face, and kissin' 'im,' as she admits that she loved him all along.³⁴⁴ Both Sylva and Nesbit resist a more progressive ending – in this instance, Augusta or Mary raising their children alone – and return to the ideal family unit. The vices of the male characters have miraculously abated through the love of a good woman and for Nesbit, Mary's anger is long since passed.

³⁴⁰Ibid., p. 72.

³⁴¹Ibid.

³⁴²Ibid., p. 73.

³⁴³Ibid.

³⁴⁴Ibid.

This oscillation between traditional and progressive conforms to Valerie Sanders's argument concerning the changeable nature of anti-feminist writing. Sanders notes that it was 'often difficult for a woman to decide where she stood in many debates about women's rights. [...] In novelists, as opposed to pure theorists, the interplay of ideas is more unstable, exposed by ambiguous characterisation and dialogue, uncertain endings, and an undertow of dissent from the apparent ideological direction of the work as a whole, opening up deep fissures of self-contradiction.'³⁴⁵ As I noted in the introduction, Sylva's work does not entirely conform to an anti-feminist genre. If anti-feminist texts possess didactic elements, then Sylva's descriptions of extreme sexual and physical violence against women, as well as women who commit suicide rather than conform (Yutta and Florica, for example), do not easily adhere to this necessary level of propriety. However, Sylva does draw parallels with Sanders's definition in terms of the ambiguity and unstable ideas that she depicts. Similarly, Amelia A. Rutledge notes that Nesbit's work was rendered non-controversial by these strategies of 'displacement and distancing with regard to feminist issues, whether by adoption of the fantastic mode [...] or by substituting for polemic the compensatory fantasy characteristics of popular romance.'³⁴⁶ In this instance, the 'fantasy characteristics' in 'Coals of Fire' are Bill's survival, his fundamental change of heart and Mary's willing acceptance of him – elements that conform to conventions of 'popular romance' and that Sylva has also woven into her stories in order to achieve a positive outcome. We might, for example, question the realism of 'Shaded Canvasses': Matthes not only survives being shot in the face, but he can still speak to and see

³⁴⁵ Valerie Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, pp. 1-2.

³⁴⁶ Amelia A. Rutledge, 'E. Nesbit and the woman question,' in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, p. 225.

his wife. Similarly, his horrific injury does not prevent him from hurting Frosi, or later, conceiving children with her. Although physically disfigured, Reinhold in 'A Pen and Ink Confession' can also have a relatively normal life.

However, the displacement of reality is not without its benefits. Rutledge's argument concludes by recognising that Nesbit's narrative strategies resulted in her adult fiction receiving limited critical attention, but that she is a figure who provides a 'valuable middle term between equally adamant feminists and anti-feminists' – a middle ground that Sylva also occupies.³⁴⁷ Neither writer is sitting on the proverbial fence, hence their frequent depictions of vice, violence and mistakes made on both sides, but they do not place the same degree of emphasis on female independence as other women writers. Their work is instead a combination of traditional ideas coexisting with progressive ones. It is not an overt protest, or a clear affirmation of traditional ideas, but a push-and-pull narrative that seeks to balance both.

This is most clearly seen in Nesbit's 'The Unfaithful Lover,' which describes the breakdown of a relationship after the unnamed male protagonist confesses to kissing another woman at a dance. It links to Sylva's depictions of miscommunication in 'Red Leaves,' 'Nine Days' and 'Shaded Canvasses.' Rather than saying what she really feels, the woman responds hysterically to her lover's confession, dubbing him a betrayer and a heartbreaker. This stems from her 'literary sense' – ideas she read in books and believes should be replicated in real life – for 'what opinion would he form of the purity of her mind, the innocence of her soul, if an incident like this failed to shock her deeply?'³⁴⁸ She believes that

³⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 235-236.

³⁴⁸E. Nesbit, 'The Unfaithful Lover,' in *The Literary Sense* (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), p. 7.

she can only be seen as pure and innocent by going against her own nature, which urges her to forgive him. For Nesbit, 'literary sense' means a lack of common sense, but this accusation is not levelled at the female characters alone. Her lover leaves angrily – without paying for their tea and cake – and, although he loved her and wanted to make amends, 'he, also, had what she never suspected in him – the literary sense.'³⁴⁹ This leads him to join the army.

Like Sylva's pairings of Frosi and Matthes and Anna and Louis, the couple misunderstand each other. Their pride results in their unhappiness. In South Africa, Nesbit's unnamed lover dies of enteric without seeing any of the fighting he believes would allow him to return home as a hero. Destiny, as the story's sardonic narrator concludes, 'is almost without the literary sense.'³⁵⁰ The girl, however, complies with her 'literary' beliefs and never takes another lover. As in Sylva's 'Red Leaves,' lives are ruined as a result of adherence to social – and in Nesbit's case literary – expectations. Nesbit's stories take a more tragic turn than most of Sylva's. With the exception of Yutta, Sylva often allows her redeemable couples to change and reconcile. Nevertheless, Nesbit and Sylva present the degree to which flaws are found in men and women, as well as the repercussions for those who have ingested the flawed belief system of their societies. In acting out a prescribed role, these people destroy themselves.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the recovery of Sylva's oeuvre and a detailed discussion of her work expand our knowledge of nineteenth-century debates and their complexity. Considering Sylva in the context of her more successful – yet also partially marginalised – contemporary allows a dual

³⁴⁹Ibid., p. 10

³⁵⁰Ibid.

recuperation to occur: Nesbit's short fiction is shown to possess the same grey areas and binary blurring as Sylva's, leading to the argument that both women's collections faded from critical interest as a result of this unrecognised ambiguity. This short fiction, already seen as of less literary value than other genres, resists conventional categorisation and thus does not receive critical consideration. By making comparisons between their stories, this hitherto underestimated detail can be reconsidered.

These case studies have shown the benefits of reassessing a marginalised writer. They have positioned Sylva's work in the context of nineteenth-century British culture and its engagement with the dangerous 'foreign other,' as well as with more familiar landscapes, such as Wales. Links between Hemans and Nesbit in particular, both of whom were, to a certain extent, marginalised by critics during their lifetimes and posthumously, allows Sylva's recuperation to benefit a wider literary community, one that seeks a more encompassing knowledge of the period and its writers. Comparisons with these three writers have also indicated the potential reasons for Sylva's literary obscurity, in terms of her reception as a female author and engagement with cultural debates.

Chapter Six. Carmen Sylva's literary legacy.

'If you are to be great, your person must disappear behind your work.'

- Carmen Sylva, *Thoughts of A Queen*

So wrote Carmen Sylva in *Thoughts of A Queen*. It is unclear whether this was a self-conscious comment, especially since a number of her volumes drew attention to her status, including the one above. Yet the aphorism serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy: Sylva did not achieve literary 'greatness' because, in part, of her status. She was never taken entirely seriously as a professional writer within British literary culture and her reputation was always qualified with references to her high-status lifestyle. Sylva was known as a queen who writes, not as a writer – a poet-queen, not a poet. Her pen name became obsolete because publishers, advertisers, critics and journalists consistently focused on her personal life. As a result, critical discussions of her work occurred alongside mythologising descriptions of her background. These exaggerated accounts were developed further by numerous biographies and this bias, coupled with her involvement in social scandals, such as the Ferdinand-Vacaresco affair, meant that Sylva was unable to escape the reputation that preceded her.

Connected to this emphasis on her background are broader British attitudes to Romania, and particularly to Germany, both of which have also exerted a negative force on her literary reputation. As shown in Chapter Three, there was a British interest in the East, but it was tinged with imperialist rhetoric, designed to elevate western superiority and portray Romania as exotic, but technologically backwards and dangerous. Anglo-German relations had become increasingly tense towards the end of the nineteenth century, due to a combination

of commercial and political rivalries.³⁵¹ Although there were pro-German supporters – and Sylva herself was made a member of the Royal Society of Literature shortly before the outbreak of war – the Great War stimulated a rise in anti-German feeling in Britain and cannot be overestimated as a reason for Sylva's eventual marginalisation. As German associations and businesses were forcibly closed down and anti-German rioting occurred in the major cities, it is unsurprising that British publications chose to avoid reporting on German writers and their literary activity. Sylva died two years into the war, in the midst of this backlash and these circumstances, coupled with the tensions within her own identity – where she was recognised as more of a queen than an author – seem to have made her writing less appealing to the British public.

Another layer to this marginalisation stemmed from the prevailing attitudes towards women's writing. The British preoccupation with Sylva's status and the suggestion that she should focus on her royal duties, rather than her writing, has been discussed in Chapter Three. These attitudes reflect the status of women's writing in the period and, in particular, the disparaging of the professional woman writer. Incapable of producing 'great' work, many critics called for their return to the domestic sphere. Sylva's writing habits, then, in a climate that did not appreciate the prolific woman writer, contributed to her marginalisation. I have argued that her personal popularity caused her work to be viewed negatively and there is an added level of complexity here: her status does not make her a 'serious' writer and the fact that her work became popular as a result of an interested public buying and reading it is not an acceptable quality

³⁵¹See Appendix Seven for a more detailed discussion of Anglo-German relations.

either. Popularity in any form was due to conforming to the masses, not creating art. Sylva produced a diverse range of material and was perceived to lack the restraint needed to be 'literary'. This attitude spread to the content of the work, which for some reviewers was unsuitable for almost every audience. Debates about the inappropriate content and the intended audience extended to her engagement with the 'Woman Question', which, due to its blurring of traditional gender norms, was difficult to categorise. Coupled with the elitist attitude to short stories that developed with the advent of Modernism, this prejudice meant that her writing was not recognised as of literary significance.

Yet, as I have argued throughout this thesis, there was, and is, a place for Carmen Sylva in British literary culture. This thesis has established her connections to Britain, both in terms of visits she made as well as her literary presence in British periodicals. It has argued that her contribution to the short story genre and engagement with the 'Woman Question' provides deeper insight into the ambiguous nature of the debate and that through reassessing Sylva, it is possible to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of other nineteenth-century writers and their works. Her oeuvre, particularly with regard to her short fiction, is part of the complex representation of gender roles in *fin de siècle* Britain and on an international scale: the controversial and at times ambiguous discussions about the role of women were not limited to Britain. There were not universally accepted responses to the issue – as the boomerang nature of Sylva's own work indicates – but they were diverse. Investigating responses to gender debates in the nineteenth century would be an area that future work could explore in more depth. Anglo-German women writers, who, as I noted in Chapter One,

have received less critical attention than their male counterparts, would form one aspect of this discussion – in terms of their presence in British literary culture as well as their engagement with topical issues. However, there remain a number of British women writers who should also be considered in this respect. The work of Rhoda Broughton could be reappraised and E. Nesbit's short fiction could be reconsidered as part of the development of the short story genre, as well as for its oscillating depictions of women's roles.

Recuperating Sylva's work enables modern critics to continue to examine definitions of literary value. Popular writing has often been overlooked and devalued, despite the insights it provides into the reading habits of the Victorian public. This is especially true of the short story and its evolution into a genre that is now praised for its formal complexity. Yet for Sylva, it was a way to not only generate financial profits, but to take advantage of the popularity of periodical culture. Her work therefore offers, in cultural terms, a broader understanding of the *fin-de-siècle*, indicative of the interests of the Victorian reader and the high demand for short fiction. This argument can be extended to encompass the literary traditions Sylva was working within, especially though her comparison with other nineteenth-century writers such as Bram Stoker and Felicia Hemans. The work she produced for the Welsh Eisteddfod and her engagement with Welsh culture in *Edleen Vaughan* is evidence of Sylva adhering to a tradition that elevated the poet-bard and emphasised the magic of music. With regard to the depiction of Romania, her work provides a cultural link that has hitherto remained unrecognised. Sylva's stories feature aspects of western engagement with the East that writers like Stoker would also utilise.

In short, this thesis proposes that Carmen Sylva has a place in nineteenth-century literary history, in terms of the genres she contributed to and the thematic concerns she engaged with. Recuperating her oeuvre into critical consciousness will improve our understanding of various strands of nineteenth-century literary culture and it will also allow a new generation of readers to enjoy a diverse range of fiction by a prolific and popular writer.

Appendices.

Appendix One. Carmen Sylva and Llandudno

The appendix contains photographs taken in Llandudno, as evidence of Sylva's physical presence. Also included is a map of Llandudno, specifically the Craig-y-Don suburb, and the email received from a curator at the Llandudno archives.



Fig. 1. Photograph taken by author, Llandudno, May 2011.



Fig. 2. Photograph taken by author, Llandudno, May 2011.



Fig. 3. Photograph taken by author, Llandudno, May 2011.



Fig.4. Photograph taken by author, Llandudno, May 2011.



Fig. 5. Photograph taken by author, Llandudno, May 2011.



Fig. 6. Photograph taken by author, Llandudno, May 2011.

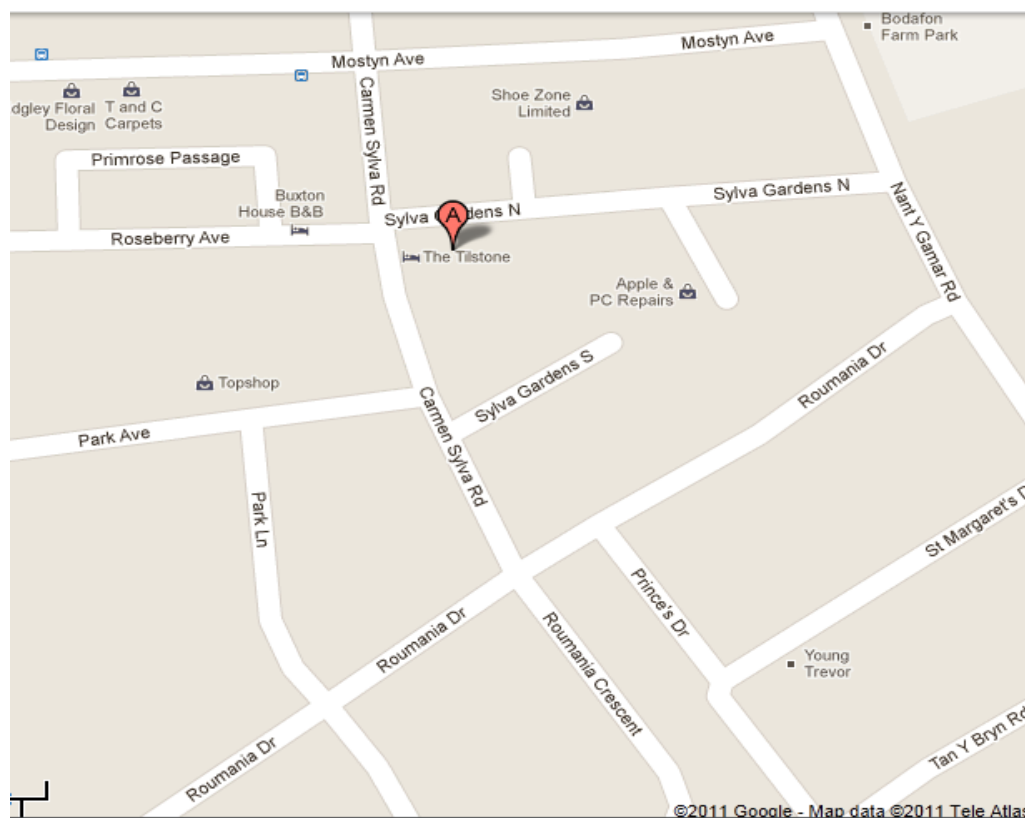


Fig. 7. Map of the Craig-y-Don area. Taken from *Google Maps* <<http://maps.google.co.uk/>> (accessed 25 August 2011).

