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The Legacy of Emmeline Pankhurst in the British Society

Diplomová Práce

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INTRODUCTION

The legacy and reputation precede Emmeline Pankhurst who is remembered as a militant suffragette and the leader of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). For many she was a charismatic and courageous leader, for others she was an autocrat and traitor. One thing is for sure, she was a complex person full of paradoxes, who was devoted to the cause of the women's enfranchisement, and she is perceived as the leading figure in the fight for equal rights in Britain at the beginning of the 20th century. In 2015 there was a movie *Suffragette* released, and it sparked a new conversation about gender inequality and the historical legacy of not only Emmeline, but the whole Pankhurst family and the WSPU. It led even to republishing of Emmeline's memoir *My Own Story* (1914), in which she describes the pre-war struggle of the WSPU with the British government for the women's suffrage. Her legacy, though strongly connected with British history, was not documented well except for several books written by her daughters and her powerful speeches. There were not many reliable sources to provide her biography; only after years of neglect, three biographies were written about her in the 21st century. The aim of the thesis is to explore Emmeline's life and legacy through her memoir and one of her speeches to create more faithful image and to compare and analyze her portrayal in biographies and filmography. As she is an ambiguous personality, the underlying focus of the thesis will be on her autocratic and uncompromising behavior, and whether it really was as black and white as presented.

The thesis will examine Emmeline's memoir *My Own Story* (1914) and the speech "Freedom or Death" she delivered in Hartford, Connecticut in November 1913. Her legacy in the movie adaptations is almost non-existent, thus, only the movie *Suffragette* (2015) and the TV series *Shoulder to Shoulder* (1974) by BBC will be analyzed. *The Pankhursts* (2001) by Martin Pugh, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (2002) by Paula Bartley, and *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (2003) by June Purvis are the three biographies that will be discussed in order to analyze how each author portrays her, and what are the commonalities and perspectives they adopt.

The first chapter provides an introduction to the topic of the suffragette movement in Great Britain. As many details will be discussed in the following chapters, it is only an overview of the beginnings of the struggle for enfranchisement, which is supposed to give a reader more insight into the discussion, including whether the militancy was the key to

women's suffrage, or how such behavior of the women was perceived at the time. It does not aim to provide any details or complete history. Similarly, the second chapter is a general outline of the life of Emmeline Pankhurst, because more details will be debated later. Mentioning the key moments of her life, this chapter serves as a brief biography and introduction of the person this thesis focuses on.

Emmeline's strategy in the WSPU is often criticized, but her determination is admired. She was an eloquent speaker, who controlled her audience, and even mastered it in her memoir *My Own Story*, which the third chapter concentrates on. It is an apologia for her behavior, meant to be read mainly by Americans. She starts with her early life, and ends her narration just before the First World War began in Europe. The chapter observes Emmeline's attempt to defend the precedent suffragettes created, and although she tries to stay objective, the tone of the memoir provides a clearer picture about her determination, personality and convictions. It is one of two primary sources used in this thesis, bringing in Emmeline's point of view, which is uninfluenced by other writers. The second primary source is Emmeline's speech "Freedom or Death." She delivered it at the peak of militancy, when a lot of her friends, colleagues, and even family started to distance from her, but she never questioned the cause.

To provide more realistic image of Emmeline, well-researched biographies published in the 21st century, which approach her life from different angles, were included. The previous biographies written in the 20th century are criticized for taking on Sylvia Pankhurst's negative attitude to her mother, and they also observe mainly the suffragette movement itself. In the biographies discussed in this paper, each of the authors takes on a different position, negative or positive, and so together they provide more balanced view of Emmeline.

Most of the current talk about the suffragettes was sparked by the movie *Suffragette* released in 2015, and although Emmeline's character played by Meryl Streep appears in the movie only for a moment, the talk around the gender equality and the acceptability of the means used was raised again. Thus, the movie and also back then influential TV show *Shoulder to Shoulder* are analyzed as a part of this thesis to provide more complex view of Emmeline in the contemporary society.

In the end, the thesis arrives at an answer to the underlying question of her autocratic behavior as the last chapter debates all the sources, and provides multifaceted portrayal of the influential suffragette. It gives the reader space to reflect and make their conclusion about Emmeline Pankhurst and even the WSPU militancy based on the information

discussed. Emmeline attempted a complex social reform to reach gender equality, because regardless of the class, young women, mothers, widows, female-workers and other females were underprivileged by law. The right to vote was only the first step to more complex legislative change, and thus it is suggested that Emmeline's legacy is still alive.

1 OVERVIEW OF THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

The British suffragette movement lasted almost a hundred years,¹ making it one of the longest suffrage struggles, which challenged the Edwardian female identity and created new courageous fearless heroines. The movement did not have a support of the Queen Victoria nor George V. The campaign “Votes for Women” gained many supporters nevertheless. The militancy got the suffragettes attention all over the world, inspiring people in China, the USA, Germany, Denmark, and even Mohandas Ghandi, who admired the determination of the women and their willingness to suffer for the cause. Despite that there were many of the non-militant suffragettes involved in other organizations besides the militant WSPU led by Emmeline Pankhurst.² One of them was National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett.

The end of the 19th century was marked with the concept of “a new woman” who challenges the patriarchy and the traditional definition of sex roles. The feminist movement was wide, and it sought changes in legal, political, educational and sexual spheres. The right to vote was only the first step towards the gender equality, although, in theory women gained some civil rights before, such as the Married Women’s Property Act 1870, or the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1857. The equality between spouses, however, was not supported by law until 1923. Also the secondary education was made available to girls in the second half of the 19th century. Some women were able to elect Poor Law Guardians since 1834, or members of municipal and county councils since 1869 and 1888 respectively, but the right to elect representatives to the Parliament, or to become a candidate, which was considered as the step to gender equality, was denied until 1917.³

Already in 18th century Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), one of the first feminist writings, although it does not focus specifically on votes. Women’s suffrage was dealt with in William Thompson’s *Appeal* (1825) dedicated to Anna Wheeler, who was a writer and advocate of political rights for women.

¹ The first petition was sent in 1832, but only in 1928 women were able to vote under the same conditions as men in Britain. [Joyce Marlow, *Votes for Women: The Virago Book of Suffragettes* (London: Virago Press, 2001), ix.]

² Jad Adams, “We Will Fight for You!” *History Today* 64, no. 9 (September 2014): 44-45.

³ Francois Bédarida, *A Social History of England 1851-1990*, trans. A. S. Foster and Jeffery Hodgkinson (Routledge, 1991), 116, 121-122.

The first suffrage petition was introduced in 1832 by Henry Hunt, however, it was ignored as well as the later 1851 petition by Anna Knight who persuaded Lord Carlisle to present it in the House of Lords. Henry Hunt presented the case based on complaints of Mary Smith of Stanmore in the county of York, who paid taxes but was not allowed to give a vote in the elections, or the fact that women had to follow the law as well, but they did not have any chance to challenge it.⁴

Political parties, nevertheless, depended on women in campaigning or organizing events. Women participated in political support groups, such as Women's Liberal Federation, Women's Labour League, or the Conservative Primrose League, including the Liberal Free Trade Union, which had women's speakers and participants around the country; on the other hand, the gender inequality persisted in divorce laws, employment, wages, parenting.⁵

To change it, the NUWSS was established in 1897. It was an amalgam of several societies trying to reach the same goal – the women's enfranchisement. They petitioned, attended public meetings, campaigned, produced pamphlets and periodicals; however, due to Emmeline Pankhurst's impatience with the NUWSS tactics and the lack of results, the WSPU was established in 1903. The motto of this women-only-organization became *deeds not words*. They aimed to get the right to vote by any means necessary, which ultimately led to using more militant tactics as the peaceful ones proved to be ineffective, because the politicians did not take the suffragettes seriously. The WSPU was seen as a complement to Independent Labour Party (ILP) which did not have a separate organization for women. At the beginning, the WSPU was a small organization with Emmeline, Christabel, Sylvia, Adela Pankhurst and Teresa Billington as the main speakers.⁶ By the year 1909, the topic of votes for women was a national issue, but until that year the suffragettes were militant, not violent. By non-violent militancy we mean harassing of politicians, street demonstrations, public speaking, or campaigning together with other socialist organizations. Later it evolved into more violent actions such as provoking public disorder, destroying public or private property, bombing and vandalizing. The extreme methods led to imprisonment of the suffragettes, however, even

⁴ Marlow, *Votes for Women*, 3-4.

⁵ Paul Johnson, ed., *Twentieth-century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Changes* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1994), 103-104.

⁶ Sandra Stanley Holton, "Women's Social and Political Union (act. 1903–1914)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, accessed 17 September 2016, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95579>.

then they did not stop fighting for the cause, and instead they adopted the ultimate self-destructive means of hunger, thirst and sleep strikes.⁷ Among the important dates of the movement belong 1909 when the hunger strikes began, the Black Friday in November 1910 during which the suffragette demonstrators were treated with an unprecedented brutality by the police force, and 1913 when Emily Wilding Davison died as a result of stepping in front of a king's horse at the Epsom Derby. In June 1917 the MPs passed⁸ the women's suffrage clause in the Bill with the age restriction to be over thirty for women to be able to vote, and they moved the Bill to the House of the Lords.⁹¹⁰

The potential explanations for the extreme behavior of the suffragettes have been discussed. Some have suggested the psychological imbalance of the women or other pathology in the society, thus making them react to the outside forces of the current British politics. It has been also pointed out that there is a correlation with the radical feminism. "Militants are granted a keener perception, a more developed consciousness, of the nature of women's social, political and cultural subordination."¹¹ Brian Harrison in his essay "The Act of Militancy" also comments the challenges and dangers of being a member of society such as the WSPU, which was led by the most determined suffragists, because the potential acts of violence could easily develop into more hazardous behavior due to emotional and psychological dependence. The possible reasons, though, show that the psychology plays an important role as the individual moves from personal beliefs to a great commitment and even greater measures; it is especially a view of constitutionalists to justify the militancy.¹²

It is questionable to what degree the militancy helped the cause of votes for women, however, Emmeline Pankhurst perceived the struggle as important as the goal, especially because it reflected the self-realization of the society. She believed that it is an expression of the fight for freedom.¹³ In her memoir *My Own Story*, Emmeline saw the fight as a way

⁷ Sandra Stanley Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst," in *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Harold L. Smith (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990), 7-9.

⁸ Voting: 387 to 57 in favour.

⁹ Holton, "Women's Social and Political Union (act. 1903-1914)."

¹⁰ For more detailed list of important dates see Appendix.

¹¹ Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst," 9.

¹² Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst," 9-10.

¹³ Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst," 12.

out of a human oppression. She uses many past resistance movements to apologize the actions, mainly in connection to the reasoning: if men can fight, then women can too.

The WSPU was based on voluntarism, and each of the suffragettes was asked to be militant in their own way. The question of self-sacrifice and autonomy was fundamental, but Emmeline's aim was to have the women keep their moral integrity and knowledge of themselves. For most of them the punishment was the suppression of the freedom of expression. It was not just the humiliation caused by forcible feeding, not the pain, but the moral humiliation in general as men considered them inferior. Although the WSPU was quite autocratic, there was freedom of initiating own way of protesting.¹⁴

Towards the year 1914, the priority among the suffragettes became the integrity of the WSPU and the militant actions, not the vote anymore. At the same time, there was a possibility of cooperation with Lloyd George if the militant actions would cease, and then he would make the franchise reform in his government, but Christabel Pankhurst refused to negotiate. Thus, they refused the very real opportunity of enfranchisement. With the coming First World War, Emmeline and Christabel changed the work of the WSPU to support the government in the war efforts against a common enemy, and so they were not as involved in women's suffrage movement as before.¹⁵

¹⁴ Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst," 15-17.