Fig. 8. Email sent to the Llandudno archives (the name of the archivist has been made anonymous):

RE: Road names in Llandudno.

Susan E— [Susan.E—@conwy.gov.uk] on behalf of archives
[Archifau.Archives@conwy.gov.uk]

Sent: 03 August 2011 12:30

To: Laura Nixon [aexln@nottingham.ac.uk]

Dear Ms Nixon

Thank you for your enquiry about Llandudno street names.

The Queen of Romania's visit to Llandudno was in 1890 and, as far as I can tell from various building plans, the group of streets named after her that you mention, were constructed from soon after that (1897 is the earliest I've found in our collection) and were still being built / extended in the 1930s.

I hope that this is of help.

With best wishes,

Susan E—.

Appendix Two. Carmen Sylva's literary presence

This appendix contains information relating to data from *British Periodicals Online*. This database has been chosen to indicate how Sylva's literary presence can be tracked and analysed.

Included below is a more complex table than that presented in Chapter Two. Results have been broken down by decade in order to illustrate the peaks and troughs in British interest. Footnotes have been included to explain certain categories.

2.1 *British Periodicals Online* results in more detail.

<u>Decade</u>	1780-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1919	1920-1929	1930+	<u>Total</u>
<u>Type of article</u>								
Advertising (buy and sell). ¹	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Advertising (primary text).	0	21	39	28	6	0	0	94
Advertising (secondary literature).	0	4	17	0	2	0	0	23
Article on or that mentions Sylva.	0	3	31	20	11	0	0	65
Article on/ by Sylva. ²	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
Brief reference (society context). ³	0	11	66	25	5	2	0	109
Contents page reference.	0	3	28	22	7	0	0	60
False positive.	29	15	8	11	0	2	0	65
False positive and reference to primary text.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Image.	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Music. ⁴	0	13	11	14	0	2	1	41

¹This was an advert placed in *Bow Bells* on 3 April 1891 by A. Lowry of London, listing unwanted books in the 'Sale and Exchange Column'. It references a short story collection entitled 'Christmas Number Tales,' and lists Sylva as a contributor alongside the journalist and novelist G. R. Sims (1847-1922) and the novelist and spiritualist, Florence Marryat (1833-1899). I have not been able to discover more information on this volume.

²These articles were written between April 1905 and November 1909 and published in the *Review of Reviews* (the exception is one article published in May 1905 in the *Musical Herald*). These articles reference and quote from non-fictional articles by Sylva, which had been previously published in other periodicals.

³References to Sylva in the context of her immediate family, other members of European royalty, or writers who knew her.

Not available. ⁵	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Obituary.	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Primary text.	0	3	6	4	2	0	0	15
Reference to play. ⁶	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Reference and primary text. ⁷	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Reference to primary text.	0	19	57	43	13	0	0	132
Reference to secondary literature.	0	5	6	6	9	0	0	26
Reference to secondary literature and primary text.	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Review (primary text) (positive).	0	7	9	5	1	0	0	22
Review (primary text) (negative).	0	5	2	1	2	0	0	10
Review (primary text) (positive and negative).	0	3	12	5	1	0	0	21
Review (primary text and secondary literature) (positive and negative).	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

⁴ References to Sylva in the context of her work being set to music or performed at concerts.

⁵ Results that are currently unavailable on *British Periodicals Online* due to technical difficulties or copyright restrictions.

⁶ References to plays written by Sylva, including *Meister Manole*.

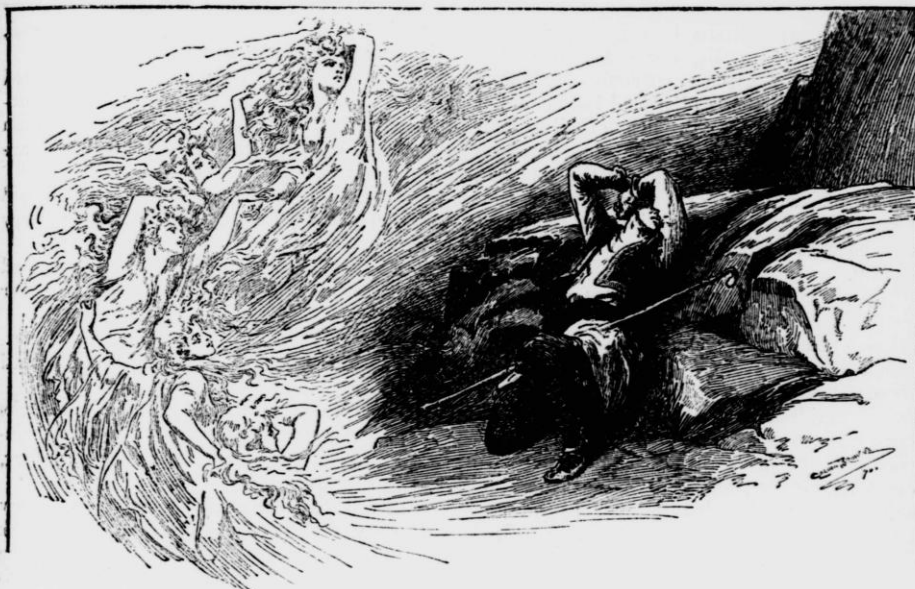
⁷ References to the poem Sylva recited at the 1890 Eisteddfod.

Review (secondary literature) (positive).	0	4	2	2	1	1	0	10
Review (secondary literature) (negative).	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	7
Review (secondary literature) (positive & negative).	0	0	4	1	1	1	0	7
<u>TOTAL</u>	29	116	316	195	64	8	1	729

Appendix Three. Textual variants.

This appendix contains images of the short stories published in the British periodical press and images of the versions published in book form. As the versions in book-form are longer in length, selected images have been included.

1. Fig. 1. First page of 'The Peak of Longing,' *Good Words*, 1891.
2. Fig. 2. First page of 'Virful cu Dor,' trans. by Alma Strettell, in *Legends from River and Mountain* (London: George Allen, 1896).
3. Fig. 3. First page of 'The Witch's Castle,' trans. by Mrs Angus Hall, *English Illustrated Magazine*, 1894.
4. Fig. 4. First page of 'The Witch's Stronghold,' trans. by Alma Strettell, in *Legends from River and Mountain*.
5. Fig. 4.1. Second page of 'The Witch's Stronghold,' trans. by Alma Strettell, in *Legends from River and Mountain*.
6. Fig. 5. 'The Story of Vengeance,' *London Journal*, 1911.
7. Fig. 6. First page of 'A Roumanian Vendetta,' trans. Edith Hopkirk, in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories* (London: R.A. Everett & Co., 1903).



THE PEAK OF LONGING.

A Legend of the Carpathians.

By "CARMEN SYLVA" (HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA).

ONCE on a time there was a round dance at Sinaia, the like of which had never been seen before, for it was a day of high feast and holiday. The hospitable monks who dwelt in their picturesque old monastery on the brow of the mountain had welcomed all comers to their tables, which groaned with provisions, and no person was sent empty away, for the peasants had come from afar—from Isvor Pocana, Lapului, Comarnic, Prodeal, and even from beyond the other side of the mountains.

The sun shone so brightly, and the heat was so great down in the valley, that the maidens had doffed their brodered kerchiefs, and the young men had pushed back their broad-brimmed, flower-bedecked hats, so as to dance more at their ease.

The married women were seated on the grass outside the circle nursing their little ones, their long filmy white veils of borandjic reflecting the rays of the mid-day sun.

The festive youths stamped with their feet, and shouted with exuberant joy; while the girls seemed to float along as if their tiny feet, just visible below their narrow skirts, did not even touch the ground. Their chemises, richly embroidered with every

colour of the rainbow, sparkled with gold and silver spangles as glittering as their pieces of gold coin which were strung round their necks, and which constituted the dowry of each maiden.

The dance undulated like the waves of the sea, now in large, now in smaller circles, to the music of the native musicians, which rose and fell like the pulse throb in the veins. Somewhat apart from the dancers, there stood a young shepherd leaning on his crook, and with his sloe-black eyes gazing on the dance. Slender and erect as a young fir-tree was he, his raven hair fell in curls from beneath his high lambskin cap, his white coarse linen shirt was clasped tightly round his body with a broad leathern girdle, and on his feet were the leathern sandals usually worn by shepherds.

His eagle eye glanced over the gay throng a moment, before discovering what it so eagerly sought for, then alighted sparkling with the light of love on a young maiden, who feigned to be wholly unconscious of his ardent gaze.

This girl was beautiful as a mountain flower, surpassing the rhododendron, more delicate even than the edelweiss. From her

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Fig. 1. 'The Peak of Longing,' *Good Words*, 1891.

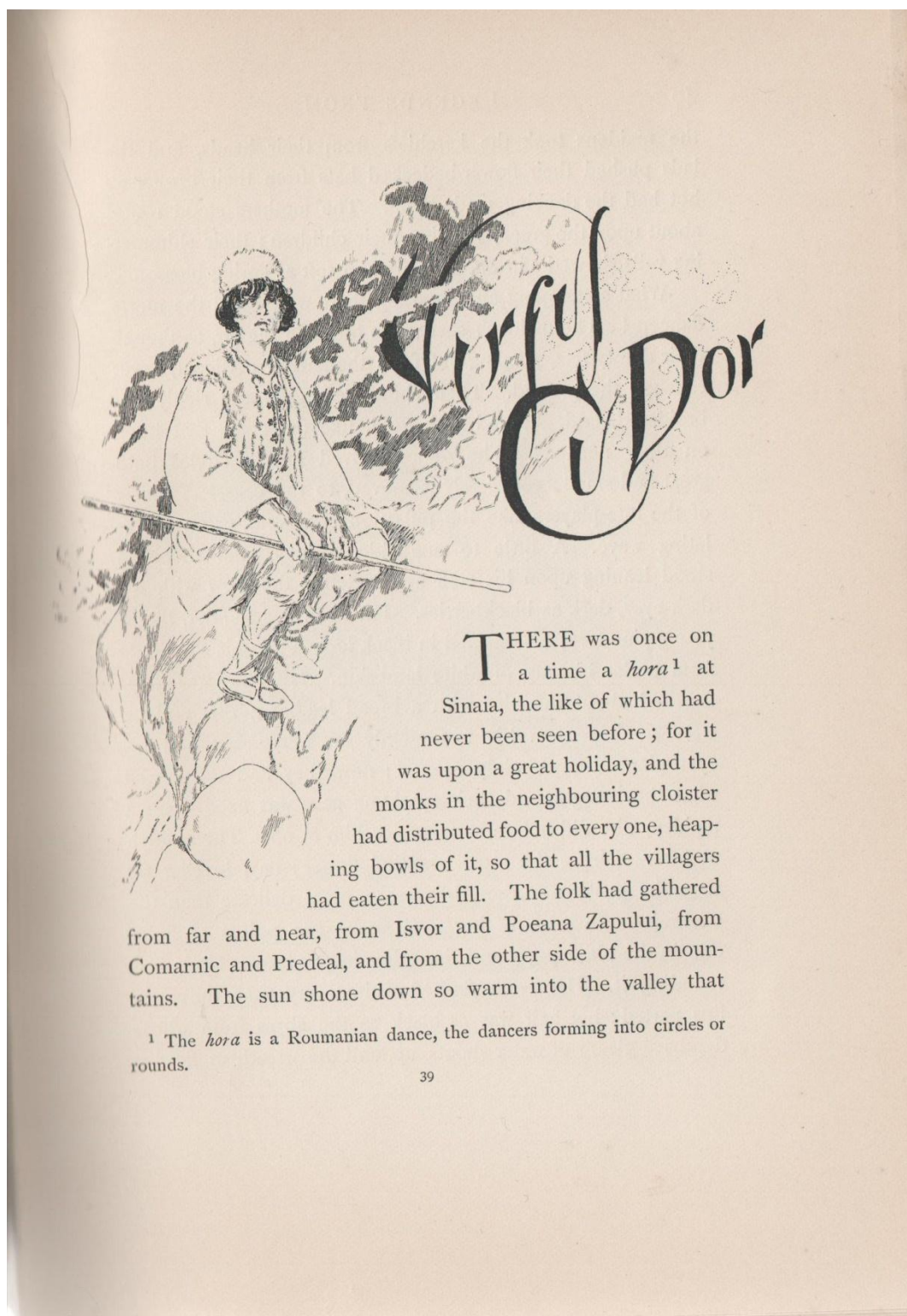
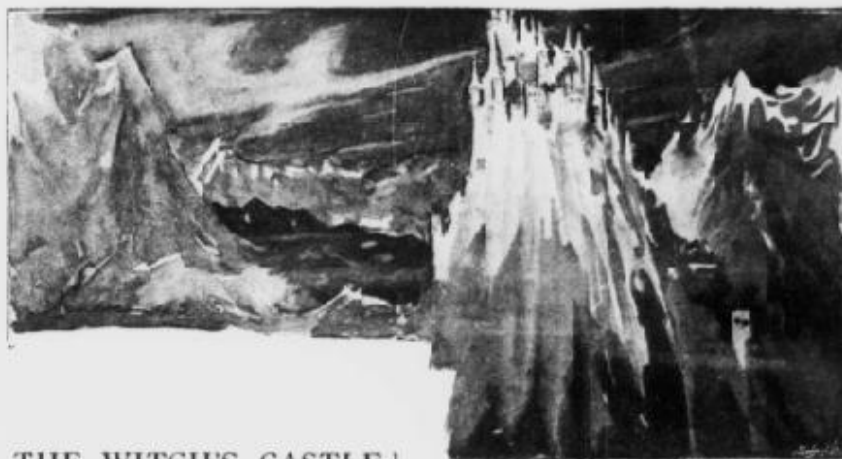


Fig. 2. 'Virful Cu Dor,' trans. by Alma Strettell, in *Legends from River and Mountain*
(London: George Allen, 1896).

THE WITCH'S CASTLE.¹

BY CARMEN SYLVA, QUEEN OF ROUMANIA.

WHEN ascending the Prahova Valley, hidden behind the great Bucegi, can still be seen the ruins of Cetalei Babei, or the Witch's Castle, rising like a huge ninepin amid the everlasting snowfields that stretch onwards towards the mighty Jipi.