¹⁵ Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst," 19.

2 EMMELINE PANKHURST AND HER OWN STORY

Emmeline Pankhurst was one of the founders of the British suffragette movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Her name became synonymous with female militancy and helping British women to get the right to vote, which ultimately led to her being named as one of the 100 most important people of the 20th century.¹⁶

Emmeline was born on July 15, 1858 in Manchester. Her parents Robert Goulden, Sophia Jane Quine and her grandparents¹⁷ were political activists and radicals supporting the children in liberal ideas. After finishing her education in Paris,¹⁸ she returned to work on the women's suffrage movement, and came to know Richard Pankhurst, a barrister and a strong personality supporting radical views, reforms of the labor laws and women's suffrage. He ultimately initiated her to politics, they married in 1879 and had five children together – Christabel, Sylvia, Adela, Frank and Harry.¹⁹

Emmeline Pankhurst states that the collapse of the women suffrage movement in 1884 was the beginning of a new phase in her life. In 1885 Richard again attempted in the general election, this time with Emmeline helping him in the campaign. She was able to get some suffragettes to help, nevertheless he failed in elections in 1886 and 1892. Despite their bad financial situation, they still pursued the controversial radical and feminist causes.²⁰

In 1888 they lost their only son Frank, but in 1889 Emmeline gave birth to another boy Harry. In those years, they hosted many people from the political and literary circles, including William Lloyd Garrison, Sir Edward Grey, Keir Hardie, and many others. During these opportunities to meet left-wing politicians and thinkers, she gained enough confidence to become a public figure herself. The general lack of progress of Women's Liberal Federation let Richard and Emmeline help to establish Women's Franchise League in 1889. The discussions and dealings with politicians within the Women's

¹⁶ Marina Warner, "The Agitator Emmeline Pankhurst," *Time*. June 14, 1999, accessed September 18, 2016, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,991250,00.html>.

¹⁷ Her grandfather participated in St Peter's Fields meeting in 1819, and later together with his wife they joined the Anti-Corn Law. [Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 6.]

¹⁸ Emmeline was inspired by French Revolution, ideas and fashion. [Carl Rollyson, "A conservative revolutionary: Emmeline Pankhurst (1857-1928)," *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 79.2 (Spring 2003): 327.]

¹⁹ June Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," *History Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 77.

²⁰ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 40-45.

Franchise League, her understanding of the politics and the gatherings prepared Emmeline for the militant phase of her life.²¹

In 1890s Emmeline became a political figure herself. In Women's Franchise League she pursued the agenda of votes for women, equal pay, higher education, having a protective legislation, however, the Pankhursts became socialists associated with the ILP, and thus Emmeline resigned Women's Franchise League in 1894. Due to her participation in ILP, she became a representative of the Chorlton-upon-Medlock Board of Guardians in Manchester.²² This experience influenced her politically. The terrible conditions of housing, diet, and regulation, no privacy, or not being able to live with their spouses pushed Emmeline to fight for the rights of the inmates. She attempted to reduce working hours of the elderly women, getting them lockers, adequate clothing, and more varied food. Truly, she was able to make some changes, especially in the diet.²³ Among the other influential aspects belong the books by Harriet Beecher Stowe *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and *The French Revolution* (1837) by Thomas Carlyle. Emmeline even claimed her birthday date to be the Bastille Day, July 14, and the influence of the French Revolution reflected in her ideas of militant campaigning and struggles for liberty. Unsurprisingly, Emmeline's favorite heroine was Joan of Arc. Christabel admired her as well, and the goal was never to surrender as Joan had to.²⁴

Richard Pankhurst died in 1898. The news about Richard being ill reached Emmeline on her travels with Christabel to Geneva, and although she set on the journey back immediately, the news about his death reached her in a train reading it in the newspapers. Afterwards, she disappeared from the public affairs for a while and quit the Poor Law Guardians due to debts left after Richard. Following the Boer War, she returned to politics as a member of ILP in 1899, and as an elected member of the Manchester School Board in 1900. In the later position she met Teresa Billington, a schoolteacher, who influenced Emmeline in her aspirations which ultimately led to establishing the WSPU.²⁵ Emmeline realized that only governmental legislation would achieve the change, which was another incentive towards militancy of the WSPU.

²¹ June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, (Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2005), accessed July 25, 2016, <https://rosswolfe.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/june-purvis-emmeline-pankhurst-a-biography-2004.pdf>, 25-32.

²² "Emmeline sat on sub-committees for Schools, Female Cases, House Female Side Including Lunatic Wards, and Relief Committee Number Five." (Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 65.)

²³ Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (Kent: Solis Press, 2015), 18-21.

²⁴ Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst," 14-15.

²⁵ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 51, 67.

The Second Conciliation Bill came up in 1911. Emmeline was still the public figure of the movement, nevertheless she did not influence the day to day and tactical planning. She travelled the country and the United States on several occasions, where she addressed students and continued the fundraising for the campaign. During tours she was wearing her special uniform, a purple-green dress, necklace of amethysts, pearls and emeralds, and her prison badge with her number H24.²⁶ At the time, however, the Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith announced a different, more streamlined Manhood Suffrage Bill, which would have an amendment about the women's suffrage. It undermined the Conciliation Bill, which ensured a parliamentary time to discuss the women's suffrage bill, as the Liberal and Labour members preferred Asquith's voting system due to its more balanced male and female electorate. Infuriating as it was, because Emmeline spent a lot of time on the Conciliation Bill, she decided that she would accept only full sex equality guaranteed by the government's bill.²⁷

In May 1913 Emmeline was trialed by the Central Criminal Court according to the Malicious Injuries to Property Act 1861, where she pleaded not guilty, because she had not personal gain from the actions of vandalism, nevertheless she was sentenced to three years of prison.²⁸

Also the relationship within the Pankhurst family became tense as Adela and Sylvia both shared left-wing opinions, which resulted in the split of family. Adela was sent to Australia at the age of 28, where she continued to work for the local suffrage cause after her mother introduced her to Vida Goldstein there. Sylvia, on the other hand, led a parallel campaign in Britain. As the Labour Party at the time cooperated with the non-militant suffragist, Sylvia and her organization East London Federation of Suffragettes (ELFS) were willing to talk to Asquith and Lloyd George, unlike Christabel or Emmeline.²⁹

During the First World War, the WSPU militancy and the fight for the cause ceased. Christabel and Emmeline, both Francophiles were surprised by events in France, and they started to support the government in the attempt to keep national unity, changing the WSPU mission towards supporting the war and fighting the common enemy.³⁰ Her opinions about the domestic policies at the time are not well documented, but in one of her speeches she said that the war is a vengeance for holding women in subjection. During

²⁶ Paula Bartley, "Emmeline Pankhurst," *History Review* no. 45 (March 2003): 44.

²⁷ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 230-233.

²⁸ Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," 91.

²⁹ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 288, 278.

³⁰ Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," 92.

the war, Emmeline supported and recruited women in order to help the society by voluntary work, as well as lectured against strikes and Bolshevism in Soviet Union, and she talked to women from working class. At the time she also adopted four war babies.³¹

In January 1917 the Speaker's Conference introduced the voting reform proposal, in the end recommending women's suffrage with the age limit of thirty or thirty-five years. The Pankhursts were not very active in these negotiations, so Millicent Fawcett took over the deputations and bargaining. Emmeline only said to Lloyd George: "whatever you think can be passed, and can be passed with as little discussion and debate as possible, we are ready to accept."³² In June 1917 the women's suffrage clause in the Bill with thirty years as a limit passed and was moved to the House of the Lords. The women's enfranchisement was close, and the bad blood within the organization led to the end of the WSPU which dates to November 1917. Although further progress in the women's movement was still needed, neither Emmeline nor Christabel were actively involved, however, the WSPU was renamed to Women's Party.³³

In 1919 Emmeline set off to her fifth tour of the United States with the objective to lecture about suppression of Bolshevism. She found more welcoming audience in Canada, where she learnt about passing of her brother Herbert who died in 1920. Despite the attempts to raise money and establish funds, her financial problems continued. Many people were not willing to finance her living as she alienated a lot of friends with her autocratic leadership, her support of the state during the war, or her leaving the cause of equal suffrage. She stayed in Canada and earned her living by lecturing for the Canadian National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases.³⁴ She remained in Toronto until 1924, from where she moved to Bermuda for a year. There, she resurrected the women's suffrage movement. Still unhappy, she decided to move to south France and open English Tea-Shop of Good Hope with Mabel Tuke, which was not success.³⁵

She got another chance to become involved in expanding the women's electorate by giving the vote to women over twenty-one years, but she declined and chose to claim that the WSPU campaign was successful in reaching women's suffrage. Only in 1926 she became interested in politics again. She started to cooperate with the Conservative Party, and later became a Conservative candidate for Whitechappel. She campaigned, delivered

³¹ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 302-303, 317.

³² Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 331.

³³ Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," 93.

³⁴ Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," 93-94.

³⁵ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 391-393.

powerful speeches, but at her age it was an exhausting attempt. She died in 1928, a month before the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928 enfranchised women over twenty-one years old, ensuring the equal suffrage.³⁶

³⁶ Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," 94-95.

3 EMMELINE'S MEMOIR *MY OWN STORY*

In her memoir *My Own Story* (1914), Emmeline Pankhurst describes her life as a leader of the suffragette movement in Great Britain at the beginning of the 20th century, and the path from childhood to her decision of initiating radical politics in order to achieve enfranchisement for women. As she notes in the foreword, she was finishing this book in the summer 1914, thus at times of the beginning of the First World War, during which the suffragette movement declared truce and ceased the militant activities.³⁷

Divided in three parts according to the stages of the militancy, Emmeline Pankhurst describes her life as a founder and leader of the suffragette movement, giving the reader a first-hand account of the WSPU campaign, involvement of other suffragettes, but mainly she focuses on the negative response from politicians. She offers her views and perspective on the development of the movement. Her strong convictions and agenda are revealed throughout the book in which she does not hold back on anyone or anything, including descriptions of the gruesome treatment of women by the authorities. Originally meant to be published in the United States, Emmeline offers details and explains concepts that might be unknown to a foreign reader.

She presents the events of the British history in this self-reflective and critical essay, supported by quotes of the main participants. It is her story and her views, thus, the perspective of a suffragette, and as much as she attempts to stay objective to provide the full story, her agenda is to defend the behavior of the suffragettes. As she finished the book before the enfranchisement, her tone is still skeptic, but hopeful as she was groomed to be a feminist since childhood.

3.1 The Making of a Militant

In the first part “The Making of Militant,” Emmeline Pankhurst returns back to her formative years, claiming that childhood experience has a lot to do with her character. She grew up in Manchester, a city known for its political incidents at the time she was growing up, and as she did not suffer any deprivations herself, she says that those violent events were a catalyst for her sympathetic attitudes which led her to militancy. Emmeline makes clear that her feministic attitudes were formed already by her parents, literature

³⁷ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, xvi.

she was reading as a child, and by her education, which still then advocated the ideas of women being homemakers.³⁸ One of the powerful moments right at the beginning of the book is her hearing her father to say: “What a pity she wasn’t born a lad.”³⁹ Conscious of her underprivileged position in society from an early age, she writes this autobiographical and political memoir in order to explain her motivations.

In this first part of the book, Emmeline Pankhurst focuses on the most influential events in her development towards being a suffragette, and points out the flaws of the British system. The promising first step to equal suffrage was the Reform Act 1866,⁴⁰ which enfranchised another part of a working urban population, specifically it was a “man” who was enfranchised. At the time, “man” included also a woman unless stated otherwise, so it seemed that the Reform Bill enfranchised women as well, however, that was not the case. Emmeline mentions this event in connection to her first visit of elections and her first suffrage meeting she attended at the age of fourteen, which she commented: “I suppose I had always been an unconscious suffragist.”⁴¹

Among other influential events are the London matchgirls’ strike in 1888, the establishment of Women’s Franchise League, or her position at the Board of Poor Law Guardians. In the office, she recognized the necessity of protection of poor mothers and babies, which, as she admits, also supported her militant tendencies. Emmeline reacted to injustices against women emotionally, for example, she sympathized with a thirteen-year-old mother who killed her illegitimate child and was later sentenced to death by hanging, although Emmeline considered the father to be the victimizer. She recognized that “if civilization is to advance at all in the future, it must be through the help of women, women freed of their political shackles, women full of power to work their will in the society.”⁴² Later as a member of the Manchester School Board, she noticed the gender inequality in the working and educational sphere, because male teachers were earning more money than women, although the women often had extra work and cared more, or the fact that men in trade unions objected to women getting skilled education.⁴³ The poverty of women, inequalities in salary, the conditions and choice of education, that all gave her

³⁸ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 3-5.

³⁹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 5.

⁴⁰ Also known as Household Franchise Bill, it was officially called The Representation of the People Act 1867.

⁴¹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 7.

⁴² Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 21.

⁴³ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 19-23.

incentive to follow her determination to get women enfranchised. For her, it was the first step out of the injustices against women.

In 1903 the WSPU was established. The determination of this society of women was to demand enfranchisement through the political action. Getting members of the Parliament to pledge themselves to support a suffrage bill proved to be difficult as none of them would consider introducing the bill. But Emmeline uses her voice to criticize the politicians by showing the reader the behind the scenes situations, such as having one of the proposals received with laughter and applause.⁴⁴ She uses these demeaning situations as an excuse for their later demonstrations and committing themselves to more aggressive protests in order to be heard.

On February 19, 1906 the first suffragette procession was held in London. The campaign started with raising public awareness, and they got publicity because of Mrs. Drummond trespassing into the residence of the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, which led to his receiving the WSPU deputation. Nevertheless, Emmeline describes back then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and later the Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith as the stern foe of the enfranchisement. He refused to discuss the issue with them, or to accept their deputations. He disregarded any attempts.⁴⁵ At the beginning she did not have militant ideas. Women should have been heard, because as men could argue for or against the bills, also the women should have been included in the legislative process, and the only way was to be impudent. Heckling of the ministers and interrupting the meetings was one possibility. Emmeline asks herself what good did it do, but this beginning is in fact the defense of her later methods and radicalization. She had a cause that she tried to approach responsibly, but as men can fight wars for their cause, women can also get violent to gain and win their war.

She expresses outrage the most when she talks about the poor conditions of women, who are treated as servants, or as lower human beings. Her indignation is also fueled by the fact that she had daughters of her own, for whom she wished another future. She believes women have to “work their will in society.”⁴⁶ This part of the book is important in understanding the origins of her willpower, although it gives an overview of the whole fight for the cause.

⁴⁴ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 27.

⁴⁵ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 43-44.

⁴⁶ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 21.

As the title of this part suggests, she was not radical or militant before the year 1908. Also none of the arrests happened yet. The attempt of the suffragettes was to present the case to the politicians, and they aimed at having the suffrage bill on the program for the year. *Deeds, not words* was their motto. Although she mentions several of the demonstrations, and media coverage, she does not describe anything in greater details except of the influences, because the main protests and demonstrations happened in later years, and consequently she pays more attention to them in coming chapters. This part is, thus, only an introduction to her thinking, influences and the situation. Her narration is very persuasive as she quotes and retells many speeches from those years. She supports her writing by mentioning specific people and so giving them a particular role in the book, remembering the politicians in a negative view to show their deception and records their negative speeches. She even goes as far as to mention the abolitionist fight in the United States, but she does not make a comparison; on the contrary, she encourages the reader to see some parallels in fighting, insults and arrests just because Americans also insisted on being heard.

3.2 Four Years of Peaceful Militancy

Entering the Parliament and interrupting political meeting was the initial stage of the suffragette movement. The negativism and attempts to stop them from speaking up escalated in brutal force and ruthlessness of the police intervention, but Emmeline defends the actions of women as a peaceful way of presenting resolutions in the Parliament. In 1907 the women's rights were completely omitted in the King's speech, which resulted in protests, imprisonments, and injuries of the suffragettes. The women, however, were perceived as entirely responsible, and the brutality of horsemen riding into the processions and fighting the women were then considered proportionate by the authorities. What they called militancy was the suffragettes "trying to carry a resolution from a hall to the Prime Minister in the House of Commons"⁴⁷ and, thus, obstructing the police.

In this part of the book, Emmeline focuses on the events and development of the fight for the enfranchisement. She points out the politics and intrigues in the government, and

⁴⁷ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 55.

mentions many of the opponents of the suffrage bill. Apart from already mentioned Asquith and Campbell, she presents Winston Churchill as a sworn opponent of women, and especially Asquith wanted suffrage to be on his terms, not to be persuaded by a bunch of women. Moreover, the politics behind the suffrage was difficult as the Liberal Party needed the support of the Liberal Women in general elections. Emmeline demonstrates many of the double standards and injustices against them, for example: “Throughout all this disorder and probable crime, not a man was arrested.”⁴⁸ By a man she means men physically attacking the women, and so she questions the injustice towards the women who were arrested “just” for a property damage. Another example of unjustly treatment was the window-breaking, because “when Englishman do it, [it] is regarded an honest expression of political opinion. Window-breaking, when Englishwomen do it, is treated as a crime.”⁴⁹⁵⁰

During the October 1908 trial, it was revealed that the sentencing of the suffragettes was happening on government’s orders, and that government also sanctioned the forcible feeding just to prevent women from leaving the prison.⁵¹ Emmeline’s attitude is very defensive, she tries to stay objective, and portrays the situation as unequal. Her stance is black and white as there are only two sides – either supporters or opponents according to her. She avoids describing attitudes of the public except on the occasions of wide protests with hundreds of thousands of people.

One of the ways to fight the system was to have the Liberals lose in by-elections. Women intended to help the Unionists to win, which again caused a lot of hatred and brutality against them. To stop women from trying, the government even revived the Act of Charles II,⁵² which did not stop them from gathering and carrying the resolution to Parliament anyway. They were treated as regular street brawlers, and as a result Emmeline Pankhurst was arrested, trialed and sent to Holloway Prison for the first time. It was year 1908.⁵³

⁴⁸ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 59.

⁴⁹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 74.

⁵⁰ Emmeline Pankhurst gave an example of a riot regarding a move of a historic gun in Winchester during which men broke windows and damaged other property, but no punishment was issued. (Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 74).

⁵¹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 81.

⁵² The Charles II “Tumultuous Petitions” Act. “Charles II, 1661: An Act against Tumults and Disorders upon p[re]tence of p[re]paring or p[re]sented publick Petic[i]ons or other Addresses to His Majesty or the Parliament,” in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5*, 1628-80, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 308. *British History Online*, accessed May 30, 2016, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/p308>.

⁵³ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 62.

Emmeline points out the determination, companionship and devotion of the women. One of the ways is her eloquent description of the hunger strikes and forcible feeding. Together with cuffing women or putting them into a straight waistcoat, prisoners were also forcibly fed by a rubber tube on the government's orders. Many physicians protested and sent a notice to the Prime Minister describing such treatment as violent and brutal with unexpected dangerous results.⁵⁴

She picks out the injustices against women, such as her daughter Christabel having a degree from law school but being unable to practice the law. On several occasions, though, she points out that she does not try to make herself or the women martyrs. Simply, it is a fight for the cause, and she realizes later that being more violent is the only way as she quotes Giuseppe Mazzini, a 19th century Italian politician: "the way to reform has always led through prison."⁵⁵

Especially negative is her stance when she talks about the new government that was elected in 1910, and a committee in the House of Commons focusing on the topic of women's rights which was established with the intention to form a suffrage bill. Chances of the WSPU getting the women's suffrage was wiped off, and thus, all the pointless endeavors led Emmeline to more aggressive tone in the book and in the campaign, because it was clear that the bill would not pass:

This is the last constitutional effort of the Women's Social and Political Union to secure the passage of the bill into law. If the Bill, in spite of our efforts, is killed by the Government, then first of all, I have to say there is an end of the truce. If we are met by the statement that there is no power to secure on the floor of the House of Commons time for our measure, then our first step is to say, 'We take it out of your hands, since you fail to help us, and we resume the direction of the campaign ourselves.'⁵⁶

The actions of the both parties became violent as the Black Friday in November 1910 followed, and the violence and riots against women who tried to reach the House were unheard of, nevertheless Emmeline gives accurate documented descriptions of the actions.⁵⁷ Her narration is vivid, descriptive, but emotionless, and she includes the

⁵⁴ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 99.

⁵⁵ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 120.

⁵⁶ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 112.

⁵⁷ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 112-115.

experience of other women as well. She narrates as if present during all the situations, becoming an omniscient narrator, and attempts to provide an objective view of the several years of the fight for votes; however, her subjective opinions are underlying the whole story. Emmeline is making her case, defends, and prepares the narration for the last radically militant part, in which she is determined to persuade the reader that the government is the enemy here.

3.3 The Women's Revolution

In 1911 the government announced the Manhood Suffrage Bill.⁵⁸ Considering it a treachery to women, a lot of negativity arose even among the public and in media condemning such turn, so beside the window-breaking, other property damages began. One of the famous acts is for example setting a letter box at Parliament Street Post Office on fire by Miss Emily Wilding Davison. As it became clear that only government approved action would pass the House of Commons, the suffragettes gave up the Conciliation Bill and focused on the equal suffrage for men and women.⁵⁹

The police saw Emmeline Pankhurst as the leader and tried to prove her influence over the women, counseling them and thus indirectly being the offender herself. In her next trial in 1913, she was found guilty by the jury of malicious incitement to a breach of the law. She saw herself as a prisoner of war, even inviting the punishment.⁶⁰ Although she is known as the leader of the WSPU and its campaign, throughout the book she is portraying Christabel as the important personality and the brains behind the campaigning.

Emmeline was not one of the prisoners who experienced forcible feeding, but still she provides an account of the suffering and torture of hunger striking as “great misery.”⁶¹ Again, her writing is descriptive and factual; the distance and choice of vocabulary are the means she uses to convey the brutality of the act. She also quotes physicians to make a case against the practice of forcible feeding, showing again the villainy of the government, but it lacks the emotional angle, as she is trying to stay objective again as in the rest of the book. The reason for that might be in the fact that the suffragettes

⁵⁸ The Second Conciliation Bill which was in favor of manhood suffrage; the supporters of women's suffrage could only ask for extension through an amendment. It meant that the women's suffrage bill did not have many supporters.

⁵⁹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 134-136.

⁶⁰ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 186-187.

⁶¹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 97.

endangered only their lives: “There is something that governments care far more for than human life, and that is the security of property, and so it is through property that we shall strike the enemy.”⁶² Suffragettes knew their calling, and they were not forced into the hunger strikes. The women differed in the means of militant protests, but they caused a huge economic waste. Emmeline points out the double standards as men have never been so severely punished for the same or similar behavior, on the contrary, men create the moral conduct, and their violent behavior is accepted, even applauded, while women are punished and forcibly fed. In response to Emily Wilding Davison being crushed by one of the king’s horses, the suffragettes barricaded themselves in the cells and started more serious thirst strike.⁶³

Emmeline makes many comparisons and lays out parallels to the cause of the votes for women. At the same time as the suffragettes were fighting for the vote, coal miners were protesting against their working conditions, but none of them were arrested; on the contrary, the government tried hard to find peace with them.⁶⁴ Inequality and injustice were visible especially in connection to the Irish fight for Home Rule. Irish men were killing and ruining human lives, British women were destroying only property. Men were applauded, women were arrested. It was also a known fact that Irish houses were full of ammunition and explosives, but they were raided only when a suffragette was supposed to be hiding or living there, not in the case of a volunteer fighting for Home Rule. It makes a parallel to the acceptability of fighting for a cause. A fight is acknowledged when initiated by men but not women. Together with the work and education situation described in the first part of the book, the double standards are most obvious in this case. The Black Friday of 1910 was excelled in May 1914 when the deputation chose the Buckingham Palace as its destination. Soon after the protests slowly ceased as the war in Europe was beginning.⁶⁵

In the third part of the book, Emmeline Pankhurst focuses on the radicalism of the suffragette movement. Emmeline contradicts herself here in claiming that it was a “mild rebellion,”⁶⁶ but later comparing it to “guerrilla warfare.”⁶⁷ Despite the obvious political reasons, thus being political offenders, they were treated unjustly, tortured, murdered and

⁶² Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 168.