Here, in bygone days, when wolves herded the flocks and eagles and doves built their nests side by side, stood a stately castle teeming with busy life. A perpetual sound of hammering filled the air, while thousands of hurrying footsteps were for ever on the move. At night a brilliant light shone high up in the principal tower, whence issued a strange weird song, ever keeping time to the whirr of a mighty spinning-wheel.

People as they passed would cast shy and anxious glances upwards, murmuring in terrified tones, "Ah! there she is spinning again!" For she who sat up there was a mighty sorceress, to whom the gnomes and cobolds had to bring gold from the bowels of the earth, that she might spin the golden threads for the bridal veil which decks the head of every Roumanian girl on her wedding morn. Thus the precious metal was brought up and poured out beside her, and woe to the sprite whose measure ran short!—he

was mercilessly jammed between the bark and stem of a giant tree, or hung up in its branches by his beard, where he might kick and shriek, but all in vain—the old woman was deaf to his cries. This cruel punishment had earned her the name of Baba Coaja, or "mother-bark," for she was hard as a dried crust and wrinkled like an ancient oak.

She alone knew how to spin the fine golden threads, preparing and carefully laying them by for thousands of years to come.

But Baba Coaja did not live alone in her castle, she had a beautiful daughter called Alba, fair and white as the dazzling snow which covered the summit of the mountains. Her skin was soft as velvet, her brown eyes were dark and lustrous, and her long silken hair glistened like the gold threads spun by her mother.

She was always kept shut up in the castle, for Baba Coaja did not wish any one to see or wed her. She had plenty of work for the girl to do, winding the golden threads, and storing them away in the underground cellars for all future generations.

But this ceaseless labour became very weary and irksome to Alba, more especially as her mother while spinning would

¹ (Translated, with the Author's permission, by MRS. ANGUS HALL.)

Fig. 3. 'The Witch's Castle,' trans. by Mrs Angus Hall, *English Illustrated Magazine*, 1894.

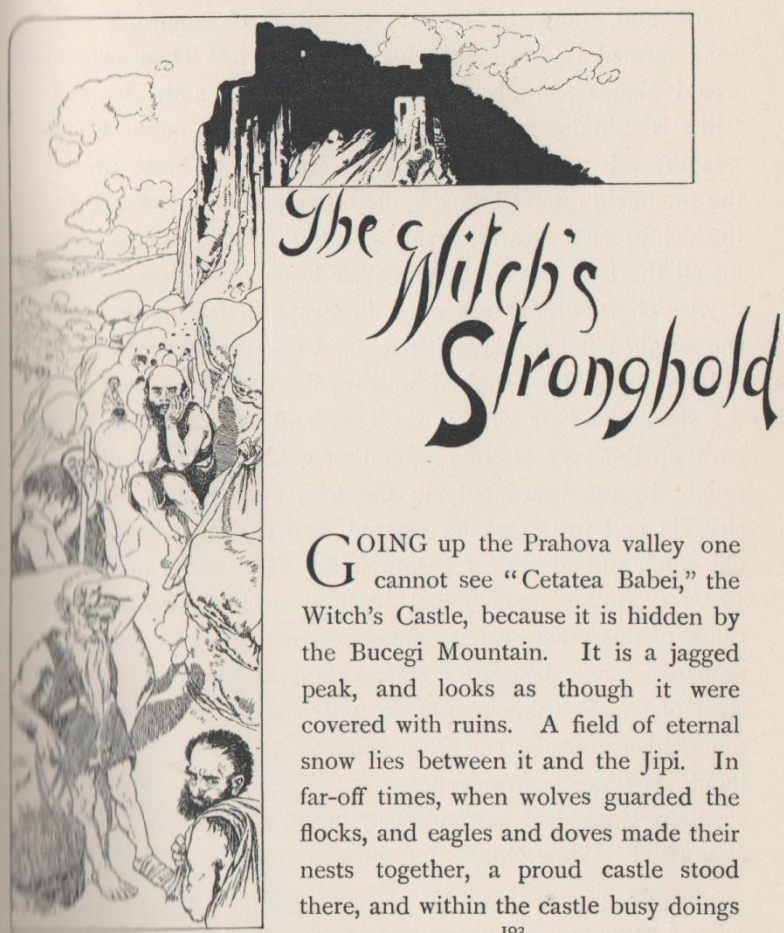


Fig. 4. 'The Witch's Stronghold,' trans. by Alma Strettell, in *Legends from River and Mountain* (1896).

went on. From morning till night it rang with pattering, clanging, bustling sounds, and hundreds of hasty footsteps scurried to and fro therein. But at night-time a light shone forth from the tower, and the humming of a mighty wheel was heard, and above the hum of the wheel a wondrous, soft song seemed to hover, keeping time with it. Then people would glance fearfully up toward the castle and whisper: "She is spinning again!" And she who sat spinning there was the mistress of the castle, a very evil witch, to whom the mountain-dwarfs brought all the gold that they found in the depths of the earth, that she might spin threads of gold for all the brides to wear upon their heads on their wedding-day.¹ The gold was unloaded in heaps in her castle, and she weighed it and chose it out—and woe to the dwarf who did not bring the required weight; he was thrust between the stem and bark of a huge tree, and squeezed until he gave up the very uttermost grain of gold; or he would be caught by the beard only in the tree, and there he might struggle and writhe as he pleased, and cry for mercy—the old witch turned a deaf ear to it all. The name of *Baba Coaja* ("Mother Bark") had been given her, perhaps because of this cruel custom of hers, perhaps because she was as hard as a stale crust of bread, and as wrinkled as the stem of an old oak. She alone understood the spinning of the golden threads, and she went on preparing them for hundreds of years in advance.

Baba Coaja had a wondrously beautiful daughter, named *Alba* ("The White One"), for she was as white as the snow

¹ The bridal veil of Roumanian girls is composed of a shower of loose golden threads.

Fig. 4.1. 'The Witch's Stronghold,' continued.

A STORY OF VENGEANCE.

By "CARMEN SYLVA" (Queen of Roumania).

The Queen of Roumania, under her pen-name of "Carmen Sylva," has written many striking stories and sketches dealing vividly with the wild life of that primitive corner of Europe over which her husband reigns. Her only child, a daughter, died in 1874, and it was out of this great sorrow that her literary activity rose.

In the following story the gifted Royal authoress relates the terrible incidents and ending of a village vendetta.

Păron, the village schoolmaster, has found his brother murdered in the forest. He suspects Dragomir, a fierce, morose man, whose family has been at feud with Păron's for generations, and retaliates by setting fire to his enemy's barn, destroying all the winter's store of corn. Dragomir has a gentle young wife, and a sister like himself, a handsome, fearless girl, stronger than any of the village lads, and dreaded for her sullen beauty and sharp tongue.

Dragomir revenged the burning of his barn by mutilating the schoolmaster's cow. He cut two pieces out of the poor beast's hide one night, and took them home to make into sandals. Păron heard of it next day, and, meeting Sanda, accused Dragomir of the act. Sanda did not answer.

"Speak, or I will shake it out of you," he cried.

She looked at him calmly.

"You cannot shake me; you are too weak, reader of books! All you are good for is to set fire to barns by night, when no one is by."

She went on, looking straight before her. Păron turned yellow with rage.

"You shall pay for that!" he said, between his teeth.

"I will tell you what," said an old peasant. "You should marry that girl. She is strong and able to work hard, and it will make an end to the old feud."

"Marry her!" cried Păron. "I will be drowned in the Otto first! But I will leave her such a token that she shall never forget me to the day of her death! She shall be so humbled that she will never dare to open her mouth or show her face again!"

Păron kept his word. He waylaid Sanda in the forest, as she was carrying some fowls to market, threw her on the ground, and cut off her beautiful hair close to her head with his knife. Then he left her. She leaned against a tree and sobbed—for the first time in her life. A woman who had lost her hair was disfigured for ever.

She wandered in the woods all night, crushed and broken, and came home in the early morning.

"Since when do you run about by night like this?" asked her brother, angrily.

"Since I have not dared to show myself by daylight," she answered, putting the handkerchief from her head. "Avenge me!" she cried, as she went out of the room, shutting the door behind her.

She never showed her face out of doors after this. Her brother's wife, the gentle Anca, whom she relieved of the housework, fetched the water from the well, and did the marketing. But when Dragomir suggested any plan of revenge, Sanda always had some objections to make, and never any advice to give.

After a while, Dragomir was forced to go into hiding. The children of the village had thrown stones at him, and provoked him to retaliate. He had injured some of them; the parents laid a complaint against him; he was fined, and, being unable to

pay, was driven from the place like a wild beast.

There was a spell upon Păron. He had not been able to throw away the long blade of hair he had cut from Sanda's head; he kept it, and it bewitched him. He forgot the feud in thinking of her. He came up to the house one night and knocked at the window. She opened it, and he spoke to her. She answered—fiercely, disdainfully, but still she answered. Dragomir, hiding in the woods, heard it all, and laughed. He saw his way to a sweeter scheme of vengeance than ever, and thought that Sanda would help him.

But Sanda was changed; strange thoughts had come to her. And Păron came again and again, and at last she knew that she loved him—the only man who had ever got the better of her. For the first time in her life she knew what fear was. She dreaded Dragomir's vengeance, and was worn out with terror and anxiety. At last she consented to fly with Păron across the frontier. She came out on the night appointed, and found him waiting by the well, with his horse. They rode away, and had nearly reached the Transylvanian border when Dragomir came up with them. He sprang on Păron and stabbed him, dragging him from his horse and striking again and again, but carefully avoiding a mortal blow, so as to prolong the agony. Sanda saw it all, and stood like one paralysed, leaning against the horse's saddle. When Păron no longer gave any signs of life, Dragomir turned to her, all covered with blood, and said:

"Thanks, sister, for having given him up to me. We have settled with him for ever. Laugh, Sanda!"

And Sanda laughed, so long and terribly that even he was afraid of her.

"Come! be quiet!" he said, "and think of what we have to do, so that I may not be caught. What good will my vengeance do me, if they send me to the Ocna mines?"

Sanda's look became fixed.

"I know how to prevent it. Come down to the river, and wash your face and hands."

She mounted and rode back. He followed her. The vultures slowly began to come down.

"Ah!" said he, as he seized the bridle. "let them clean up the place. They will seek him long enough then!"

"What am I to do with you?" he asked, presently.

Sanda did not answer—she stared at him indifferently.

"Are you not afraid of me?"

"Afraid! What should I be afraid of?"

"Of the punishment I am reserving for you. I am preparing a foretaste of hell for you, my dove! That will do you good."

"Come, wash yourself! wash yourself! or you will go to the Ocna mines!" she said, quietly, as though she had heard nothing.

They had left the ravine and were on the top of the sheer cliffs which overhung the Otto.

"Can we get down that way?" asked Sanda.

"No," answered Dragomir.

He let the horse go and leaned over the edge to look.

"Go and wash yourself!"

The words were hissed into his ear. Sanda's strong hands seized him by the throat and pushed him over.

The horse returned riderless, but Sanda never came home. She was seen sometimes

in the woods laughing and singing, with flowers in her hair. Many people tried to take her to their homes, believing that such folk bring luck to a house; but she allowed no one to approach her. She slept inside a hollow pine tree, and the villagers would leave maize porridge in the woods for her. Anca once came out to persuade her to come home; but Sanda laughed when she saw her and would not speak.

Anca and her baby both died. The village children grew up to manhood and womanhood. Sanda lived on, and seemed never to grow old. Her story has become a legend; but she is still seen sometimes, playing with her flowers, happy as a child. One can scarcely believe that the last act of an hereditary vengeance was accomplished by her hand.

HOW HE COULD RECOUP HIMSELF.

John Morgan was the jack-of-all-trades in a small Midland town. If there was a pane of glass broken, or a leaking gas-pipe, John was at once called in—if he could be found.

At last his old wife paid Nature's last debt, and John being improvident in all things, it fell upon the minister of the chapel where John attended, when he did not forget, to arrange for the funeral expenses.

After the burial was over, John said to the pastor:

"I don't know how to thank you, and don't know how and when I shall be able to repay you; but," lowering his voice, he said, "if you will let me fake the chapel-gate, you can soon get the money back, and more."

"Do you think women would vote for the best man?"

"Certainly! The bridegroom wouldn't be noticed at all."

—:o:—

Mrs. Nagleigh: "I suppose you are satisfied now that you made a mistake when you married me?"

Nagleigh: "I made a mistake all right, but I'm not satisfied."

—:o:—

"So his mother intends making a pianist of him?"

"Yes."

"Who is to be his master?"

"She hasn't got that far yet; at present she is merely just letting his hair grow."

—:o:—

Mrs. Subbe: "If you want a nice hall rug, why don't you get one of those tiger skins with the real head on it?"

Mrs. Urbbe: "I never could use one of those things in my hall. You don't know how imaginative my husband is every time he comes home late."

—:o:—

Customer: "How long have you been a chemist?"

Chemist: "Twenty years."

"Passed all the examinations?"

"I am a member of the Pharmaceutical Society."

"That's all right. Now that I know you are fully qualified, give me a seedling powder."

—:o:—

"I am not happy with my husband. Can I get a separation?" asked a lady of a solicitor.

"His life is insured in your favour, isn't it?"

"Yes; I made him do that before we were married."

"Well, I advise you not to separate. He'll probably live longer away from you."

Fig. 5. 'A Story of Vengeance,' *London Journal*, 1911.

A ROUMANIAN VENDETTA

A STARLIGHT night. The Olto rushes madly along between its high, stony banks, and a cool breeze is wafted through the side valleys, down which a number of little mountain torrents come tumbling in haste, bubbling and foaming as they rush to mingle their waters with those of the bigger stream.

It was into one of these little side valleys that a tall figure was just turning, looking all the taller in the surrounding gloom. Just then the moon rising shed a sudden flood of light over the whole landscape, making the shadows, into which the figure had quite disappeared, blacker still. The light streamed over the villages that lay wrapt in slumber, over the murmuring forests, and over the meadows sweet with the breath of innumerable flowers, and with the breath of the cattle scattered over them.

And now the figure steps out again upon the meadow—a man, tall and upright as a young fir-tree, clad in a short dark jacket, and with shining weapons stuck in the broad belt round his waist; his white woollen breeches are tucked into the top of his high boots, the felt hat on his long hair is garlanded with

Fig.6. 'A Roumanian Vendetta,' trans. by Edith Hopkirk in *A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories* (London: R.A. Everett & Co., 1903).

Appendix Four. Plot summaries of Sylva's short stories

This appendix contains plot summaries for the short stories that have been discussed in this thesis; that of *Edleen Vaughan* is also included.