⁶³ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 169-170.

⁶⁴ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 141.

⁶⁵ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 217-219.

⁶⁶ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 169.

⁶⁷ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 176.

driven mad by forcible feeding – this is the view and message offered by Emmeline Pankhurst in this book. She defends the action of the suffragette rebellion by using only such means necessary to get the voting rights: “We only go as far as we are obliged to go in order to win, and we are going forward with this next protest demonstration in full faith that this plan of campaign, initiated by our friends whom we honor to-night, will on this next occasion prove effective.”⁶⁸ Although they did not use violence on purpose, their behavior is definitely not peaceful. Their ways can be questioned due to their excuse “if men can fight, we can fight,” nevertheless, the question remains whether it was a right defense to use radicalism.

The ridiculousness of the political background is obvious from the lengthy descriptions of the great meetings at the government and the House of Commons, as well as from the desperate need to prevent women to deliver their deputation. Emmeline’s voice is becoming more determined and impatient in the third part. She continues to name the opponents of the suffrage, and retells the lengthy speeches of the politicians against the votes for women. By quoting them, she adds on the seriousness of the matter from the current perspective, because the politicians’ opinions are stereotypical and misogynist. Emmeline was a great speaker herself, and she quotes also her defense or activist speeches, which validate her as the leader of the WSPU. She follows the timeline in the book, but the events of the several years of the fight seem to repeat itself. The pattern is to get a support from members of the House, the rejection of the measure by the House or the government, which was followed by protests and consequently trials and prison.

As mentioned, Emmeline Pankhurst had her own agenda when writing this book. It is clearly a feminist writing, and although the intention was to inform the foreign readers, she also aimed at defending the actions of the suffragettes. She mainly protected her name and accepted the responsibility for the actions, but at the same time she gave credits to women who took initiative. *My Own Story* does not tell the story of the movement, though. Emmeline’s reach and descriptions give an impression of the recording of the suffragette movement from the WSPU members’ view, leading a reader to believe that it is a full record of all the events; however, as the title suggests, it is focused on Emmeline’s perspective, her defense, and the subjectivity is thus to be expected.

⁶⁸ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 137.

4 EMMELINE'S SPEECH "FREEDOM OR DEATH"

Emmeline Pankhurst was considered a great speaker at her time, always delivering powerful speeches to the point. Her most famous speech "Freedom or Death" delivered in Hartford, Connecticut, on November 13, 1913 was even named as one of the ten best speeches of the 20th century.⁶⁹ Rebecca West, who heard Emmeline's speech, claimed that Emmeline had hoarse sweet voice, and although she was very slim and trembling, she still managed to delivered a powerful speech which left a lasting impression.⁷⁰

Mrs. Katharine Hepburn, president of the Connecticut Women's Suffrage Association, invited Emmeline to speak to American women during Emmeline's fundraising tour of the United States in 1913. There, Emmeline delivered the speech with the objective to highlight the wrongs against women and to justify the militancy in Britain without encouraging American women to adopt the same methods. She did not advocate militancy in the United States, but her speeches were supposed to unite women all over the world, because the situation was beyond advocacy⁷¹ and as she said: "But since I am a woman it is necessary in the twentieth century to explain why women have adopted revolutionary methods in order to win the rights of citizenship."⁷² She is angry about the double standard, because people do not understand adopting militant methods by women, but accept it without hesitation when men question and rebel against injustices with violence. Thus, at the beginning of the speech she invites the audience to consider that they also used violence in their Civil War. While defending the militancy, she keeps calm and logical to defend her moral purpose,⁷³ which she often supports by other examples of injustices or other uses of violence. She refers to the Irish situation, Parnell fighting for the Home Rule, the women of Ulster signing the declaration of independence, but also to men fighting in China while Sun Yat-sen led the revolution from England.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ "Great speeches of the 20th century," *The Guardian*, November 1, 2010, accessed October 22, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/series/greatspeeches>.

⁷⁰ Germaine Greer, "Germaine Greer on Emmeline Pankhurst's extraordinary 'Freedom or death' speech," *The Guardian*, April 27, 2007, accessed October 22, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/apr/27/emmeline-pankhurst-freedom-or-death-introduction>.

⁷¹ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 174.

⁷² Emmeline Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death" (speech, Hartford, CN, November 13, 1913), *Archives of Women's Political Communication*, Iowa State University, http://www.womenspeecharchive.org/files/Pankhurst_1913_Freedom_or_Death_22EB6C9AD876F.pdf.

⁷³ Bartley, "Emmeline Pankhurst," 166.

⁷⁴ Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death."

She explains reasons behind the militancy, and why it is efficient to break windows. She sees it as political means especially because women have no other means to protest due to lack of rights. Men can change the legislature if they disagree with it, they can go to the politicians and have their voice to be heard. There is no option for women, so she makes an analogy to defend her cause: "One baby is a patient baby, and waits indefinitely until its mother is ready to feed it. The other baby is an impatient baby and cries lustily, screams and kicks and makes everybody unpleasant until it is fed."⁷⁵ The figures of speech make her agitation even stronger. Another is connected to the local issue of Civil War: "you cannot make omelets without breaking eggs; you cannot have civil war without damage to something."⁷⁶ At the same time, she admits it is a war, supporting it by the vocabulary she uses such as *soldier*, *fight*, *militant*, *battle*. Emmeline was known for trying to make a connection with the audience using references to local issues or anecdotes; for example, in this speech she made the audience to think about her trial in Britain where women are imprisoned for being a nuisance. Emmeline also points out the influence of media, as they show women as the attackers, while in many cases men assaulted women.⁷⁷

She mainly focused on working class women because of her concern with their legal situation. Especially she was troubled by the situation of young mothers and wives, who did not have any legal support, or the position of other women, inheritance or a divorce over which women had no power. In her defense of militancy, she comments: "After all the most practical criticism of our militancy coming from men has been the argument that it could not succeed."⁷⁸ She argues that window breaking is useful and the only means women have, as shop owners cannot argue with them, because they are their customers. On the other hand, sympathy is also not useful and wanted, because it had not brought any result yet. Men considered the women inferior and without power from the beginning:

We would be with you if you could succeed but it is absurd for women who are the weaker sex, for women who have not got the control of any large interests, for women who have got very little money, who have peculiar duties as women, which handicaps them extremely – for example, the duty of caring for children – it is absurd for women to think they can ever win their rights

⁷⁵ Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death."

⁷⁶ Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death."

⁷⁷ Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death."

⁷⁸ Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death."

by fighting; you had far better give it up and submit because there it is, you have always been subject and you always will be.⁷⁹

The only answer is to raise the status of women; the political status is the first through the women's suffrage. Having means to be heard would lead to more equality, and men would finally need to accept that women are worth the same as men, thus, they also need to be respected and to be held to the same standards of morality.⁸⁰

During her speeches, she was often interrupted by applause; she was admired for often speaking without notes for long hours without repeating herself. She shared personal stories about her family and controlled her audience by being blunt and contentious which was unusual especially for a woman.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death."

⁸⁰ Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death."

⁸¹ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 138-139, 236.

5 EMMELINE PANKHURST IN BIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE

There has been a lot written about the suffragette movement, but only few biographers focused on Emmeline Pankhurst. Her memoir *My Own Story* is the first record of her public life, but avoids the private. Similarly, her daughters wrote books about her as a suffragette leader, and how it reflected on their lives to have such mother, including *The Suffragette Movement* (1931) or *The life of Emmeline Pankhurst* (1935) by Sylvia Pankhurst or *Unshackled – The Story of How We Won the Vote* (1959) by Christabel Pankhurst. All the stories reveal the contrast between family dysfunctionality and its dynamics. In the 21st century three main biographies of Emmeline Pankhurst were published – *The Pankhursts* (2001) by Martin Pugh, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (2002) by Paula Bartley, and *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (2003) by June Purvis. This chapter talks about their portrayal of Emmeline with the focus on whether she was the autocrat everybody considered her to be.

5.1 *The Pankhursts* by Martin Pugh

A biography *The Pankhursts* (2001) written by Martin Pugh, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, is a family saga of Emmeline, Christabel, Sylvia and Adela Pankhurst, in which Pugh observes the dynamics of the relationships, giving a detailed account of the lives and interactions between the mother and her daughters. His book varies from the other biographies of the family in focusing on Adela in more detail, and Pugh also takes more interest in Emmeline's adopted children.

Pugh points out the necessity to take the historical background into consideration, especially the parenting of the Victorian and Edwardian era, where the radicalism clashed with still prevailing conservative values. Emmeline, who was quite conservative, was not the best mother as even her children admitted, such as Adela once wrote: “for if we lost her as a mother, they gained her as a political leader.”⁸² Emmeline was raised in Victorian England, and the values reflected, for example, in the way she dressed or dressed her daughters to look like ladies at all times. She also disbelieved in female higher education, or she made decisions for her children as previously was in the habit. Thus, she placed a lot of efforts to raise her daughters to become ladies and let them pursue their artistic

⁸² Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, xvi.

aspirations, not the formal education. Although the university education should have been viewed positively, Emmeline disagreed as she feared of them having careers as simple school teachers.⁸³

The book has been researched well, but Pugh himself emphasizes that even though he draws on interviews with former suffragettes, many of them saw it as their duty to defend the reputation of the leaders of the WSPU.⁸⁴ However, June Purvis claims in her review “The Pankhursts (Book)” (2002) that Pugh takes on Sylvia’s views of Emmeline as failed mother and a leader.⁸⁵ Suzi Feay mentions in “Suffragette city” (2001) that Pugh is showing the Pankhurst women as arrogant and expressive, presenting their negative sides, highlighting their fundraising skills and the mixing of the family with the WSPU business. Feay calls the book “narrow in scope,”⁸⁶ but appreciates the other players involved in the movement and the network of friendships the Pankhursts created, especially those that Emmeline used in her political activities. Pugh, moreover, highlights the ideological shifts of the family. According to him, Emmeline and Christabel were especially a surprise to the society as their opinions moved from left to the right, or their involvement in supporting the nation during the war.⁸⁷

June Purvis notices some discrepancies in Pugh’s biography. She points out the different roles Pugh assigns to Emmeline’s parents or the influence of her brothers. He shows Emmeline’s mother as her role-model, because she was a strong woman with an opinion and courage to express it as well as to lead the men of the family,⁸⁸ but in *My Own Story* Emmeline specifically notes the critical influence of her father and hearing him say: “What a pity she wasn’t born a lad”⁸⁹ which was crucial in her career. Although, Pugh mentions the Oliver Banks’ article “Becoming A Feminist: the Social Origins of First Wave Feminism” (1986), where he states that most of the women fighting for the equality cause came from supportive families, especially where fathers had a positive influence on their daughters. Pugh concludes diplomatically: “Emmeline was a product of a family of talented, high-spirited individualists.”⁹⁰ In regard to her brothers, Emmeline mentions in her memoir *My Own Story* that seeing their privileges made her feel less

⁸³ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 59-60.

⁸⁴ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, xv.

⁸⁵ June Purvis, “The Pankhursts (Book),” *History Today* 52, no. 10 (October 2002): 57.

⁸⁶ Suzi Feay, “Suffragette city,” *New Statesman* 130, no. 4563 (November 12, 2001): 56.

⁸⁷ Adela’s ideology shifted from socialism to fascism, on the other hand, Sylvia was later more interested in communism and anti-fascism. (Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, xviii).

⁸⁸ Purvis, “The Pankhursts (Book),” 57.

⁸⁹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 5.

⁹⁰ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 14.

important, and although they were on good terms, it was her task to make home attractive for them.⁹¹ Pugh presents that relationship according to Adela's interpretation that the brothers were sweet and kind men. Critiquing Pugh's focus on Emmeline's ambitions, Purvis claims that he does not show Emmeline's personality and strength in the book, but rather adopts views which Sylvia presents in *The Suffragette Movement* (1931), thus, Emmeline being a failed mother and a leader, which, as Purvis mentions in her article "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation" (2003), contradicts what Sylvia previously said about her mother in *The Suffragette* (1911). Thus, Purvis criticizes the strong focus on writings of Sylvia and Adela, making the image of Emmeline and Christabel inadequate.⁹²

Pugh suggests that Emmeline took social class very seriously, and she had strong ambitions to move up the ladder. He gives an example of her establishing the suffragette movement among the upper-class women. It is an argument for her being a failed leader, not approaching a vast number of women. On the other hand, the class position and patriarchy has to be taken into account according to Purvis, who also supports the claim by a case of Jessie Stephen, a working class woman from Scotland, who testified that there were many working class women engaged in the movement. Thus, it contradicts the assumptions of not involving the common people in the WSPU, which is again Sylvia's portrayal of Emmeline as a "traitor of the socialist cause."⁹³ Misleading is the fact that it was not a socialist fight, but any woman interested in gender equality was welcomed to join the movement. Moreover, the WSPU did not run as smoothly as it would seem. The autocratic leadership was often criticized, they had problems with financing, the militant methods were often not accepted by all, and so for example, in 1912 the cooperation of the Pankhursts and Pethick-Lawrences was terminated.⁹⁴

Emmeline's role in Richard's career obviously had a positive influence on hers, Pugh tells a story that Emmeline was looking for strong personalities in her life, including Richard and Christabel. His view of the relationship of Christabel and Emmeline is based on Christabel leading her mother, not the other way around. Again, Purvis disputes that by claiming it is a view of Sylvia. According to Purvis, Emmeline was an active leader

⁹¹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 4-5.

⁹² June Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," *Women's History Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 75.

⁹³ "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," 86.

⁹⁴ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 252.

of the campaign.⁹⁵ The point is that Christabel in her book *Unshackled* presents her mother as the powerful personality, while Emmeline in her memoir *My Own Story* describes Christabel on many occasions as the head and force behind the WSPU, such as her actions in questioning politicians, taking initiative in thwarting elections or presiding sessions of Women's Parliament.⁹⁶ The WSPU organized Women's Parliament in February 1907, and another in March 1907. At this time, although not visible in public affairs, the dominant personality was Christabel as it was her idea to ruin the by-election campaign or her strategy to include more upper-class women to fight the politicians. This caused a difficulty within the WSPU in 1907 as many of the branches did not agree with the strategy. Some of them favored the cooperation with the Labour Party.⁹⁷

June Purvis says that Pugh's biography takes on the typical scenario of Emmeline being an opportunist who wants to move upwards in the class.⁹⁸ Pugh is picking out on the controversies surrounding her, especially being a bad mother, financial problems, socialism, and her participation in criticism of Bolshevism in Russia.

5.2 *Emmeline Pankhurst* by Paula Bartley

Emmeline Pankhurst (2002), a biography written by Paula Bartley, a leading expert in History at the University of Wolverhampton, focuses on the political history of Emmeline Pankhurst, which shows her development and a success story. Bartley questions Emmeline's pragmatism, radicalism, conservatism, her minor role in the initiation of the militancy of the WSPU, and her commitment to parliamentary democracy in politics. Divided in three parts according to her initiation to politics, suffragette period, and her later life, Bartley does not speculate much about the personal life, mainly because of the lack of resources to refer to, but she quotes also an unpublished play by Sylvia which deals with Emmeline's life. According to Ian Cawood in his article (2003) about Bartley's biography. Bartley managed to present "a sense of the excitement and 'magic' of Emmeline's rhetoric" in comparison to Pugh's *The Pankhursts*,⁹⁹

⁹⁵ "Emmeline Pankhurst: A biographical interpretation," 79.

⁹⁶ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 30, 60, 67.

⁹⁷ Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 153-156.

⁹⁸ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 4.

⁹⁹ Ian, Cawood, "Ian Cawood sees more pluses the minuses in the biography of a pioneer feminist," *History Review* no. 46 (September 2003): 55.

Bartley begins with discussing the influences on Emmeline's life since she was born. Primarily she points out the Manx heritage, which is seen as a cause of Emmeline's radicalism. Moreover, she mentions the impact of her parents and the upbringing as they encouraged their children not to accept injustice,¹⁰⁰ by which Bartley reflects the message Emmeline gives in her memoir that it was mainly her parents who had an immense effect on her. Although Bartley does not provide new information about the Pankhurst family, she shows the different treatment of the kids. In particular, all the children were neglected except for Christabel, who received special treatment through the childhood and in adulthood as her mother defended her and stood by her in the campaign. Although Bartley avoids it, she mentions less known facts such as Harry Pankhurst's paralysis in more detail and the influence it had on Emmeline, including her fundraising trip to the United States to raise money for his treatment.¹⁰¹

The third chapter discusses the years 1858-1903 and is divided in subchapters depending on Emmeline's interest in human rights, specifically helping children, elderly, feeble-minded, and unemployed. Except for the more details about each of the unprivileged class of people, Bartley does not provide new information beyond confirming the fact that Emmeline was committed to helping working class women throughout the whole career beginning in her work as a Poor Law Guardian, later as a member of Manchester School Board and finally as a suffragette and aspiring politician.¹⁰²

Bartley sets on to defend Emmeline in her action, and provides explanations for what she is mostly criticized for, including supporting militancy, abandoning socialist principles, her autocratic or despotic behavior, or the talk about whether she cared for working class people. "Emmeline Pankhurst's reputation as a violent militant can cause historians to overlook those occasions when she was all for compromise and advocated peaceful protest."¹⁰³ It is shown that Emmeline was a great strategist, and her political shifts were not ideological. She is connected the most to militancy of the movement, although Bartley shows that the beginnings of the WSPU were more in hands of Christabel. In defending Emmeline, Bartley, however, emphasizes situations when Emmeline was actually supporting non-violent methods, such as having women to

¹⁰⁰ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 18-23.

¹⁰¹ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 115.

¹⁰² Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 47-51.

¹⁰³ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 84.

withdraw subscriptions to colleges or boycott the census. Emmeline was not the initiator of the militancy, but she certainly applauded and supported each attack and its continuation.¹⁰⁴ In many cases she was not even original, being inspired by previous protests. Her main defense was that they are reacting to white slavery and inadequate legislation. In comparison to Pugh, Bartley mentions the topic of prostitution, by which Emmeline was completely appalled by as it was slavery according to her.¹⁰⁵ Leeann Lane in her review of the biography says that Bartley portrays Emmeline as a social reformer, who is not only interested in women's suffrage, but also other problems of inequality and injustice. Lane points out that Bartley makes connections between different stages of Emmeline's life, including her work before the WSPU to her later involvement in Canadian National Council for Combating Venereal Disease, as well as the influence of her parents that led her to social reform, or her marriage to Richard Pankhurst who initiated her to the politics. According to Lane, Bartley defends and finds reasons for Emmeline's behavior, including the politics of the WSPU which ultimately led to several splits of the organization or the topic of working class citizens: "[a]lthough Pankhurst's support for working-class men receded, her commitment to working-class women endured and informed her suffrage discourse; the vote was not an empty symbol of women's citizenship, it was the vehicle with which to develop a more wide-ranging feminist program designed to eliminate social and economic inequality."¹⁰⁶ In the book Bartley also discusses the problem of how women were perceived, and how menopause or mental issues were assigned as reasons for this unacceptable behavior.¹⁰⁷

Bartley devotes a whole part of the book to the questions and explanations concerning why Emmeline wanted the female suffrage. One of the reasons is her socialistic thinking. She saw the vote as a right to citizenship, which means that without passport there is a half of the population ignored. For Emmeline, all the women, regardless the class, faced the same injustices, so she pushed for marital rights as well as citizen rights. Also Cawood points out that Bartley defends Emmeline in pursuing the working class members and their issues.¹⁰⁸ Bartley keeps mentioning Emmeline's main interest in working class in general, however, she points out that working class men became less of an interest of Emmeline, mainly at time of the fighting as they sexually harassed them at the

¹⁰⁴ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 78, 123, 126.

¹⁰⁵ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 174.

¹⁰⁶ Leeann Lane, "Emmeline Pankhurst," *Canadian Journal of History* 39, no. 3 (December 2004): 621.

¹⁰⁷ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 130.

¹⁰⁸ Cawood, "Ian Cawood sees more pluses the minuses in the biography of a pioneer feminist."

demonstrations. Emmeline, however, still believed in the fact that the voting rights are means to equality for everybody.¹⁰⁹

Concerning Emmeline's switch from militancy to loyalty to the country during the First World War, Bartley makes a point that Emmeline was, despite militancy, well respected even during the militant stage. Again, to defend her because many think that Emmeline did not focus on equal rights during the war, Bartley wrote: "Yet throughout this period she never abandoned her fundamental ideals: she continued to campaign for equal pay for women workers and to speak out vigorously against the sexual double standard."¹¹⁰ She supported the country during the war because justice was threatened in general. If the country would have lost in the war, the women's vote would be pointless. Many did not welcome her loyalties during the war, thus tensions among suffragettes raised, because some of them wanted to continue working on the voting rights. In the end, another part of the WSPU separated, and the Independent Women's Social and Political Union (IWSPU) was established in 1916.¹¹¹ The pre-war suffragette movement, however, prepared the situation for the women, who helped during the war.

Although Bartley seems to apologize Emmeline in the most parts of the book, in conclusion she quotes Teresa Billington-Greig, who claimed that Emmeline was autocratic, and it was dangerous for women to work with her as they often defended ideas they did not believe in. Emmeline was a strong personality who used women to her advantage.¹¹² On the other hand, Emmeline did not believe in democratic principles in their fight. "In many ways, she remained the embodiment of Liberal Victorianism: of individualism, personal liberty, rights and responsibilities, constitutional reform, democracy, and high standards of morality."¹¹³ She might have been despotic but not arrogant, always willing to sacrifice herself in the name of social reform achievements.

In his review Ian Cawood comments that Bartley presents new or unfamiliar information about Emmeline, especially the fundraising activities in the United States. Cawood, however, notices several discrepancies in the biography, such as a wrong title of Stanley Baldwin, who is claimed to be a Prime Minister during revelation of Pankhurst's statue, but actually lost the office before then, and he also criticizes the overlooking of the other actors and events that are relevant to the women's suffrage: "The

¹⁰⁹ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 73-77, 119.

¹¹⁰ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 189.

¹¹¹ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 187.

¹¹² Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 234-235.

¹¹³ Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 240.