1. 'A Love Tragedy,' trans. by Robin Napier, *Temple Bar*, 1882.
2. 'Puiu,' trans. by Helen Zimmern, *London Society*, 1884.
3. 'Nine Days,' *Belgravia*, 1889.
4. *Edleen Vaughan* (London: F.V. White & Co., 1892).
5. 'Vrancia,' *The Lady's Realm*, November 1897 – April 1898.
6. *Shadows on Love's Dial*, trans. by Helen by Wolff (London: Downey & Co.; Henry Bumpus, 1895; 1905).
 - a. 'A Stray Leaf.'
 - b. 'Shaded Canvasses.'
 - c. 'The Rod that Spoils the Child.'
 - d. 'A Pen and Ink Confession.'
 - e. 'Red Leaves.'
 - f. 'A Broken Statue.'
7. *Legends from River and Mountain*, trans. by Alma Strettell (London: George Allen, 1896).
 - a. 'The Jipi.'
 - b. 'Vîrful Cu Dor.'
 - c. 'The Witch's Stronghold.'
8. *A Real Queen's Fairy Book* (London: George Newnes Ltd., 1901).
 - a. 'Carma, the Harp-Girl.'
 - b. 'The Story of a Helpful Queen.'
9. *A Roumanian Vendetta*, trans. by Edith Hopkirk (London: R.A. Everett & Co., 1903).
 - a. 'A Roumanian Vendetta.'
 - b. 'Two Waifs from the Taygetos.'
 - c. 'Neaga.'
 - d. 'The Gipsy's Love Story.'
 - e. 'The Cripple.'
 - f. 'A Funeral in the Carpathians.'

1. 'A Love Tragedy':

This is the coming-of-age story of three children – siblings Ralph and Bertha, and their friend Edith. Even as children, Ralph and Edith wish to marry, but know it is impossible – Ralph and Bertha's grandmother has decreed that Ralph must enter the priesthood. Bertha, however, feels too wild for a religious life. She falls in love with Tassio, a merchant in search of a rich wife, but he soon becomes interested in Edith. Bertha is jealous, blaming her grandmother for not correcting her faults as a child. Meanwhile, Ralph takes his holy orders. He confesses his love for Edith, but will not relinquish his duty to God. Edith vows to become a nun but her mother will not allow it. Bertha accuses Edith of stealing Tassilo's affections and although she does not love him, Edith admits that she would not dare to refuse his proposal. Unbeknown to both women, Tassilo overhears their conversation and eventually proposes to Edith. Bertha vows revenge. The wedding draws nearer and Edith is warned by a mysterious woman not to accept anything from a priest. On the day of the wedding – which Ralph is officiating – he hands Edith a ceremonial wafer. She eats it and dies almost immediately. Bertha, in fear for her life, admits to her brother that she murdered Edith – poisoning the wafer with the help of a witch. Ralph cannot forgive her and Bertha leaves to join a nunnery. She eventually dies there. Ralph also leaves to become a missionary.

2. 'Puiu':

This is an allegorical story about the formation of Romania. The story describes Mother Earth's creation of the world, giving land to her children to cultivate. Her children have different languages and do not understand each other, resulting in wars. The land Puiu receives arouses the jealousy of her siblings. They mistreat her, stealing her crops and warring on her land, which lies between theirs (a subtle reference to the Russo-Turkish War). Eventually, the brothers imprison her. Mother Earth helps Puiu to free herself. Once she has seen free of her chains, she watches her brothers fight and waits for her mother's signal. Hearing her voice, she casts off her chains and throws a rock at one of her brothers, breaking his limbs. Her brothers are surprised, but are resolved to break

her spirit, again forcing her to do their bidding. Once her work is done she runs weeping through the forest, berating Mother Earth for filling her with desires, but without the physical ability to achieve them. Her mother reminds Puiu that she has been protecting her until now and Puiu is eventually content.

3. **'Nine Days':**

Whilst walking with a friend through the streets of Bucharest, Anna is bitten by a dog. Her husband Louis – a doctor – appears and pushes the dog away, but is also injured. Anna instantly recalls a newspaper article about rabid dogs in Romania. At home, Anna looks up her symptoms and deduces that she has nine days left to live. She begins to question the way she has lived her life, and resolves to kill her son, feeling that his life will be too difficult without his parents. She also reveals that she and Louis have a marriage of convenience. Both have had numerous affairs. Ironically, the impending death brings them closer together and they decide to leave Bucharest. They travel to Vienna, where Louis tells Anna that the dog might not be infected: it was captured but not killed so that tests could be conducted. They receive a telegram to that effect, but Louis's behaviour – constantly tired and feverish – hints that this is untrue. Anna too, feels a sudden pain and realises she is dying. She resolves to be brave and will not murder her son. She now understands the importance of life.

4. **Edleen Vaughan: or Paths of Peril (1891/1892):**

The novel follows the trials and tribulations of the Vaughan family: Edleen, her son Tom and her husband Harry, who is Tom's stepfather. There are also a number of subplots, including the local vicar, Gwynne, and his family. Gwynne's happy family is torn apart by the death of his daughter Una. Gwynne himself dies soon after. Edleen Vaughan has an unhappy marriage, but this stems from Tom's behaviour and the strain that it has put on her relationship with Harry. He tries to be firm with his wife for her own sake, but she views this as cruelty. Tom constantly asks Edleen for money, which she gives him, even going so far as to pawn her jewellery and replace the majority of it with stones made of paste. Tom also steals from his mother and his two half-sisters, Winnie and Minnie. His

drinking and gambling result in debts that he expects his mother to pay. He also flirts shamelessly with his cousin Kathleen, who is governess to the young girls.

One day, Kathleen catches Tom talking with Temorah, a local girl who is also in love with him. He persuades Temorah to let him stay the night, in a passage rife with sexual connotations. Kathleen vows revenge and vandalises the grave of Temorah's mother. Tom later rebuffs Temorah, who feels guilty for having succumbed to Tom's charms. She is soothed by the bard, Llewellyn, who had a very similar relationship with a woman named Ulla, who is now an evil witch. Ulla's monstrosity stems from her relationship with Llewellyn: she conceived a child out of wedlock and drowned it in the river. Temorah also gives birth to a baby. She pretends to have adopted her son, so as to avoid being shunned by society. She is tempted by Ulla, but resists her. She does, however, attack Kathleen for vandalising the grave. As a result, Kathleen again seeks revenge. She obtains two spells from Ulla – one to destroy Temorah and one to entice Tom. Kathleen then heads to Temorah's cottage. She sees the child and distracts him by lighting matches but when she hears someone coming, she throws them down and flees. A burning match falls onto Temorah's bed and the ensuing fire kills the baby. Temorah goes mad with grief. Kathleen's guilt leads to a confrontation with Tom but, when she will not confess, he sexually assaults her. After the incident, Kathleen attempts to kill herself, but is saved by Llewellyn.

For his role in ruining Kathleen and Temorah's lives, Tom is thrown out of the village. He joins a gang of housebreakers, forging cheques in his stepfather's name and begging his ailing mother for money. His crimes are eventually uncovered and he is arrested. He is later sentenced to penal servitude for life, despite efforts to save him. Edleen dies soon after. Her widower, Harry Vaughan, now proposes a marriage of convenience to Kathleen, who accepts. However, she still tries to seduce the Gwynnes' son, Morgan, who had once cared for her but is now engaged to Winnie. Kathleen's plans are eventually thwarted and she leaves Wales, never to return. The morally upstanding characters continue to live happily.

5. 'Vrancia':

Stefan the Great, the Prince of Moldavia, has been beaten in battle and is now wandering through the Vrancia mountains, trying to avoid his enemies. Exhausted, he seeks shelter with an elderly woman. Unbeknown to him, she realises who he is and endeavours to help him, sending her seven sons in different directions to create a new army. When Stefan wakes, he sees what he initially believes to be a moving forest, but the elderly woman reveals this to be the new supporters, coming to help him. Revitalised, Stefan goes back into battle and is victorious. As a gift to the seven sons, he gives one of the Vrancia Mountains to each of them.

6. *Shadows on Love's Dial* (1895, 1905):

a. 'A Stray Leaf':

Since her parents' separation, Isa and her brother Wolfgang have lived with their father, but the young girl longs for her mother. When her father remarries and starts a new family, both children feel ignored and unloved. They leave the family home to live with their mother, who has also begun a new life. This situation is not ideal: both are bullied by their step-siblings and Isa's beauty begins to attract her stepfather's attentions. Rumours abound that Wolfgang and Isa are illegitimate and when Wolfgang is sent to boarding school, Isa returns to the man she believes is her father, who unbeknown to her, is dying. After his death, Isa is offered a home with her elderly aunt and begins to attract attention in the town. She falls in love with Herr von Rense, but his family will not allow the match. Hardened by this, Isa attends a ball and overhears von Rense deciding to end his courtship, but to make her his mistress in later life. Appalled, Isa returns home and finds a letter from Wolfgang. In order to support him financially, she marries, but does not love her vice-ridden husband, who is often absent. On one of these occasions, Wolfgang visits. He has uncovered his illegitimacy and is determined to start a new life elsewhere. Isa refuses to leave because she does not want to be compared to her 'ruined' mother. Then she receives a letter that reveals her husband is a bigamist, with a wife and three children. Not wanting to be responsible for destroying a family, as her mother did, she joins her brother at sea.

b. 'Shaded Canvasses':

Frosi and Matthes are the most attractive couple in their village and everyone rejoices when they marry. Their happiness only lasts a few months, however: on the day of a wedding, Frosi and Matthes argue. Later that evening, Matthes is brought home, badly injured. After being accidentally shot in the face, he is hideously disfigured. Frosi dutifully nurses him, but is disgusted by the thought of intimacy between them. Matthes is also dissatisfied with his condition, accusing his wife of having an affair with Berndt, the man who shot him. He is also physically violent towards her. Frosi contemplates suicide, but instead visits her local priest to ask him for a legal separation. The priest persuades her to remain with him for another month and visits Matthes in his home to advise him to be more patient and less jealous. The month passes and Frosi, now physically emaciated by her efforts, repeats her plea. Again, the priest asks her to try again. He also reveals that Berndt has left the village. Matthes now realises the extent to which he has mistreated his wife and his admission causes an epiphany in Frosi, whose love for her husband suddenly returns.

c. 'The Rod that Spoils the Child':

A six-year old girl named Heidi would rather play than learn. Prevented from being with the children outside her window, Heidi watches them instead of completing her homework. Unfortunately for Heidi, her apparent idleness is punished by her English governess. She is sent to her room and told that she must be ill. Confused and lying in bed, Heidi begins to question her actions, blaming the other children for distracting her. She feels the increasing influence of her conscience, which reminds her of all the little 'sins' she has committed. Feverish, she sees the wallpaper come to life and judge her. Eventually someone opens the door to her room and looks in, but Heidi pretends to be asleep. The somewhat ambiguous ending suggests that there was no need for Heidi to apologise for her behaviour.

d. 'A Pen and Ink Confession':

The initially unnamed narrator receives a letter from an old friend, Sophie Lehn, who asks her to accommodate her son, who will shortly be visiting the narrator's town. Sophie's letter, produced for readers, is intercut by the narrator's opinions. She drafts a reply, but her interjections continue, initially in parentheses, but also in more definite breaks, marked by a series of dots. At these points, Augusta (a name revealed only at the end of the story) provides further information for readers. She reveals a marriage that is far from ideal: her handsome husband is jealous and demanding, accusing Augusta of affairs whilst gambling away their money. He develops epilepsy and whilst caring for him, Augusta discovers she is pregnant.

One day, Reinhold has three fits on a train and is helped by Augusta and a stranger. The couple invite him to dinner to show their gratitude. Reinhold initially refuses to speak to Herbert Krause and later, when they move into the drawing room, attacks him for looking at Augusta inappropriately. Herbert leaves, Reinhold beats Augusta and attempts to hang himself, believing she is being unfaithful to him. These delusions convince Augusta that he is mentally unstable and he is committed to an asylum. Upon his departure Augusta herself becomes ill and goes into labour. Her daughter Henny is born and Augusta later discovers that they have lost their home, but that the new owner will allow mother and daughter to stay. The new owner is Herbert. As Augusta recovers, she realises that her child is disabled. She develops feelings towards Herbert, but will not be 'faithless' when there is still hope of Reinhold's recovery. She receives news of his return and breaks her ties to Herbert. Augusta's sadness and confusion are reduced by the fact that Henny finally stands for the first time and the story ends with the family reunited.

e. 'Red Leaves':

A copper beech tree is personified to explain why his leaves are red and recounts the story of Yutta, who is marrying her cousin Almann, and Heinrich, a travelling folksinger. After a week of married life, Yutta becomes unhappy and returns to her family. There, she presents a poem that she wrote – in German –

which expresses her distaste for married life. Heinrich joins her and Allman at their castle and sings a song about her. When he leaves, Yutta contemplates her life – she loves Heinrich, seeing her husband only in terms of brotherly affection. Yet she wants to resist her feelings, believing that she will not only have broken her marital vows, but that Almann will have Heinrich killed. A priest confirms her fears, telling her that she is impure. Suicidal, she rides along the banks of the river and stabs herself to death. Her blood mingles with the leaves of the copper beech, staining them forever.

f. ‘A Broken Statue’:

The story begins by depicting the beautiful countryside and an equally beautiful girl. Marina, despite her ‘affected’ singing and appearance, soon ensnares Arnold, an artist who wants her to model for him. Back in his studio, he destroys a statue of his fiancée, Lia. Marina becomes a regular sitter and Arnold soon becomes enamoured. Marina begins to spread rumours that Lia is being unfaithful. As a result, Arnold breaks off their engagement and Lia is heartbroken. She blames Marina for her death. Hubert, the man Lia was accused of having an affair with, eventually reveals himself: it was Marina he loved, not Lia, but Marina cast him aside because of his lack of wealth. Arnold refuses to see Lia on her deathbed, but becomes increasingly dissatisfied with his new wife. Lia dies and Arnold begins to be shunned by society. One night, Hubert reveals the extent of Marina’s treachery to Arnold. Filled with rage, he destroys his statue and then throws a hammer at Marina. Hubert, clearly mad with grief and betrayal, announces his intention to avenge Lia by revealing to the townspeople that Arnold killed both women. As Hubert passionately kisses Marina’s dead lips, Arnold escapes into the night. Many years later, a statue by a famous artist in Italy (presumably Arnold) is sent to the village to be placed on Lia’s grave.