Ulster crisis [...] is hardly discussed; neither is the threat of war with Germany, nor the constitutional crisis, all of which help to explain Asquith's reluctance to give valuable time to the issue of female suffrage."¹¹⁴ As the book is aimed for the general reader, it is one of the issues that need more attention and explanation. Nevertheless, it is a clear and chronological biography that does not speculate about Emmeline's personal life, and it actually avoids it for the most of the part, except of the initial influences sparking her interest in politics and the outcome of her marriage. Bartley does not pay much attention to Emmeline's daughter Sylvia, nor to the funeral of Emily Wilding Davidson, which are two crucial moments in Emmeline's life. She focuses on Emmeline's determination and reasons, not the politics and fights with the government.

5.3 *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* by June Purvis

June Purvis, a prominent professor of women's and gender history at the University of Portsmouth, wrote a biography *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (2003) as a reaction to inadequate representation of Emmeline in the previous biographies and documentaries as many of them were influenced by Sylvia Pankhurst's *The life of Emmeline Pankhurst* (1911) and *The suffragette movement* (1931). The later especially depicted Emmeline in a prejudiced view by a hurt daughter, whose perceptions of Emmeline, however, were influential for further generations: "The middle-class Emmeline Pankhurst who had deserted socialism, supported the war effort during the Great War and turned to the Conservative Party during the last years of her life, became an unfashionable figure, often dismissed as bourgeois, right wing, autocratic, ruthless, divisive and patriotic."¹¹⁵ Amy Strong (2002) comments that Purvis decided to write the biography out of frustration that the previous attempts diminished the work of the WSPU, especially Emmeline's contribution.¹¹⁶ Purvis, however, attempted to write a complex portrayal of a woman she admires greatly.

The extent research is mainly based on the primary sources; she quotes a lot from speeches, and Emmeline's personal letters. Stephen Brook in his 2005 review of *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* notices that Purvis mentions even some less known events of the suffragette movement, especially around the year 1912. He praises Purvis

¹¹⁴ Cawood, "Ian Cawood sees more pluses the minuses in the biography of a pioneer feminist."

¹¹⁵ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 5.

¹¹⁶ Amy Strong, "Emmeline Pankhurst (Book)," *Library Journal* 127, no. 13 (August 15, 2002): 110.

for an extensive research and also the concept of “patriotic feminism” during the First World War. On the other hand, he points out Purvis’ bias as her sympathies prevent her from answering some significant questions, such as discussing Emmeline’s ideology or temperament. “Early in her biography, Purvis insists upon the legitimacy of Emmeline’s position, which she said recognized ‘the power of men over women in a male-defined world...and the primacy of putting women rather than the consideration of say, social class, political affiliation or socialism, first.’”¹¹⁷ Brooke also comments on Emmeline’s position on class and gender, the overlap and complementation of each other, as she overlooked the difference in equality in different social classes. Purvis comments that Emmeline fits the new stereotype of the era – the “new woman.” Such a woman was not interested just in family issues, but was engaged publically as well, she was educated and challenged the patriarchal society. Still, Emmeline brought up her children in a quite conservative Victorian manner, especially being focused on discipline, on the other hand, the children were also reading the socialist literature, they were present during the family discussion of the public matters and at gatherings happening at their home.¹¹⁸

Purvis pays a lot of attention to Emmeline’s life before the WSPU, thus the times when she was determined to do something impactful, but she turns it back to the marriage with Richard Pankhurst, and leaves the reader wondering about the marriage of convenience again. However, she depicts the marriage as harmonious, supportive, loving, and also shows her in the light of devoted mother and wife: “I was never so absorbed with home and children...that I lost interest in community affairs.”¹¹⁹ In the review “The most prominent suffragette” (2003) by Barbara Winslow, she writes that Purvis portrays Emmeline as a tactician and charismatic leader, but also loving mother and wife. Purvis quotes from unpublished letters to present Emmeline as a grieving widow, which becomes “the best and most impassioned part of the book.”¹²⁰ Thus, Purvis creates a picture of all the complicated relationships, but also shows Emmeline as a determined character to plea for the social reforms starting in her position of the Guardian.

According to Brooke, Purvis points out the effectiveness of the WSPU and confirms Emmeline’s autocratic behavior, especially her ruthlessness to Pethick-Lawrences, Sylvia

¹¹⁷ Stephen Brooke, “Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography,” *Labour / Le Travail* 55, (Spring 2005): 294.

¹¹⁸ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 30, 35-36.

¹¹⁹ Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (London, Eveleigh Nash, 1914), 13, quoted in Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 19.

¹²⁰ Barbara Winslow, “The most prominent suffragette,” *Women’s Review Of Books* 20, no. 8 (May 2003): 13.

and Adela, or her attitudes in various organization she was involved in.¹²¹ For Emmeline, militancy was a challenge to the conventional female behavior, the expectation that a woman will be submissive and inferior to a man.¹²² “She could be gentle and fiery, idealistic and realistic, creative and destructive, kind and ruthless, democratic and autocratic, invincible and vulnerable, courageous and afraid.”¹²³ Depending on the view of either Christabel or Sylvia, the portrayal of Emmeline varies greatly, however, Purvis admits that Emmeline was autocratic on several occasions. As she was a self-appointed leader of the WSPU, she was determined to keep the position even by the means of annulling the constitution of the WSPU, by cancelling the annual conference or by the election of a committee when she was challenged by some members, including Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence. For Teresa Billington-Greig she was even a dictator. Although unscrupulous, she had an authority on stage.¹²⁴ Both Emmeline and Christabel were radical politicians in the second feministic wave, but a recent research showed that branches of the WSPU had enough autonomy. Only the leadership structure was hold tight by the Pankhursts.¹²⁵ Since 1912 she was both the leader and the Honorary Treasurer, holding a great deal of the WSPU power in her hands, and supporting thus the autocratic accusations.¹²⁶

Purvis discusses also Emmeline’s criticism of socialism, and she points out that historians¹²⁷ see this as her ideological political move to the right, however, Purvis says that Emmeline was mainly critical of the socialist pacifistic approach of the Labour Party and of the trade unionists who did not care about women’s rights.¹²⁸ Winslow criticizes Purvis, though, on her avoiding the topic of the WSPU racial politics, her disinterest in having the voting right for all women without any restrictions, and as well as Emmeline’s portrayal after 1914 as a patriotic feminist embracing militarism, imperialism and women’s contribution during the war.

Although historians have generally portrayed Emmeline’s patriotic support for the British government during the First World War as an abrupt about-turn from her suffragette days, they have not explored the ways in which this support was

¹²¹ Brooke, “Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography,” 294-295.

¹²² Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 73.

¹²³ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 7.

¹²⁴ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 97-100.

¹²⁵ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 109.

¹²⁶ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 203.

¹²⁷ For example, Rowbotham, Garner, Pugh.

¹²⁸ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 303.

not given uncritically or how she pressurized the government to encourage women to undertake war work, believing that the eventual reward would be the parliamentary vote. In short, little attention has been given to her 'patriotic feminism.'¹²⁹

Purvis does not believe that other biographies and documentaries give Emmeline justice, especially because they focus only on enfranchisement, but omit the other social changes she was involved in, such as abolition of exploitation of children, economic and sexual.¹³⁰ Purvis tries to disassociate Emmeline from Sylvia's view of her mother. She is being meticulous in explanations of Emmeline's strategies and giving insight into her life.¹³¹ Written by an admirer, it is a very descriptive and detailed revisionist biography with prose features, which portrays Emmeline as a revolutionary.

¹²⁹ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 268.

¹³⁰ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 362.

¹³¹ Winslow, "The most prominent suffragette," 14.

6 EMMELINE PANKHURST IN FILMOGRAPHY

The cinematographic portrayal of the British suffragette movement is not wide. Only several short movies about the enfranchisement were made, including *A Suffragette in Spite of Himself* (1912), directed by Ashley Miller, and *Emmeline Pankhurst: The Story of the Suffragettes* (1994), directed by Kate Dunn, which makes the movie *Suffragette* (2015) the only historical fiction movie about the British suffragette movement. There are many more documentaries following the issue of the women's suffrage, however. In 2015 the BBC for example produced a three-part documentary *Suffragettes Forever! The Story of Women and Power* (2015) directed by Rebecca Burrell. There are also footages by Pathé News, or a television series *Shoulder to Shoulder* (1974), directed by Waris Hussein and Moira Armstrong, which follows the destinies of the main suffragettes. An episode *History of the World* from *Suffragette City* (2010), directed by Webster, focuses on the Museum of London rare objects from the period of this suffragette movement. *Secrets of a Suffragette* (2013) directed by Harvey Lilley, or *Sylvia Pankhurst: everything is possible* (2011), directed by Ceri Dingle, are other documentaries following the movement with the focus on Emily Davison and Sylvia Pankhurst respectively, and thus provide more complete filmographic documentation.¹³²

6.1 The Movie *Suffragette* (2015)

The political drama *Suffragette* (2015) opens with: "Women do not have the calmness of temperament or the balance of mind to exercise judgement in political affairs. If we allow women to vote, it will mean the loss of social structure. Women are well represented by their fathers, brothers, husbands. Once the vote was given, it would be impossible to stop at this. Women would then demand the right of becoming MPs, cabinet ministers, judges."¹³³ The speech is followed by men's cheering and applauding.

This melodrama is directed by Sarah Gavron and written by Abi Morgan. It tells a story of a fictional character, Maud Watts, played by Carey Mulligan, and communicates the desperate situation of the suffragettes between 1912 and 1913, thus at times of the

¹³² Sarah Gavron, "The Making of the Feature Film *Suffragette*," *Women's History Review* (2015), 24:6, 986.

¹³³ *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron (2015; London: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2016), DVD. 01:18-01:45.

serious militant activities. The movie is a historical fiction about injustice, inequality, disobedience and devotion of the women, who sacrificed their health and their lives in the fight for the voting rights. It addresses important facts about the legal and social position of women in that period. Gavron's interest in the topic and the fact that there has not been a fiction movie made about the suffragette movement led her to further research and creation of this timely movie, which touches the topics of inability to vote, attempted rape, contraception, different wages, and maternal rights questioning whether the child belongs *with* or *to* a father or a mother.¹³⁴

The drama begins in 1912 during the militant phase and ends with the death of Emily Wilding Davison jumping in front of a king's horse. The main character Maud Watts is on her way to deliver a package when she is caught in the middle of a window-breaking where she recognizes her laundry co-worker, Violet Miller, played by Anne-Marie Duff, as one of the activists. Maud is implicated as well due to the long-distance surveillance photographs, a means used for the first time in Great Britain. The movie follows her story from her giving a testimony to Lloyd George, specifically the Glass House Laundry speech testimony about the working conditions, and it is followed by her participation in demonstrations, prison, family breakdown, and other militant actions. After one of the arrests Maud is returning home ashamed and disgraced, which nevertheless does not undermine her beliefs. She continues to support the cause, however, she loses her husband, son, and a job, upon which she devotes her life to the cause completely, although she is offered a way out for exchange of information.

The momentous appearance of Meryl Streep in the role of Emmeline Pankhurst shows the deeds and sacrifice of the suffragettes. In the movie, she delivers the speech supporting the fighting of women to be equal to the brothers, and approaches Maud with the influential statement: "never surrender, never give up the fight."¹³⁵ The tight connections and support among the suffragettes, including mentoring, are manifested there. For example, the character Edith Ellyn played by Helena Bonham Carter, who plays a chemist bomb maker supported by her husband, persuades and mentors others to join the fight and escalate the militancy. The movie also shows the practice of forcible feeding and ends with the suffragettes attending Derby for more media coverage where Emily Wilding Davison repeats Emmeline's words "never surrender, never give up the fight"¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Gavron, "The Making of the Feature Film *Suffragette*," 987-988.

¹³⁵ *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron, 44:55-44:58.

¹³⁶ *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron, 1:27:02-1:27:06.

and gives Maud a book *Dreamers* before she enters the racecourse and steps in front of a king's horse.