7. Legends from River and Mountain (1896):

a. ‘The Jipi’:

This is a Romanian folktale about the formation of the Jipi mountains. Twin brothers Andrei and Mirea are hunting a bear one day and meet a beautiful

young girl. They take her home to meet their mother, marking the beginning of many visits. When her grandfather dies, Rolanda comes to live with the brothers and their mother. Although Rolanda wishes to remain free and never marry, both brothers are in love with her. She is upset and confused, as is the mother, who notices that the brothers are becoming bitter and jealous. Eventually, Andrei and Mirea give Rolanda one day to decide who she loves. Telling them that she loves them both, but cannot choose between them, she throws herself over a cliff. As she reaches the bottom, she is magically transformed into a waterfall. The brothers want to follow her, but before they can do so, they become mountains – the Jipi. Out of love for them, the mother falls to the ground and becomes moss.

b. ‘Virful Cu Dor’:

Another legend about the Carpathians Mountains. A handsome shepherd, Jonel, attends a local festival and watches the object of his affection, the beautiful Irina. Jonel performs the final part of the ‘hora’ with her, an act of great significance for him but not for Irina. Jonel wishes for some sign that Irina reciprocates his affections, but instead, she challenges him to remain on the mountaintop without his flock of sheep. Jonel vows to prove his love, despite being warned by an older shepherd. He heads to the mountain without his sheep and chases away his faithful dogs. He falls asleep, waking up surrounded by thick clouds that soon become beautiful women. They offer to take him to paradise but he rejects them, angering the fairies and causing them to cover the mountain in snow. A fairy palace appears and he is offered shelter, which he again refuses. The palace falls to pieces, crushing him. Deep under the earth, the dwarves hear the destruction and uncover Jonel, caring for him until he recovers. Down there, he is again tempted by a mermaid – who is revealed to be the Dwarf King’s bride. They return him to the mountain-top and the king informs Jonel that he has caused his own misfortune: he has remained faithful to Irina, but has abandoned his duties. For that reason, he must be punished. Jonel stands on the mountain, facing the oncoming storm. His love for Irina turns to hate and he vows to break all ties with her. As he does so, the Spirit of Yearning appears to him and puts him into a

trance, where he remains until spring. The other shepherds find Jonel's lifeless body on the mountain and bury him there.

c. 'The Witch's Stronghold':

Baba Coaja ('mother-bark') is a witch who spins golden threads for the bridal veils worn by every Romanian woman on her wedding day. She keeps her beautiful daughter, Alba, captive in her castle. Alba has to work for her mother, but is unhappy about the situation, especially since her mother weaves evil incantations into the threads. Alba is beaten when she spins love into one thread, which her mother throws into a large pile, vowing that Alba will never marry until she has found it. Although this seems cruel, Baba Coaja is trying to protect her daughter – it has been foretold that Alba would have a short and unhappy life. Unaware of this, Alba longs to be free and has fallen in love with a handsome man, although she has only ever seen him from afar. Baba vows to kill him if he returns, but he does, taking Alba to his kingdom. Alba is terrified of the outside world and dependent on Porfirie, her prince. She does not see any value in the jewels she wears, but refuses to be married with gold in her veil. Porfirie and his mother object to this, with the latter ordering Alba to be forcibly restrained so that the veil can be placed on her head. Believing he can make her happy with material goods, Porfirie goes back to the witch's castle to obtain more jewels, but Baba Coaja turns the jewels into snow and ice, burying Porfirie on the mountain. The distraught Alba manages to reach him, but it is too late. Blaming her mother with her last breath, Alba dies and Baba Coaja destroys the castle.

8. **A Real Queen's Fairy Book (1901):**

a. 'Carma, The Harp-Girl':

Carma was brought to earth by an angel in order to make the world more beautiful. Loved by the people of the village, particularly the local children, she sings to them with her magical harp and encourages them to become better people. One day a prince hears Carma singing. He returns the next day and asks her to return to his castle to sing for his ailing mother, promising that she can return to the wood afterwards. Carma agrees, but the children mistrust him. At the

castle, it is revealed that the prince lied to her – his mother is not ill and is unkind to Carma. She wants to leave but is persuaded to stay. The angry prince tries to force her to marry him. The children arrive at the castle to see Carma, who begs to be set free. Furious, the prince stabs her. The children make a litter to carry her back to the forest and remove the dagger. Carma recovers and realises that she was foolish to listen to the prince's lies. The prince returns and again asks her to be his queen. She refuses and the children drive him out of the forest – they know that Carma was born for singing, not marriage. Carma plants the dagger in the ground and it turns into a rose tree. She remains in the forest with the children and continues to sing.

b. 'The Story of a Helpful Queen':

This story focuses on a Queen who prays to be able to bring happiness to the world and shoulder the burden of suffering herself. God grants her wishes and the queen has the power to heal, but this suffering is then inflicted on her own body. People flock to her for healing and she becomes destitute as a result of her efforts. Her torments increase when she takes on the spiritual suffering of those with guilty consciences as well as illnesses. She visits a woman whose son is dying, but in healing him, her own son dies. She loses her powers, no longer believes in divine justice and blames herself. As she sleeps, she is visited by the spirit of her son who assures her that he is in a happier place, but also chides her: the queen should not have tried to end all suffering and it had to be atoned for through her son's death. She can console others, but cannot change the hell on earth that God has purposefully created in order to test humans.

9. **A Roumanian Vendetta (1903):**

a. 'A Roumanian Vendetta':

This is a story of conflict between two families and the lengths they will go to for revenge. It begins with Dragomir skinning strips of leather from a live cow, leaving it in agony. He returns home to his sister Sanda, his wife Anca and their baby. It is revealed that the attack on the cow is the latest in a long line of antagonism between their family and that of Pârvu, the village schoolmaster.

Pârvu's cow was attacked because Pârvu burnt down their barn and had given Anca such a fright that she was unable to produce milk for the baby.

Living in the village itself, Pârvu believes that Dragomir murdered his brother, Dan, and even suspects Sanda. When the plight of his cow is revealed and Sanda appears, she is accused by Pârvu and the rest of the village. She mocks Pârvu, leaving him to vow revenge. He attacks her when she is walking to market, pinning her to the ground and violently cutting off her long hair. When he releases her, he expects Sanda to attack him, but instead she bursts into tears. Pârvu feels guilty and leaves with the hair, later locking it in a keep-sake box. Sanda is distraught, feeling she has lost her honour. She cannot plan revenge, but wants Dragomir to avenge her. One night he witnesses Pârvu visiting Sanda and confessing his love for her, which she seems to reciprocate. Unbeknown to them, Dragomir continues to spy on the lovers. The opportunity for revenge arises when the two decide to run away together. Just as they reach the Transylvanian border, Dragomir brutally murders Pârvu. He threatens his sister, who smiles strangely and merely suggests that he wash away the blood. They reach a cliff, where Dragomir might do this, but before he has the chance, Sanda throws him over the edge. She finally ends the conflict between the families but is struck down by madness. She becomes part of local legend while those around her grow up and die, including Anca and the baby, who waste away shortly after the murders have been committed.

b. 'Two Waifs from the Taygetos':

Two foundlings – children abandoned on the banks of an unnamed Romanian river – named Soare (Romanian for 'sunshine') and the dark-haired beauty, Evanghelù, have grown up on opposite sides of the river, but feel an affinity for each other. Soare sends gifts across the river for Evanghelù, eventually coming across the river himself to leave flowers. One night, when she is asleep, he places a silver ring on her finger and they utter their first words to each other – each speaking the name of the other. Soare approaches the priest, asking him to marry them, but in a tragic twist of fate, the priest refuses to sanction the engagement, revealing a secret that he has held for many years: Soare and

Evangelhelù are siblings. Soare is heartbroken by this knowledge and dies, asking Evangelhelù to follow him. Directly after his funeral, she does so. The two are buried together. The narrator notes that a veiled figure sobbed over their grave for a number of years after their untimely deaths, but very little now remains to commemorate them.

c. 'Neaga':

The story begins in a salt mine, which is used as a correctional facility for criminals. The conditions are terrible and when a young prisoner named Sandu arrives, he tries to commit suicide. The other prisoners try to console him. An elderly prisoner, Vlad, reveals his crime – involvement in the murder of a local tyrant, who had beaten Vlad's sister to death. The young man admits that his crime is also murder – stabbing the man who had insulted the woman he loves, Neaga. Vlad is revealed to be Neaga's father.

One day, the Prince and Princess visit the mine and pardon some of the convicts, including Vlad. He vows to find Neaga. When they reconcile, she reveals that her mother remarried – having been told that Vlad was dead – and that he has a son named Radu. She also implies that her stepfather had mistreated her. Father and daughter leave the village and earn their living as minstrels. They reach another village on the day of a lavish wedding. Unbeknown to them, it is Radu's wedding. They confront him, but Radu refuses to acknowledge his family. Vlad curses his son and they leave. The wedding does not take place. Later, Radu encounters an escaped convict. It is Sandu – although the men do not know each other. Radu helps Sandu to escape his pursuers.

Time passes. Vlad is now dying and Neaga seeks help in a local monastery. There, she meets her brother, now living as a monk. He begs their forgiveness and is blessed by Vlad with his dying breath. Now alone in the world, Neaga decides to petition the Prince and Princess for Sandu's release but he miraculously appears. He is still in hiding, so they escape into Serbia, returning after many years, when Sandu has been officially pardoned and Radu has become an abbot.

d. 'The Gipsy's Love Story':

This story is told from the perspective of an unnamed daughter of a boyar. The story initially focuses on Mother Gafitza, who works as the family housekeeper and is in charge of the servants, who the narrator notes are often gypsies, taken by force from their families. Cassandra is the most beautiful gipsy servant in the house, and Didica, a 'Lautari' – gipsy musician – is the most talented. He vows to give up his travelling lifestyle and marry Cassandra, but Mother Gafitza refuses to allow it. She has decided that Cassandra will marry Costaki, the cook. Realising she has no choice, Cassandra vows she will never love another man. As the wedding draws nearer, she does not speak to or look at her future husband, which causes her to be beaten. The narrator notes her own involvement in the story at this stage: arguing with her father about the violent punishment of serfs. Her father's attitude does not change, however, and events continued as a matter of course. Mother Gafitza forces Didica to perform at the wedding and the guests appear intoxicated by his music, all except Cassandra, who stands silently. Both are heartbroken and go their separate ways: Didica vanishes into the night with another gipsy girl and Cassandra remains with her husband. She is a faithful wife and mother, but has no happiness left in her life.

e. 'The Cripple':

This story is set at Christmas in the old monastery of Margineni, now a prison. The temperature is so low and the snow so thick that the prison guards change shifts every thirty minutes. As the soldiers tease a recently married guard named Nicolai, they do not notice their superior officer eavesdropping on their conversation. Unbeknown to them, the officer is in love with Nicolai's wife, Florica. Filled with jealousy, the officer vows revenge, arranging for Nicolai to take the next shift and for no-one to relieve him. Nicolai, freezing to death in the snow, realises that the officer has done this intentionally. Praying to be avenged, he loses consciousness but is found and taken to hospital. His frost-bitten hands have to be amputated, although his feet are saved. Nicolai refuses to allow his wife to be informed as he suspects Florica of conspiring with the officer. He journeys home and Florica is initially pleased to see him, until she sees his

injuries. Her mother is even more appalled and informs Florica that Nicolai is a danger to them and the baby. They treat Nicolai badly and do not notice that he is becoming increasingly resentful. Friends agree to help him get revenge and he forces Florica to write a letter to the officer, arranging to meet him. When the officer arrives in the forest, the gang brutally murder him. Florica arrives and Nicolai warns her that she will meet the same fate – she can only escape him through death. The next morning, Florica is found dead in the river. Nicolai is wracked with guilt and the villagers shun him. One year after the murders, the accomplices, fearing that he will expose their involvement, strangle Nicolai in his bed. Little inquiry is made about this murder. His child is raised by Florica's mother, grows up unconscious of his tragic upbringing and does not repeat his father's mistakes.

f. 'A Funeral in the Carpathians':

A snow storm rages across the Carpathian Mountains. Only one house shows evidence of life and ironically, the light is shining on a corpse – a beautiful woman, watched by her grieving husband, Paul. In another room, their children, Lucie and Hugo, talk about their mother's death, which neither of them fully understands. The family moved to the Carpathian Mountains due to Paul's work as an engineer and he blames himself for bringing his delicate wife to this climate. He contemplates suicide. After the storm, people come to the house to transport the corpse to the burial ground. Paul is the only mourner and the children are upset and confused, despite attempts by the villagers to explain death to them. On his way home, Paul is intercepted by his workmen, who inform him that the storm has all but destroyed the railway he came to Romania to build. Exhausted, he returns home and again resists the urge to kill himself. His daughter Lucie takes it upon herself to care for him. The passage of time does not reduce Paul's grief and he tries to decide what to do: return to the West Indies or transport his family to the Caucasus, where he has been offered further work. Remembering his wife's final words, Paul struggles on for the sake of his children.

Appendix Five. List of Carmen Sylva's published works.

5.1. Primary texts.

Year	Title	Publisher	Translator	Genre	Extra information
1884	<i>Pilgrim Sorrow.</i>	London: T. Fisher Unwin (New York: Henry Holt.)	Helen Zimmern.	Allegorical short stories.	Translated from <i>Leidens Erdengang</i> (Berlin: Alexander Duncker, 1882).
1905	<i>Suffering's Journey on the Earth.</i>	London: Jarrold & Sons.	Margaret A. Nash		Republished under a different title in 1905, illustrated by Percy A. Nash. Second edition 1906.
1887	<i>Songs of Toil.</i>	New York: Stokes and Brothers.	John Eliot Bowen.	Poetry.	Thirty-one poems published in German and English. Not published in Britain. Reprinted in 1888, 1892.
1888	<i>A Heart Regained.</i>	Boston: Cupples and Hurd.	Mrs Mary A. Mitchell.	Novel.	Not published in Britain.
1890	<i>Thoughts of a Queen.</i>	London: Eden, Remmington & Co.	H. Sutherland Edwards.	Aphorisms.	Translated from <i>Les Pensées d'une Reine</i> (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1882). German edition, <i>Vom Amboss</i> (Bonn: Strauss, 1890).
1911	<i>Golden Thoughts of Carmen Sylva</i>	London: John Lane (New York: John Lane Company)	H. Sutherland Edwards.		
1913	<i>Sparks from the Anvil; or Thoughts of a Queen.</i>	London: Jarrold	A.H. Exner.		Exner also included a selection in his edition of Sylva's poems (1912).

1891	'In Fetters' and 'The Mother-in-Law' in <i>Carmen Sylva. A Study with two tales from the German of Carmen Sylva.</i>	Chapman & Hall.	Blanche Roosevelt.	Short Stories.	Two short stories published at the end of Roosevelt's biography.
1891	<i>The Bard of the Dimbovitza.</i> ¹	London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.	Carmen Sylva (German) and Alma Strettell (English).	Romanian folksongs.	Translated from <i>Lieder aus dem Dimbovitza</i> (Bonn: Strauss, 1889) First series. Collected from the peasants by Hélène Vacaresco.
1892	<i>Edleen Vaughan: or Paths of Peril.</i>	London: F.V. White & Co. (New York: Cassell Publishing Company).		Novel.	Reportedly written in English. Three volumes. Originally serialised in <i>Hearth and Home</i> (May to October 1891).
1894	<i>The Bard of the Dimbovitza</i>	London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.	Carmen Sylva (German) and Alma Strettell (English).	Romanian folksongs.	Second series. Collected from the peasants by Hélène Vacaresco.
1895	<i>Shadows on Love's Dial.</i>	London: Downey & Co.	Helen Wolff.	Short stories.	Six stories translated from <i>Handzeichnungen</i> (Berlin: Duncker, 1884).
1905	<i>Shadows on Love's Dial.</i>	London: Henry F. Bumpus.	Helen Wolff.		