Meryl Streep as Emmeline Pankhurst appears in the movie only to give a speech about women being ridiculed for fifty years, and now it is time for deeds and sacrifice, to become law-makers. She incites women to further militancy: "I would rather be a rebel than a slave,"¹³⁷ after which Maud meets her for the first time, and is told "never surrender, never give up the fight."¹³⁸ Barbara Winslow, however, claims in the article "Women's Monumental Struggle" (2016), that it is a strength of the movie that the Pankhurst characters are actually missing from the movie, because it shows the other sides of the struggle.¹³⁹ Thus, Emmeline's main contributions to the movie are firstly the motto "never give up the fight" and secondly the "control-your-own-destiny" speech. She is a hero in the movie, but no special attention is paid to her actions. Neither there is further explanation of the WSPU working, or involvement of Emmeline's daughters, except for the scene when Edith's husband, played by Finbar Lynch, starts questioning the strategy of bombing a house of a government minister. Although he was supportive until this point, now he starts doubting the militancy as Sylvia: "Even Sylvia Pankhurst is opposed to her mother and her sister's militant strategy."¹⁴⁰ The movie rather focuses on the violent behavior of the law enforcement, the tactics, and also the forcible feeding process. "Streep has garnered an inordinate amount of publicity for her one four-minute sequence as Emmeline Pankhurst, but it's the lesser-known supporting cast whom audiences will remember afterward--all of whom benefitted from Gavron's years of research."¹⁴¹ On the other hand, it is Emmeline's character who embodies the fight. She is the public figure in the movie, having her photographs published in newspapers or having framed pictures on the walls. In the interview with Sarah Gavron "The Past, Present, and Future of Women's History on Screen" (2015) by J. E Smyth, Gavron says that although Emmeline is an exceptional woman, a movie about her would be a story of power, and only by the character of Maud it escapes the trap of its genre. Gavron's fascination was with the working class women whose stories she found in the archives, showing that it was not a

¹³⁷ *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron, 44:19-44:22.

¹³⁸ *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron, 45:10-45:14.

¹³⁹ Barbara Winslow, "Women's Monumental Struggle," *Against The Current* 31, no. 181 (March 2016): 15.

¹⁴⁰ *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron, 1:10:03- 1:10:08.

¹⁴¹ Mark Peikert, "Sarah Gavron, *Suffragette*," *Back Stage (19305966)* 56, no. 43 (October 29, 2015): 10. *Business Source Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 8, 2016).

struggle limited only to upper classes, thus making it more relevant to today's situation.¹⁴² Gwen Seabourne in her "Deeds, Words and Drama: A Review of the Film *Suffragette* (2015)" (2016) claims that Emmeline's appearances are the canonical parts of the struggle together with hunger striking, Emily's death and setting letter boxes on fire. On the other hand, Seabourne criticized Gavron for her claims that "the W.S.P.U./Pankhurst story is less well known than the constitutionalists' story,"¹⁴³ because Seabourne believes that the charisma of the Pankhursts is one of the essential factors of the militant success.

John Anderson says in his review for *Time* "Women's vote in *Suffragette* is still uneven, underfunded" (2015) that gloves come off in the movie. *Suffragette* follows Pankhurst's claims that women will be heard only through actions. "Gavron portrays the suffrage crusade as a working-class movement, one whose members are bludgeoned with societal contempt and political blackjacks."¹⁴⁴ There is nothing new or revealing about the suffragette movement, however, it shows the emotions and complicated backgrounds which are missing in any biography or documentary. Maud's story demonstrates that the fight did ruin personal lives of the suffragettes, but also that the monumentality of the struggle led to the breakdown of the society.

The movie also determines that it was not only a fight of upper and middle class women. Barbara Winslow points out that there were trade union and labor women involved in the fight, and the situation of the working class women portrayed can show better the unequal conditions they had to struggle with.¹⁴⁵ But the issue the reviews¹⁴⁶ comment on is having only white casting. It reflects the problems of the current society, but on the other hand, the British and American suffrage fight was led mainly by white women, whose rights the suffrage was supposed to support. J. E. Smyth in his introduction to the *Cineaste*'s interview defends Sarah Gavron who tried to calm down the talk about marginalizing women of color. Such comments ignore the pressing issues of the suffragette struggle, and focus on these irrelevant aspects.¹⁴⁷ Winslow emphasizes other

¹⁴² J. E. Smyth, "The Past, Present, and Future of Women's History on Screen," *Cineaste* 41, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 18.

¹⁴³ Gwen Seabourne, "Deeds, words and drama: A review of the film *Suffragette* (2015)," *Feminist Legal Studies* (2016): 3.

¹⁴⁴ John Anderson, "Women's vote in *Suffragette* is still uneven, underfunded," *Time* 186, no. 18 (November 2, 2015): 54.

¹⁴⁵ Winslow, "Women's Monumental Struggle," 15.

¹⁴⁶ Anderson, "Women's vote in *Suffragette* is still uneven, underfunded"; Winslow, "Women's Monumental Struggle"; Seabourne, "Deeds, Words and Drama: A Review of the Film *Suffragette* (2015)."

¹⁴⁷ Smyth, "The Past, Present, and Future of Women's History on Screen," 18.

discrepancies, such as the diversity of London's East End where the movie is set, and thus lacks characters of other communities such as Jewish, Italian, or Irish.¹⁴⁸

Suffragette is a gripping story of women's suffrage and the sacrifice of the women. It lacks a strong male pro-suffrage characters, though. The movie puts emphasis on the sisterhood, struggle, and class consciousness, which was one of the main aspects Gavron was trying to highlight. The struggle transcends the class. It is a vivid and contemporary movie which shows the determination of women who knew exactly what they were doing.

6.2 The TV Series *Shoulder to Shoulder*

A historical drama *Shoulder to Shoulder* (1974) by BBC and Warner Bros was a British major production which dramatized the story of the Pankhurst family and other influential women in the suffragette movement. At the time this very influential TV series focused on the cross-section of feminine types, and offered an insight into the first-wave feminist movement in history.¹⁴⁹ Directed by Waris Hussein, Moira Armstrong, and edited by Midge Mackenzie each episode of the series tells a story of a different suffragette,¹⁵⁰ however, the central characters, Emmeline Pankhurst played by Siân Phillips and Christabel Pankhurst played by Patricia Quinn, reappear in each episode. Sylvia Pankhurst, played by Angela Down, is a key figure as well due to her socialist views, which shape the approach of the series. Although McKenzie conducted interviews with suffragettes and did her research in archives before filming, June Purvis, in her review "The March of the Women," (2014) sees a great influence of Sylvia's autobiography *The Suffragette Movement*.¹⁵¹ Purvis claims that Sylvia is overshadowed by her mother and sister in the series, because her socialist feministic thinking varied greatly, and thus was expelled from the WSPU. Each 75-minute episode of *Shoulder to Shoulder* chronologically covers a particular aspect of the suffragette movement, and in particular the story of Emmeline starts at her induction to politics and supporting her husband in elections, and finishes in 1918 after getting the voting rights. The title of the series comes from the lyrics to "March of the Women," the suffragette anthem by Edythe Smith, which

¹⁴⁸ Winslow, "Women's Monumental Struggle," 16

¹⁴⁹ Vicky Ball, "Forgotten sisters: the British female ensemble drama," *Screen* 54, no. 2 (June 2013): 246.

¹⁵⁰ Episode 1: The Pankhursts, Episode 2: Annie Kenney, Episode 3: Lady Constance Lytton, Episode 4: Christabel Pankhurst, Episode 5: Outrage, Episode 6: Sylvia Pankhurst.

¹⁵¹ June Purvis, "The March of the Women," *History Today* 64, no. 11 (November 2014): 5.

is a cover soundtrack to each episode. The series does not avoid neither the militancy nor the horrors of forcible feeding and hunger strikes.¹⁵²

The opening episode “The Pankhursts” focuses on the private and public lives of the Pankhursts before the WSPU. Emmeline is portrayed as a fearless and determined woman even in a situation when she is attacked by men throwing bottles at her.¹⁵³ At the same time, she is also an uncompromising mother. For example, she forces Harry not to wear glasses, although his eyes are weak, so he can strengthen them back.¹⁵⁴ At this time, Christabel is interested in dancing, and she is a shallow negative person. She is being skeptical when her mother tells her “one man can change the world,”¹⁵⁵ on the other hand, Sylvia is portrayed as a caring and artistic figure with a socialist thinking. “The importance of the scene where Emmeline and some local socialist women establish the women-only WSPU in 1903 is almost incidental. Although Emmeline is introduced, all too briefly, as an inspiring leader, the suffragette movement is seen through the eyes of the unhappy Sylvia, angry socialist, rejected daughter.”¹⁵⁶ Emmeline is an ambitious, elegant lady, who is bad with money, but has connections that she is using in attempted social reform. Emmeline is shown to be jealous and discontented with Christabel who started to spend time with Eva Gore-Booth, a poet and a suffragist, who actually played a key role in Christabel’s interest in the topic, however, is very supportive when her daughter decides to study law, which she will not be able to practice due to the female restrictions. In the end, it is Christabel who is the most determined one, she is the politician leading the WSPU, while Emmeline is the person with connections and character to approach wide audience. Sylvia’s role is to challenge the two, and remind them of what Richard stood for. Emmeline is the distinguished public face and the leader, being welcoming and supportive. Her character in the series is guiding the audience through the movement.

The series also focuses on their private lives, mainly on the quarrels in the family. In the second episode “Annie Kenney,” Sylvia accuses her mother that although they share the same passion, Emmeline never gave up anything, sacrificing even her family, while

¹⁵² Sergio Angelini, “Shoulder to Shoulder (1974),” *ScreenOnline*, accessed October 22, 2016. <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1253044/index.html>.

¹⁵³ Taylor Ken, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “The Pankhursts,” 1, directed by Waris Hussein and Moira Armstrong (1974; London: BBC and Warner Bros., 1974), DVD, 3:20-4:30.

¹⁵⁴ Taylor Ken, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “The Pankhursts,” 9:23-9:35.

¹⁵⁵ Taylor Ken, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “The Pankhursts,” 41:20-41:25.

¹⁵⁶ Purvis, “The March of the Women,” 5.

Sylvia gave up her passion for art.¹⁵⁷ Being esteemed, Emmeline throughout the most of the show remains calm, except for family arguments and also when Annie Kenney books the Caxton Hall without discussing it with her first as she is persuaded it is impossible to fill it with people.¹⁵⁸ There we can watch the tactics and strategy Emmeline adopts and behaves as the true leader. In the third episode “Lady Constance Lytton,” we can observe Emmeline during her speeches, when she encourages her audience to join the walk to the House of Commons inciting rebellion there. Her strong uncompromising leadership is also reflected in the episode four “Christabel Pankhurst” as she decided for the good of the WSPU and Pethick-Lawrences to expel them. Together with Christabel, Emmeline had an absolute control over the actions of the WSPU. With the time passing and more visits to prison, Emmeline’s appearances keep changing to more devastated, older looking, exhausted woman with under eye circles and grey hair. In this stage, Emmeline claims that she is willing to sacrifice some principles to do some things which would not otherwise. She finally admits the hard life and compromises she has to do, never living in peace and quiet, and feeling lonely.¹⁵⁹ In the last episode “Sylvia Pankhurst,” Emmeline takes Christabel’s side when she wants to separate the WSPU from Sylvia’s more socialist practices, as she does not like violence, and her methods differ greatly, such as she publically comments on the Irish situation or is more democratic in constitution. Emmeline keeps repeating that Christabel is the true politician, and she is more than willing to follow her.¹⁶⁰ The series also approaches the topic of the First World War and the change of militancy in hope that the government would need them, which would ultimately help them to get the vote. It is portrayed towards the end when Emmeline and Christabel are having dinner together with Lloyd George who supports the vote and the option of women becoming candidates to the Parliament at this point.¹⁶¹

Shoulder to Shoulder describes the history of the suffragette movement from the women’s point of view; it shows the cynical behavior of the Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George, or the prejudices against Prime Minister Asquith. Although it presents the very important parts of the movement, for example hunger strikes and forcible feeding,

¹⁵⁷ Alan Plater, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “Annie Kenney,” 2, directed by Waris Hussein and Moira Armstrong (1974; London: BBC and Warner Bros., 1974), DVD, 52:20-53:10.