¹As mentioned in Chapter Two, the folksongs in *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* were not written by Sylva, but as they have been associated with her throughout her literary career, the publication history has been included here.

1896	<i>The Bard of the Dimbovitza</i>	London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.	Carmen Sylva (German) and Alma Strettell (English).	Romanian folksongs.	Third series. Collected from the peasants by Hélène Vacaresco.
1896	<i>Legends from River and Mountain.</i>	London: George Allen.	Alma Strettell.	Romanian folktales.	First ten stories are by Sylva (remaining nine are German folktales). Taken from <i>Aus Carmen Sylvas Königreich. Pelesch Märchen</i> (Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich, 1883). Illustrations by T.H. Robinson. 1996 edition is a facsimile reprint.
1996	<i>Legends from River and Mountain</i>	Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers	Alma Strettell		
1901	<i>A Real Queen's Fairy Book.</i>	London: George Newnes.		Fairy tales.	Illustrated by H. Nelson and A.G. Jones. German edition: <i>Märchen einer Königin</i> (Bonn, Strauss, 1901).
1961	<i>A Real Queen's Fairy Book</i>	Chicago: Davis & Company.			
1902	<i>The Bard of the Dimbovitza</i>	London: Harper & Brothers.	Carmen Sylva (German) and Alma Strettell (English).	Romanian folksongs.	All three volumes (previously published by Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.) are republished as one.
1903	<i>A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories.</i>	London: R.A. Everett.	Edith Hopkirk.	Short stories.	Hopkirk was Sylva's former secretary.
1904	<i>Sweet Hours.</i>	London: R.A. Everett.		Poems.	Reportedly written in English.
1904	<i>How I Spent My Sixtieth Birthday</i>	Mirfield, Yorkshire: John H. Fearnley, the Hermitage Bindery. (New York: Scribner.)	H.E. Delf	Memoirs.	

1911	<i>A Royal Story Book.</i>	London: Digby, Long & Co.		Short Stories	Eight short stories largely focused on Romanian culture.
1911	<i>From Memory's Shrine.</i>	London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Limited. (Philadelphia: Lippincott)	Edith Hopkirk.	Memoirs.	Translated from <i>Mein Penatenwinkel</i> (Frankfurt-Main: Minjon, 1908). Reprinted in Britain in 1911, 1912, and 1914.
1912	<i>Poems.</i>	London: Jarrold.	A.H. Exner.	Poetry.	Eighty-four poems taken from various collections. Also includes a selection of aphorisms from <i>Vom Amboss (Thoughts of a Queen)</i> .
1920	<i>The Letters and Poems of Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva).</i>	Boston: The Bibliophile Society.		Poetry and letters.	In two volumes. Not published in Britain.

5.2. Primary texts published in periodicals or magazines.

Year	Title	Publication	Translator	Genre	Extra information
1882	'A Love Tragedy.'	<i>Temple Bar.</i>	Robin Napier.	Short story.	Signed The Queen of Roumania.
1884	'Puiu.'	<i>London Society.</i>	Helen Zimmern.	Allegorical short story.	Featured in January. Initially part of Sylva's <i>Pelesch-Märchen</i> but not published in <i>Legends from River and Mountain</i> (1896).
1887	'The Burning Mountain.'	<i>Queen, the Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle.</i>		Short story	Also published under this title in the Australian newspaper <i>The Western Arugs</i> on 29 April 1897. Later part of <i>Legends from River and Mountain</i> (1896) under the title 'Piatra Arsa'.
1888	'Decebal's Daughter.'	<i>Woman's World.</i>	Mrs Emma B. Mawer.	Short story.	Published in the first volume. Mawer wrote a biographical article on Sylva (also in this issue). Later published in <i>A Royal Story Book</i> (1911).
1888	'A Queen's Thoughts.'	<i>Woman's World.</i>		Aphorisms (x20).	Published in the first issue.
1889	'Furnica; or The Queen of the Ants.'	<i>Woman's World.</i>	Mrs Emma B. Mawer.	Short story	Later part of <i>Legends from River and Mountain</i> (1896).
1889	'Thyself and thy Brethren.'	<i>Sunday at Home.</i>	John Kelly.	Poem.	Featured on 11 May.
1889	'Peasant Life in Roumania.'	<i>Forum.</i>		Non-fictional article.	Published in the June issue.
1889	'Nine Days.'	<i>Belgravia.</i>		Short story.	Featured in November.
1890	'The Soldier's Tent.'	<i>New Review.</i>		Folksong.	Featured in June. Later published in <i>The Bard of the Dimbovitza</i> (first series).
1890	'Gypsy Song.'	<i>New Review.</i>		Folksong.	Featured in September. Later published in <i>The Bard of the Dimbovitza</i> (first series)

1890	Untitled.	<i>Murray's Magazine.</i>		Poem.	Included in an article entitled 'The Welsh Eisteddfod.' Published 13 September 1890.
1891	'The Peak of Longing.'	<i>Good Words.</i>		Short story.	Featured in January. Later part of <i>Legends from River and Mountain</i> (1896), under the title 'Virful cu Dor.'
1891	'The People's Mother.'	<i>Sunday at Home.</i>		Poem.	Featured in April. Published at the end of an article on Sylva.
1891	'A Funeral in the Carpathians.'	<i>London Society.</i>		Short story.	Featured in the holiday issue. Later published as part of <i>A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories</i> (1903).
1892	'The Home Secretary.'	<i>Sunday at Home.</i>		Non-fictional article.	
1894	'The Witch's Castle.'	<i>English Illustrated Magazine.</i>	Mrs Angus Hall.	Short story.	Published in January. Reportedly translated with Sylva's permission. Later part of <i>Legends from River and Mountain</i> (1896) under the title 'The Witch's Stronghold.'
1896	'The Serpent Isle.'	<i>Lady's Realm.</i>		Short story.	Published in the first edition (November 1896-April 1897). Later part of <i>Legends from River and Mountain</i> (1896) under the same title. Also published in <i>A Royal Story Book</i> (1911) under the title 'The Poet.'
1896	'Fidelity.'	<i>Strand Magazine</i>	Alys Hallard.	Short story.	Later part of <i>A Royal Story Book</i> (1911) under the title 'The Lady's Crag's'.
1897	'Praise Ye The Lord.'	<i>Quiver.</i>	Sir Edwin Arnold.	Poem.	Featured in Mary E. Garton's article, 'Queens as Hymn-Writers'.
1897	'Vrancia.'	<i>Lady's Realm.</i>		Short story.	Featured in the third issue (November 1897-April 1898). Facsimile of her signature, although likely to be inauthentic.
1897	'Balta (The Lake).'	<i>Lady's Realm.</i>		Short story.	Featured in the third issue (November 1897-April 1898).

1898	'The Siege of Widin. An Episode in the Russo-Turkish War.'	<i>Lady's Realm.</i>		Short story.	Featured in the fourth issue (May-October 1898). Later published as 'The Fall of Vidin' in <i>A Roumanian Vendetta and Other Stories</i> (1903).
1899	'The Story of a Helpful Queen.'	<i>North American Review.</i>		Short story.	Published in November. American periodical. Later published under the same name in <i>A Real Queen's Fairy Book</i> (1901).
1900	'Westminster Abbey.'	<i>Nineteenth Century.</i>	Arthur Waugh.	Poem.	Published in April. German original published underneath English version. Written in Bucharest on 9 January 1900.
1900	'The Woman's Vocation' and other Poems	<i>North American Review.</i>	Sidney Whitman.	Poetry (x4).	Published in March. American periodical.
1904	'Reminiscences of War.'	<i>North American Review.</i>		Non-fictional article.	Anecdotal account of tending the wounded during the Russo- Turkish War. Published in October.
1905	'Musical Hours.'	<i>Nineteenth Century and After.</i>		Non-fictional article.	Published in April.
1908	'On Earth – Peace.'	<i>Nineteenth Century and After.</i>		Non-fictional article.	Published in January.
1908	'My Kittens.'	<i>Century.</i>		Non-fictional article.	Published in March.
1908	'Some Thoughts About my Library.'	<i>Pall Mall Magazine.</i>		Non-fictional article.	Published in November.
1911	'A Story of Vengeance.'	<i>London Journal.</i>		Short story.	Published in June.

1912	'Pablo Domenech. A Tragic Tale of How a Private in the Ranks Avenged a Personal Insult by His Superior Officer.'	<i>The New York Times.</i>		Short story.	Published on 28 January under the headline 'A Stirring Short Story by Queen Carmen Sylva.' Advertised as the first publication of this story in the USA.
1913	'If I were a Millionaire.'	<i>Fortnightly Review.</i>		Non-fictional article.	Published in March.

5.3. Work contributed to larger collections.

Year	Title	Publisher	Translator	Genre	Extra information
1892	<i>Capitals of the World.</i>	London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company.		Non-fiction.	Two volumes. Sylva wrote the chapter on Bucharest.
1904	<i>Wayfarer's Love.</i>	London: Archibald Constable Ltd.		Aphorism.	Written in French.
1905	<i>Letters on the Simple Life.</i>	London: Partridge.		Non-fiction.	Contributors include Marie Corelli, Sarah Grand and Arthur Conan Doyle. Sylva's essay is entitled 'The Simple Life in a Palace.'

5.4. Other.

Year	Title	Publication	Translator	Genre	Extra information
1909	<i>Charles Dickens.</i>			Poem.	Poem about Dickens on a souvenir postcard. Composed in Bucharest, 28 January 1909.
1910	<i>The Art of Tatting.</i>	London: Longmans, Green & Co.		Non-fiction.	Sylva wrote the introduction. Volume written by Lady Katharin L. Hoare. Tatting is a method of creating lace through a series of knots and loops.
1913	<i>The Lily of Life.</i>	London: Hodder & Stoughton.		Non-fiction.	Sylva wrote the preface. The fairy tale was written by her successor, Queen Marie.

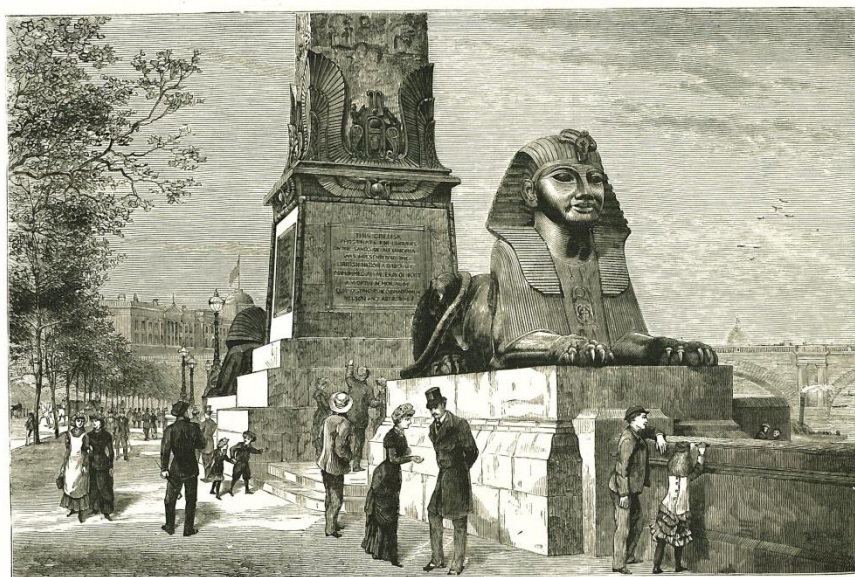
Appendix Six. Images.

This appendix contains the images of Sylva that have been discussed in this thesis.

1. Fig. 1. Untitled illustrations, *Graphic*, 2 June 1881, p. 12.
2. Fig. 1.1. Untitled illustrations, *Graphic*, 2 June 1881, p. 13.
3. Fig. 2. 'The Photographs of the Month,' *Review of Reviews*, October 1890, p. 379.
4. Fig. 3. 'Carmen Sylva – The Poet,' *Quiver*, January 1897, p. 770.
5. Fig. 4. 'Carmen Sylva's Grandchildren,' *Black & White Illustrated Budget*, 8 August 1903, p. 595.
6. Fig. 5. 'T.M. The King and Queen of Roumania Their Busy and Useful Lives,' *Black & White*, 29 December 1906, p. 844.
7. Fig 5.1. 'T.M. The King and Queen of Roumania Their Busy and Useful Lives,' *Black & White*, 29 December 1906, p. 845.



ELIZABETH, FIRST QUEEN OF ROUMANIA
CROWNED MAY 22, 1881



CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT, WITH THE SPHINXES WHICH WILL SHORTLY BE PLACED AT THE BASE

Fig. 1. Untitled illustrations, *Graphic*, 2 June 1881, p. 12.

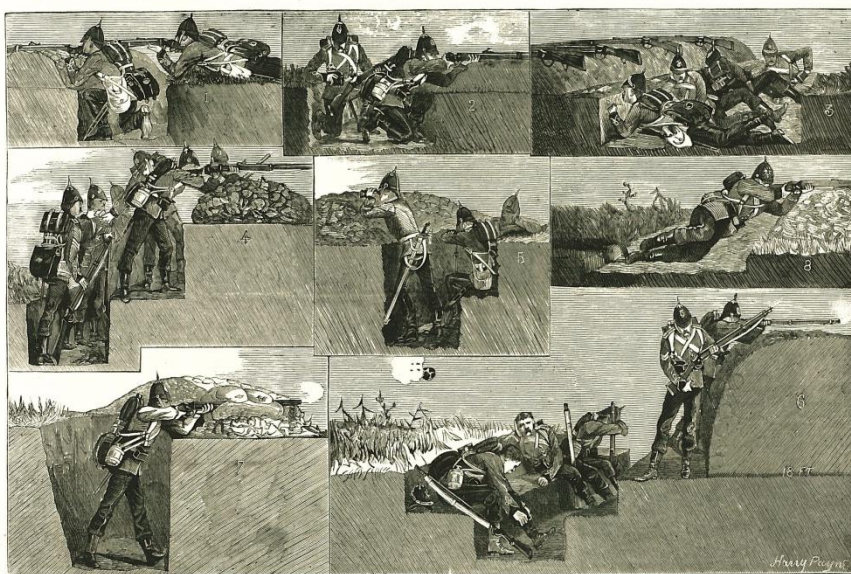
JULY 2, 1881

THE GRAPHIC

13



CHARLES, FIRST KING OF ROUMANIA
CROWNED MAY 22, 1881



1. Half-hour Trench.—2. One Hour Trench.—3. Two Hour Trench, or One Hour's Extra Work at the One Hour Trench.—4. Cover obtained for Rear Rank Standing by Deepening the One Hour Trench.—5. Cover Sitting obtained by Widening the One Hour Trench.—6. Four Hour Breastwork.—7. Sectional View of Rifle Pit.—8. Shelter Pit, Made in Five Minutes.

INFANTRY AND THE SPADE—HASTY ENTRENCHMENTS

Fig. 1.1. Untitled illustrations, *Graphic*, 2 June 1881, p. 13



Fig. 2. Anonymous, 'The Photographs of the Month,' *Review of Reviews*, October 1890, p. 379.



Carmen Sylva—The Poet-Queen of Roumania.

(Photo: A. Manders, Llundudno.)

Elisabeth

[See p. 803.]

Fig. 3. Anonymous, 'Carmen Sylva – The Poet,' *Quiver*, January 1897, p. 770.

AUGUST 8, 1903

ILLUSTRATED BUDGET

595

* CARMEN SYLVA'S GRANDCHILDREN *



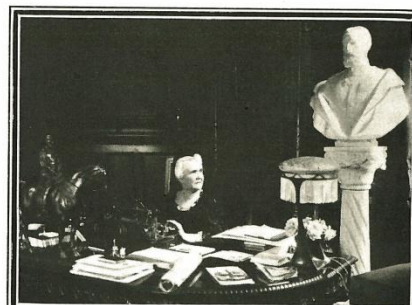
PRINCESSES ELIZABETH AND MARIA OF ROUMANIA
Daughters of the Crown Prince and Princess Ferdinand of Roumania

Fig. 4. 'Carmen Sylva's Grandchildren,' *Black & White Illustrated Budget*, 8 August 1903, p. 595.

T.M. THE KING AND QUEEN OF ROUMANIA



THE QUEEN RECEIVES SOME PEASANTS IN THE GROUNDS OF THE PALACE



"CARMEN SYLVA" IN HER STUDY, WHERE SHE CONDUCTS MOST OF HER OWN CORRESPONDENCE AND USES A TYPEWRITER



CASTEL PELESH, THE FAVOURITE RESIDENCE OF THE KING AND QUEEN



THE FAMOUS STATUE SHOWING "CARMEN SYLVA" OFFERING A CUP OF WATER TO A WOUNDED SOLDIER



T.M. THE KING AND QUEEN ABOUT TO SET OUT FOR A WALK IN THEIR PARK

Photos : Chasseau-Flaviens

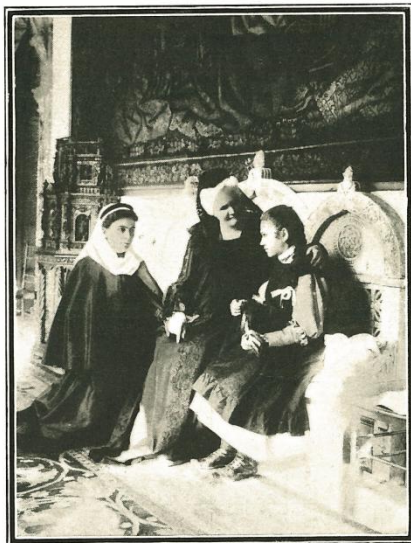
Fig. 5. 'T.M. The King and Queen of Roumania Their Busy and Useful Lives,' *Black & White*, 29 December 1906, p. 844.

DECEMBER 29, 1906

BLACK & WHITE

845

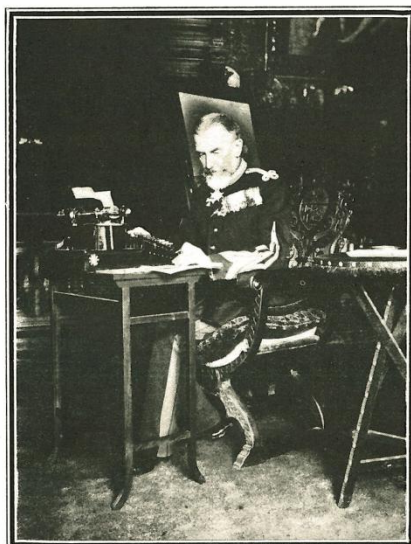
THEIR BUSY AND USEFUL LIVES



THE QUEEN TAKES A GREAT INTEREST IN THE BLIND, AND IS SEEN HERE TALKING WITH A LITTLE PEASANT GIRL



IN SPITE OF HER LITERARY AND PHILANTHROPIC WORKS, THE QUEEN FINDS TIME FOR THE MORE ESSENTIALLY FEMININE OCCUPATION OF NEEDLEWORK



H.M. THE KING OF ROUMANIA IN HIS STUDY, WHERE HE OPERATES A TYPEWRITING MACHINE



THE QUEEN IS AN ENTHUSIASTIC MUSICIAN, AND IN THE PHOTOGRAPH IS SEEN ACCOMPANYING M. DINCO, THE FAMOUS COMPOSER

Fig 5.1. Anonymous, 'T.M. The King and Queen of Roumania Their Busy and Useful Lives,' *Black & White*, 29 December 1906, p. 845.

Appendix Seven. Anglo-German relations.

The purpose of this appendix is to provide a contextual background for the thesis, bringing together the various connections between Britain and Germany during the nineteenth century. This involves discussion not only of political and economic factors, but also the cultural links between the two countries, in terms of dynastic connections, religion and social reforms. The following section is not intended to be an exhaustive account of these issues, but will attempt to draw a connection between fluctuations in their relationship, caused by a combination of factors, and the infiltration of German ideas into British culture. These links may provide some explanation for the interest in, and eventual marginalisation of, Carmen Sylva.

As Haines succinctly describes it, ‘the influence of one culture upon another is of slow growth, a history of gradual infiltration, of resistance encountered, of partial acceptance, of adjustment and re-adjustment.’¹ Broadly speaking, Anglo-German relations during the nineteenth century should be viewed in terms of three factors: politics, the economy and social values. Developments in these areas had positive and negative influences upon the overall relations between Britain and Germany. These factors are also related, particularly with regard to politics and subsequent economic policies. An obvious example of this is the unification of Germany in 1871: the political decision to unite thirty-nine smaller states, albeit dominated by Prussia, stimulated a rapid period of industrialisation and economic change, so that by the twentieth century, Germany was ‘the leading industrial nation in Europe.’² By the outbreak of World War One, Germany’s production levels almost equalled that of Britain. In 1871 Germany was producing 38 million tons of coal compared with Britain’s 118 million, but by 1914 this had increased to 279 million tons, substantially closer to Britain’s output (approximately 292 million).³ In turn, German economic advancement caused a commercial rivalry with Britain from the 1880s onwards,

¹George Haines, *German Influences Upon English Education and Science 1800-1866* (New London, Connecticut: Connecticut College, 1957), p. 57.

²William Carr, *A History of Germany 1815-1985* (1969; London: Edward Arnold, 1987), p. 166.

³*Ibid.*, p. 167.

which affected the political decisions made by their respective leaders, as shown, for example, in the 1887 Merchandise Marks Act in Britain, which forced German manufacturers to print 'Made in Germany' on their goods. This action largely backfired, however, since 'the German goods, now properly marked, were soon recognised by customers as being in many cases cheaper *and* better [than British goods].'⁴ Indeed, Kennedy sees economic changes in Germany as the 'most profound cause' of Anglo-German tensions and thus the defining element in their overall relations: without unification and the industrial transformation that it brought to the nation, 'Germany would have remained an "insignificant country",' and would not have detracted from Britain's dominance in world affairs.⁵

The social structures of Britain and Germany were very different prior to German unification: while the majority of the British population lived in urban areas, Germany contained a large base of lower class peasants and restricted the franchise to the upper classes through 'a complex patchwork of legal jurisdictions,' which had been devised a century earlier.⁶ But rapid industrialisation, coupled with the growing German population, caused a fundamental alteration to this social structure, becoming more threatening to the previously unchallenged British dominance.

This strong correlation between the economy and the subsequent political developments can be seen throughout the nineteenth century. The insular, non-interventionist policies pursued by the British in the 1860s, for example, was a result of the country's military and naval weaknesses. The 'pigmy' size of the army and relatively small navy, compared with its continental counterparts, meant that whilst Britain could proffer opinions in European affairs, such as the Franco-Prussian War, they did not want to become actively involved in it.⁷ No major reassessment of British foreign policy occurred even after France's defeat in this war. Indeed, Britain generally supported German unification, its economic transformation and the subsequent expansionist policies, until it directly infringed

⁴Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: The Ashfield Press, 1987), p. 57.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 464; p. 465.

⁶David Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780-1918. The Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 3.

⁷Kennedy, p. 16.

on areas of British dominance. This is apparent with regard to manufacture, as mentioned above, which in the later decades of the nineteenth century became more focused on arms expenditure and naval expansion. This development added a potential German threat to British security as well as to the economy.

German expansion into British-dominated areas is also apparent with regard to colonisation, and the 'scramble for Africa' in particular, which began in 1884. German dominance over Togoland, the Cameroons, German East Africa and some of the Pacific Islands caused a deterioration of relations with Britain: Germany was not only encroaching on British colonial dominance but was also exploiting desires for colonial expansion in order to improve their relations with France and isolate Britain. For example, both Germany and France opposed British financial reform in Egypt and 'supported each other's colonial claims.'⁸ Anglo-German relations were further soured when the Jameson Raid, orchestrated by the British to cause an uprising, took place in the Transvaal in 1895. Germany considered the raid unsanctioned and Kaiser Wilhelm II's 'Krüger Telegram' aroused great indignation in Britain, stimulating a press war between the two countries.⁹ Carr states that this event 'helped to crystallise subconscious resentment of Germany's commercial rivalry and gave encouragement to the very small minority of Englishmen who positively hated Germany.'¹⁰ This dislike was not limited to Britain, as shown in the rise in nationalistic, right-wing parties and pressure groups in Germany, such as the Pan-German league, which was vehemently anti-British. Although there were later uprisings in German colonies, as well as a deterioration in relations between Germany, France and Russia – which caused Germany to turn back to Britain for support and sign the Heligoland-Zanzibar treaty in 1890 – Germany's desire for a 'place in the sun' caused 'a cooling' in Anglo-German relations.¹¹

It is important to recognise, however, that these developments did not have drastic consequences during the nineteenth century: for all their tensions,

⁸Carr, p. 155.

⁹This was a telegram sent from Kaiser Wilhelm II to Stephanus Krüger (better known as Paul Krüger) (1825-1904), the President of the Transvaal Republic, praising him for repelling the Jameson Raid. When the telegram was leaked, the British were outraged by the apparent support given by the Kaiser in this matter.

¹⁰Carr, p. 191.

¹¹Kennedy, p. 218.

Germany and Britain did not go to war until 1914. The changes in their relationship, both positive and negative, should be viewed relatively, an idea that should also be applied to the influence of certain politicians or members of the respective royal families in shaping the Anglo-German relations in this period.

In terms of causing friction between Britain and Germany, British prime ministers such as William Gladstone (1809-1898) and Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) may have initially supported German unification, but they had 'mixed feelings' towards Bismarck, which left them opposed to German policies of increased arms expenditure, anti-socialist laws and colonial bids.¹² Similarly, certain German leaders can also be seen to have had a decidedly negative effect on Anglo-German relations: the chancellor Otto von Bismarck, despite his frequent visits to England – and offers of alliance – encouraged German press campaigns against England. His repressive anti-Catholic and anti-Socialist policies repelled many Britons and his desire to 'remain the master of Europe's destinies' impeded the development of closer Anglo-German relations.¹³

The appointment of Bernhard von Bülow (1849-1929) as State Secretary in 1897 also marked a deterioration of Anglo-German relations: Germany began an aggressive policy of *Weltpolitik*, which attempted to eliminate Britain's global dominance. This period of anti-British sentiment and von Bülow's 'unique contribution to the worsening of Anglo-German relations,' caused Britain to become more suspicious of Germany.¹⁴ Thus, although both Germany and Britain's political parties 'were not acutely concerned about Anglo-German relations except during a few periods of crisis,' the inherent prejudices of their political leaders had an effect on the diplomatic decisions they made as well as the way in which they portrayed other nations in the media.¹⁵

The Press played a key role in shaping Anglo-German relations, manipulated by both German and British politicians to gain public support, with many politicians writing for the newspapers. Similarly, many newspaper editors and journalists became politicians. Indeed, before entering politics, Disraeli had

¹²Ibid., p. 28.

¹³Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 86.

written a number of novels, as well as political pamphlets. Newspapers were an important way of gauging public opinion, as well as influencing it, a circumstance that political figures such as Bismarck recognised, establishing a Press Bureau in the Foreign Ministry to 'deal with newspaper treatment of foreign affairs,' initially during the Franco-Prussian War.¹⁶ In effect, this was designed to manipulate the public by printing pro-government articles. Newspapers such as the popular *Kölnische Zeitung* served this purpose, becoming 'a frequent mouthpiece of the Foreign Ministry,' and a propaganda tool.¹⁷

The Times also had a reputation as an agent of the British government, with many foreign countries believing that if it did not directly report to the government, the articles it produced had been officially sanctioned.¹⁸ Liberal newspapers in Britain were initially supportive of plans for German unity in the 1860s and at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War were still pro-German, believing that Napoleon was largely responsible. As the war progressed, however, and more information about Bismarck and his methods came into the public sphere, opinions began to change. The *Daily News* and the *Economist* began to publish critical articles, leading to 'heated' exchanges between the German right-wing and British liberal newspapers.¹⁹ Whilst this indicates that wider political events shaped Anglo-German relations, it also suggests that certain forms of social expression, such as newspapers, could contribute to their deterioration: easily and effectively communicating with the general public to stimulate distrust or further the opinions of those in power. The influence of such media is particularly relevant to Carmen Sylva's literary reputation, as she was widely reviewed until her death in 1916, but soon faded from cultural consciousness.

It must be recognised, however, that whilst nineteenth-century Anglo-German relations were a delicate balancing act, this was not a period solely characterised by a decline in relations. Indeed, there were economic and political factors which encouraged stronger bonds between the two countries. Successful Anglo-German diplomacy in the 1870s, for example, was a result of their mutual

¹⁶Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 96.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 93.

concerns about Russia: both Britain and Germany wished to remain on good terms with Russia, but concern about her potential understandings with France led Britain and Germany to turn to each other for assurance of mutual support. This improvement in the Anglo-German friendship meant that ‘in diplomatic affairs at least, the British and German governments occupied a rather similar position in the late 1870s, which was made even more alike by the fact that their political leaders were flexible and undogmatic.’²⁰ Whilst political leaders may have disliked each other, they would not rule out alliances if it would benefit the domestic security of their own country.

Extensive trade relations also aided Anglo-German relations. These dated back to the Middle Ages. Although Kennedy remarks that Anglo-German economic trade was ‘very much in the nature of a “one way street,”’ the fact that Germany was so dependent on Britain and that Britain profited financially from this reliance, highlights the importance of maintaining a positive trade relationship during this period.²¹ Germany imported raw materials from Britain, such as lead, wool and coal, as well as items produced in British colonies, including sugar, coffee and tobacco. After unification, during the subsequent period of industrialisation, Germany also acquired British trains, rails and textile machines, as well as British workers to use them.

It is also important to note that Germans were the largest immigrant population in nineteenth-century Britain, which may have affected the political as well as economic relations between the two countries. German immigrants have been a part of British culture since the Anglo-Saxon period, as ‘invaders, businessmen, employees, refugees or residents.’²² The reasons for coming to Britain were numerous, including overpopulation, the draw of establishing new trade links between London and German ports in Hamburg and Bremen, as well

²⁰Ibid., pp. 35-6.

²¹Ibid., p. 41.

²²Panikos Panayi, ‘Germans in Britain’s History,’ in *Germans in Britain since 1500*, ed. by Panikos Panayi (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), p. 1.

as religious and political persecution. At the turn of the nineteenth-century, Graham Jefcoate suggests there were 20,000 Germans living in London.²³

As Panikos Panayi has noted, movement out of Germany during this period occurred in a series of peaks and troughs, beginning at the end of the Napoleonic period (1846-57) due to agricultural failures and revolutions, from 1864-1873 and finally from 1880-1893.²⁴ Economic booms in the United States of America encouraged people to emigrate there in pursuit of financial success and many Germans, en-route to this new life, chose to remain in Britain. Britain's asylum policy during this period was also very accepting, effectively allowing anyone to emigrate there. This meant that by the nineteenth century, many German merchants, as well as financiers and clerks, were well-established in Britain and contributing to European trade, creating what Kennedy terms a 'cosmopolitan family.'²⁵ Although this presence seems to have been primarily focused on London, where around fifty percent of Germans lived between 1861 and 1911, there was also a large number of German industrialists in other cities, including Manchester.²⁶ Although the number of Germans in Britain was drastically reduced at the outbreak of World War One, the fact that they were contributing to British exports and importing them into Germany itself, further supports the idea that mutual trade formed a major part of Anglo-German relations and undoubtedly influenced their perceptions of each other.

There were also religious connections between the countries. Northern European society during the nineteenth century was predominantly Protestant, creating a religious tie between Britain and Germany that permeated through all levels of the class system and 'flourished' during Bismarck's policy of *Kulturkampf* – a policy of state persecution against the Catholics.²⁷ Ultimately, the persecution failed and the Catholic Centre Party remained a dominant force in German politics, stimulating a 'major realignment of German politics at the end of

²³Graham Jefcoate, 'German Printing and Bookselling in Eighteenth-Century London. Evidence and Interpretation,' in *Foreign Language Printing in London 1500-1900*, ed. by Barry Taylor (London: The British Library, 2002), p. 5.

²⁴Panikos Panayi, 'German Immigrants in Britain, 1815-1914,' in *Britain since 1500*, p. 75.

²⁵Kennedy, p. 48.

²⁶Panayi, 'Germans in Britain's History,' p. 7.

²⁷Kennedy, p. 104.

the 1870s.’²⁸ It was also instrumental in the passing of anti-socialist laws, a fact that led to a new deterioration of Anglo-German relations, since the Centre Party had a fundamentally negative attitude towards Britain, due, among other factors, to the Jewish leadership of Disraeli.²⁹ Similarly, Britain, with its strong Liberal influences in party politics, could not condone the anti-Socialist elements of German politics.

The monarchy also had a cultural influence on British perceptions of Germany and vice versa. As discussed in Chapter Three, the most obvious example of this is Queen Victoria. She was the last member of the Hanoverian royalty, a family had who first ascended the British throne in 1714. Her familial ties and knowledge of German affairs ‘considerably enhanced her *actual* – as opposed to her constitutional – position in the formation of the country’s policy towards Germany.’³⁰ Her husband, Prince Albert, consistently called for welfare reforms, as well as changes to the university system, once he had been elected to the position of chancellor at Cambridge University. He was also instrumental in organising the Great Exhibition in 1851, an international exhibition of culture and industry. Although she and her eldest daughter, also named Victoria, disliked Bismarck, the British monarch remained a staunch supporter of all things German, influencing not only the politicians she worked alongside, but also the British public, many of whom saw the Queen as a symbol of their national identity.

The same could not be said of the German Kaisers. The first head of the constitutional German monarchy was Wilhelm I (1797-1888), but he distrusted Gladstone, whom he saw as undermining the British monarchy. This, coupled with his preference for Russia and his general ‘passivity,’ which led to a reliance on Bismarck, clearly had a detrimental effect not only on the German public’s engagement with Britain, but also in terms of the British response to his reign.³¹ Although his son and successor, Friedrich III (1831-1888) was a firm anglophile,

²⁸Blackbourn, p. 197.

²⁹See, for example, the passing of the ‘Gesetz gegen die gemeingefährlichen Bestrebungen der Sozialdemokratie’ (‘Law against the dangerous efforts of Social-Democracy’) in 1878. Although this legislation was repealed by the Reichstag when Bismarck resigned in 1890, further anti-socialist measures were introduced under the leadership of Wilhelm II. For example, a bill was passed in 1894 that made inciting class hatred a punishable offence and in 1899 a law was passed threatening severe penalties for workers who formed unions.

³⁰Kennedy, p. 124.

³¹Ibid.

his premature death after a reign of just ninety-nine days drastically reduced his potential for influence. Wilhelm II, Kaiser from 1888-1918, perhaps had the greatest contribution to Anglo-German relations, but his engagement with Britain was 'erratic,' alternating between praise and distrust.³²

These examples suggest that cultural influence can weaken between countries, depending on political or economic developments. This is also apparent when elements of British popular culture are considered, such as pieces produced in magazines and newspapers from the period. Many satirical cartoons, articles and poems were published in British periodicals, including *Punch*. They criticised Germany, depicted its people negatively and mocked their traditions. At the outbreak of World War One, there was a period of sustained anti-German backlash, or 'Germanophobia,' which destroyed a large proportion of the German community in Britain as well as British interest in the country and its culture.³³ German associations and periodicals were forcibly closed down and the 1914 Aliens Restriction Act limited their movements. Literature focusing on Germany during this period could be extremely negative. Arnold White's *The Hidden Hand*, for example, was filled with anti-German stereotypes and saw German influence as a 'malignant, efficient and invisible force [...] working for the undoing of the British Empire,' in all aspects of British culture, including the Foreign Office.³⁴

Despite this period of antagonism, there is evidence of German culture being used positively and being amalgamated into areas of British society. This is not to say that British ideas did not influence German models of thought – the British emphasis on facts 'had permeated into the thought patterns of many Germans.'³⁵ This mutual exchange of intellectual ideas suggests that developments made in both countries during the nineteenth century, were on some level dependent on cultures other than their own.

One of the key areas of German influence is with regard to educational institutions. Haines suggests that nineteenth-century England remained static in

³²Ibid., p. 222.

³³Panayi, 'Germans in Britain's History,' p. 8.

³⁴Arnold White, *The Hidden Hand. A study of German influence in England* (London: Grant Richards Ltd, 1917), p. 17.

³⁵Haines, p. 30.

the face of change, handing over its status as a leader in science and education to the quickly advancing German states, led by Prussia, as well as other European countries, such as France and the Netherlands. This English reluctance to break with tradition meant there were ‘very few institutional provisions,’ for scientific developments.³⁶ Unlike their German equivalents, British universities had few laboratories and did not use experimental methods, which Haines ties to the influence of the Church. In contrast, Prussia had heavily reduced the Church’s influence over educational institutions.³⁷ This may explain why individuals such as the Scottish poet Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) campaigned so vigorously for the establishment of a university free of religious affiliations and why London University eventually opened as a result of private funding in 1827. The German education system was seen as a cultural success and British reformers wanted to make changes based on German models. Those calling for educational reforms during this period, such as Mark Pattison, had spent periods of time on the continent, specifically in Germany. Pattison had attended courses at Heidelberg University and was appointed by the Education Committee of the Privy Council to investigate the education system in the German states in 1859. He discovered a system that was far superior to that of Oxford and Cambridge. Although professors were paid less than their British counterparts, there was ‘an atmosphere in which learning was respected by all and ardently pursued by student and teacher.’³⁸ Thanks to his findings, as well as others, including Matthew Arnold, ‘the whole face of Oxford was altered.’ It now awarded fellowships based on academic merit and extended the curriculum, specifically with regard to science, history and philosophy.³⁹

Realising that Britain lagged behind many continental countries, steps were taken in the early decades of the nineteenth century to improve English scientific success, as shown in the reforms to the Royal Society in the 1820s. This society was designed to stimulate scientific pursuits and was soon followed by the establishment of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1831,

³⁶Ibid., p. 17.

³⁷Ibid., p. 7.

³⁸John Sparrow, *Mark Pattison and the Idea of a University* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 111.

³⁹Ibid., p. 115.

which promoted professional interest and interaction for the scientific minds of Britain. Crucially, it was based on a German model: the *Deutscher Naturforscher Versammlung*, established in 1822. The developments made to the discipline of history were also a result of Britons who had been heavily influenced by their German contemporaries. William Stubbs (1825-1901), for example, a cleric who later became Professor of Modern History at Oxford from 1866-1884, aided the development of the 'Oxford School' of history, 'one of the most influential intellectual strands in history at this juncture.'⁴⁰ His opinions on the study of history had been heavily influenced by Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), a historian and professor at the University of Berlin, who championed a source-based approach to research, using empirical evidence and philological criticism.

German influence on British society also occurred in the field of literature, an area which is most relevant to my thesis. This influence involves the German literature read in England – both in its original form and translated into English – and the pockets of interest in German life that occurred as a result. German-language books began to be printed in London at the turn of the seventeenth century but significantly, foreign-language newspapers and periodicals only appeared from the nineteenth century onwards.⁴¹ The development of German-language newspapers such as the *Londoner General Anzeiger*, the *Londoner Zeitung* (previously *Hermann*) and *Die Finanzchronik* are testament to the growing and well-established German community in London before the outbreak of war, despite their relatively short print-runs.

Graham Jefcoate has highlighted three 'phases' in German-language book trade activity, with the first 'Pietist phase' lasting from the early to mid-1700s. The second phase dated from around 1749-1793 and saw the establishment of the first German Press. The final phase occurred between the late 1700s to the early 1800s. It was in this last period that the *Deutsche Lese-Bibliothek* opened in the Strand and increasing numbers of German grammar textbooks were published for the English public, although many people were still not particularly inclined to

⁴⁰Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional. Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 24.

⁴¹Clive Field, 'Preface,' in *Foreign Language Printing in London 1500-1900*, vi.

learn German.⁴² It was also during this final ‘phase’ that German writers such as Schiller and Goethe became popular in Britain and there was ‘a vogue for the German language and its literature.’⁴³ Despite this, German literature remained relatively unknown and there was only a superficial interest in it. This is perhaps explained by the historical context: Britain was not only dominant in world affairs, but was also the main exporter of goods to Germany. There was little need for German goods and this self-sufficiency perhaps extended to German literature.

M.M. Waddington supports this idea, writing that British readers were initially exposed to German ideas through translations of religious work, a development that continued until the mid-eighteenth century. Walter Scott founded a society for the study of German in 1792, which suggests that there were individuals in Britain already formally praising German literature and culture. Other writers, such as Carlyle and Coleridge, were also encouraging the incorporation of German thought with English.⁴⁴ Waddington sees this as connected with ‘dissatisfaction with liberalism as [sic] as a cure for personal perplexity and social evil,’ and this trend was continued by other ‘Germanophiles’ like George Henry Lewes and George Eliot.⁴⁵ Yet, as Susanne Stark notes, the ‘importance of modern languages was not significantly increased,’ in Britain, since this interest primarily stemmed from the cultural elite.⁴⁶ This could explain the development of small ‘pockets’ of interest, dedicated to the reading of German literature. These groups were spread around Victorian cities. The development of this interest appears to develop from individuals such as William Taylor and Thomas Carlyle, the latter of whom was ‘one of the most powerful forces engaged in moving the reception of German literature from a provincial to a national stage.’⁴⁷ Their interactions with their contemporaries and family members appear to have caused a swell of interest in German literature. Subsequent networks ranged from London to Norwich, Manchester, Liverpool, Coventry and Bristol.

⁴²Jefcoate, pp. 6-7.

⁴³Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁴M.M. Waddington, *The Development of British Thought from 1820 to 1890 with Special Reference to German influences* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, Limited, 1919), pp. 45-46.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 64.

⁴⁶Stark, p. 17.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 18.

In Norwich, Susanne Stark sees William Taylor as spreading ‘a tradition of interest’ to a number of women, whom she terms ‘The Norwich Group.’ This group included the translator Sarah Taylor (later Austin) (1793-1867), her cousin Harriet Martineau and the philanthropist Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845).⁴⁸ In Manchester, a German literary circle formed around Elizabeth Gaskell and her husband and the city became ‘a centre for the reception of German literature [and] in many ways took over the role of the Norwich group.’⁴⁹ Manchester was home to the Foreign Library, established in 1830, and the *Schiller Anstalt*, which opened in 1859 to encourage the British public to embrace foreign literature and which counted Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) among its members. A large number of German industrialists also lived there. Smaller areas of interest were located in Liverpool, surrounding the translator Anna Swanwick (1813-1899), and in Bristol, where the physician Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808) (father of the poet Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849) resided. Stark suggests that Beddoes’s praise of German culture and literature influenced Samuel Taylor Coleridge.⁵⁰ Coventry, too, was the place where George Eliot developed her interest in all things German, although this interest was to increase dramatically when she met George Henry Lewes in London in 1851.⁵¹

It was London, as Britain’s capital and the centre of trade and commerce, which became the centre of the nineteenth-century book publishing trade, catering to the majority of German immigrants and British supporters of German literature. It was home to prominent German literary figures and politicians, including, as I noted in Chapter Two, the German diplomat and ambassador Baron Christian Karl Josias von Bunsen. He had a wide and varied circle of acquaintances, including Max Müller, as well as the lawyer and diarist Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867) and the theological writer Julius Hare (1795-1855), who alone collected ‘several thousand volumes of German books.’⁵²

A number of German women writers also lived, worked in, and visited London. They form two distinct groups, the first being those who travelled to

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 21.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., p. 28.

London as part of a tour of Britain, such as Ida von Hahn-Hahn in 1846, Fanny Lewald in 1850 and Carmen Sylva in 1890. Then there are those who spent prolonged periods of time in London or remained there permanently as political exiles, as is true of Malwida von Meysenbug, who fled to London in 1852 and Johanna Kinkel, who emigrated permanently 1851. A number of these women were acquainted with each other, as well as with prominent British literary figures, including Carlyle and his wife, Jane.

Overall, Anglo-German relations were in a state of flux in the nineteenth century. The presence of Germans in Britain was not permanent and tensions between the countries occurred in peaks and troughs, but the relationship between the countries was undoubtedly significant, particularly for Carmen Sylva, who has been immortalised in British geography as well as its literary history.

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