¹⁵⁸ Alan Plater, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “Annie Kenney,” 1:01:46-1:04:20.

¹⁵⁹ Taylor Ken, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “Christabel Pankhurst,” 4, directed by Waris Hussein and Moira Armstrong (1974; London: BBC and Warner Bros., 1974), DVD, 8:50-9:45.

¹⁶⁰ Taylor Ken, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “Sylvia Pankhurst,” 6, directed by Waris Hussein and Moira Armstrong (1974; London: BBC and Warner Bros., 1974), DVD, 22:12-25:13.

¹⁶¹ Ken, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, “Sylvia Pankhurst,” 1:07:25-1:10:40.

Purvis critiques the series for its inaccuracies about the WSPU. It seems that the WSPU was interested mainly in the vote, however, it does not feature that the women also wanted social reforms which would lead to more equality in family position, education and employment.¹⁶² Vicky Ball comments in her article “Forgotten sisters: the British female ensemble drama” (2013) that the series appeared in times of countercultural movements, and thus reflects the contemporary fight for sexual liberation, as well as it shows that such TV series are concerned with more than just issues of gender; they portray a female heroine fighting issues of class, gender and her sexuality.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Purvis, “The March of the Women,” 5.

¹⁶³ Ball, “Forgotten sisters: the British female ensemble drama,” 246-247.

7 DISCUSSION

Emmeline's unorthodox strategy is criticized, but her determination is admired. It is impossible to separate her personality from politics, although Emmeline is a sensitive, kind, determined woman and mother, she hardly ever forgave people and struggled with loyalty to people, not being able to compromise.¹⁶⁴ Based on various sources, depending on whether Sylvia Pankhurst's opinion is reflected in the approach, the biographies and filmography paint a different picture of this complex and contradictory person, whose legacy is still alive in the current society, because her goal was not only the vote, but a complex social reform to ensure that women are not seen as inferior, but have the same working and living conditions.

In regard to biographies, they aim to describe Emmeline from different perspectives. Pugh wrote a whole family saga about the Pankhurst women, while Bartley and Purvis focused exclusively on Emmeline, who they both admire, and thus wrote compilations defending her. The three biographies differ discussing the political or both political and personal. Bartley claims from the beginning that due to the lack of sources, she will be avoiding the personal as she refuses to speculate, while Pugh struggles with Emmeline's personal life especially during the time of the First World War. Purvis uses interviews, personal letters and documents from archives to complete the missing picture of Emmeline. What they mostly agree upon is her position as a mother. She clearly preferred Christabel, and as Pugh and Bartley suggest, she neglected the rest of the children. Purvis creates a picture of a loving mother and wife, but when it came to politics, Emmeline was uncompromising even to her children. She was conservative and did not allow her vision and strategy to be challenged, neither from the members of the WSPU nor from her family, which is also shown in *Shoulder to Shoulder*. Pugh comments on Emmeline marrying for the purpose of moving up the social ladder, however, Bartley and Purvis describe the marriage as harmonious and loving. In her memoir, Emmeline does not discuss the personal on many occasions, but she talks about her family affectionately, especially about the tragedies of the deaths of her husband and two sons. On the other hand, she is so immersed into campaigning that she is not present when her husband and son die. Christabel is an important part of the memoir; Emmeline clearly admires her and gives her credit for many of the events and strategies of the WSPU. Similarly, the TV

¹⁶⁴ Bartley, Paula. "Emmeline Pankhurst," *History Review* no. 45 (March 2003): 44.

series *Shoulder to Shoulder* portrays their relationship as very close, supporting each other in fighting the government, friends, but even family. Bartley reacts to that by questioning Emmeline's role in initiation of militancy because of the credits Emmeline gives to Christabel.

All the authors also comment on the influences that shaped Emmeline and her interest in social justice. Pugh mentions the Victorian upbringing and her parents, which corresponds with what she claims in her memoir. The other major impact was her position as a Poor Law Guardian and a membership at the Manchester School Board, where she experienced the poor and unjust conditions of women; especially as a Guardian she suffered seeing the young mothers without any legislative support. Apart from these, which also Purvis and Bartley discuss, Bartley comments of Emmeline's Manx heritage as one of the influences.

Purvis repeats that she wrote the biography as a reaction to the unjust portrayals of Emmeline by previous historians; specifically, she names Pugh who adopted the negative version of controversies surrounding Emmeline based on Sylvia's books. One of the debates, then, is whether Emmeline shifted ideologically during the First World War and became more conservative, or whether it was all part of her strategic plan. Purvis takes a stand that the shift to more right wing politics or the excuse about strategy are too general, though. She focuses more on the two concepts of "patriotic feminism" and "new woman," and omits the radical politics of the WSPU for most of the part. Purvis believes that Emmeline was just critical of some parts of socialist ideology, especially the Labour Party, and it was a strategic plan to work with Conservative party after the war without giving up on the social cause. Bartley mainly points out the tensions in the WSPU when Emmeline decided to change the course during the war, but also claims that she still believed in the fundamental ideas. On the contrary, Pugh observes her criticism of Bolshevism and socialism at that time, seeing it as a shift from her pre-war and pre-WSPU leftist orientation.

Pugh is also criticizing Emmeline for her exclusive attitude to the working class, being interested only in some aspect of the social injustices, however, both Bartley and Purvis show that she was trying to help the working class men and women throughout the whole career. Bartley especially points out the issue of prostitution. Even though *My Own Story* was written before the war, Emmeline's passion for the social reform is obvious, focusing on the poor and underprivileged women. It becomes a recurring theme in all the discussed sources, as she repeats the influence of her being a Guardian and working at

the Manchester School Board. Even in her speech “Freedom or Death” she comments on legal situation of the women. This topic is not prevailing in *Shoulder to Shoulder*, however, it is indirectly an underlying theme of the whole movie *Suffragette*. As the heroines of the movie are working class women, it shows their first-hand experience with the unjust system Emmeline was trying to change. In this regard, Purvis is criticized for avoiding the topic of Emmeline not pursuing the voting right for all women, regardless class or age.

The movie *Suffragette* portrays Emmeline as the leader and the strong personality suffragettes looked up to, which is indicated by her photos in the newspaper or framed pictures, but also by the fact that many sacrificed themselves during the speech scene just to protect her and let her escape without being arrested. Some of the suffragettes, Maud included, go to meet Emmeline as the icon of the movement. The TV series takes on the same image. In the first episode, she is becoming determined, but in later episodes she is unyielding and unreasonable, such as the scene with Annie Kenney when Annie booked the Caxton Hall. On the other hand, *Shoulder to Shoulder* is influenced by Sylvia’s writings. Sylvia is portrayed as the sacrificial hero suffering by not being good enough for her mother as she has different opinions and stronger awareness of people around her, which makes Emmeline look despotic and over-ambitious. In the series, Emmeline is the distinguished lady with connections in the society important for further development of the movement. She is not accepting defeat. Such attitude she takes on in the memoir as well. Although she gives credit to other influential suffragettes in the memoir, the WSPU is her organization she defends and is unable to compromise on. In this manner, she supports the view of being autocratic due to her undemocratic and stubborn leadership. The movie does not pay a special attention to her, although she is the charismatic leader, it is rather focused on the movement. The TV series shows her strong personality, and especially the power she had over the suffragettes as the leader. Thus, while the filmography presents her as a person to look up to, biographies vary here as already mentioned. Pugh is more skeptical, making her look like an overly ambitious opportunist without any strong personality. On the contrary, Bartley and Purvis admire her despite her faults. Bartley points out Emmeline’s interest in injustices, marital rights and other topics, not just the voting rights and militancy she is mostly connected to; however, she omits some important events. Purvis shows her as ruthless but admirable leader unwilling to compromise to reach a social reform. The celebration of Emmeline Pankhurst varies.

The speech itself is important in realizing the extent of the suffrage issue around the world, and thus even Emmeline's appeal to others in her fundraising activities and raising awareness about the problem of insufficient legislation concerning women's rights. The passion and anger she conveys to the audience is based on injustice and her drive she uses as an excuse. Although being frustrated, she was able to keep her calmness and persuasion important for fundraising and agitation. Again, she is not willing to compromise; she has a clear message.

The authors agree upon her autocratic behavior; she even admits it herself in the memoir: "if any one begins to suggest, that some other policy ought to be substituted, or if she tries to confuse the issue by adding other policies, she ceases at once to be a member. Autocratic? Quite so."¹⁶⁵ She does not believe that the WSPU is a democratic organization. The purpose of the memoir was a propaganda to apologize the increasing violence. She was loud about the sanctions and demands. In "Freedom or Death" she is unyielding, persuading Americans that militancy is inevitable if women in Britain want to get enfranchised. In regard to the biographies, Purvis is honest about the autocratic behavior, while Bartley rather sets on defending Emmeline. Bartley provides a section of explanations and excuses for Emmeline's behaviors, but Pugh mainly points out the negatives about Emmeline, especially her arrogant leadership of the WSPU. Also in *Shoulder to Shoulder* with her short temper and strictness even to her family and friends, she seems autocratic, leading the WSPU together with Christabel. In the episodes where she confronts Pethick-Lawrences and Sylvia, Emmeline is calm but unyielding. She is not portrayed as mean, because she considers the impact of the violent militancy on Pethick-Lawrences if it continues. The confrontation of Sylvia seems as an idea of Christabel at first, until Emmeline supports her, creating a family conflict. Emmeline does not present the expulsion as a personal problem, but as a difference in approach to the suffragette movement, and for the good of the WSPU, her beloved organization, she sets to protect it by any means necessary, including expelling her close friends and family.

¹⁶⁵ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 37.

CONCLUSION

Emmeline Pankhurst is an ambiguous personality in the women's suffrage movement. She was kind but also ruthless, ambitious but uncompromising, determined but autocratic. Although biographies about her attempted to provide a complex view, there are many contradictions. Given the lack of diary, letters or personal collections, recreating her life presents a particular challenge. This thesis provides multi-layered perspective as it considers her memoir and speech to give a direct perspective of Emmeline and an analysis of her work, but also analysis of three well-researched complex biographies and the only two filmographic representations. The aim of the thesis was to consider the different sources to create multi-layered compilation about Emmeline, analysing her works and works of the historians and filmography, in order to discuss the legacy and her portrayal in the current society.

The direct legacy, the memoir *My Own Story* and the "Freedom or Death" speech, are an apologia for the militant strategy, but also an aggressive and persuasive way to make a point about the injustice that women do not have any support in legislation. It was not only the fact that politicians did not want to grant the voting rights to women, which was supposed to be the first step to further social reform to provide more rights to women, but also their dismissive and arrogant behavior as well as behavior of police and society in general. She obviously had aversion to politicians, critiquing them in her memoir by quoting their lengthy speeches she commented on and ridiculed. It shows the behind the scenes situation from the perspective of a suffragette as the title of the memoir suggests; it is after all her story. In the speech, she also highlights the wrongs against women. She especially makes comparisons to other situations when men fought, and it was acceptable; for example, the simultaneous fight for Irish Home Rule supports the frustrated and angry tone of hers. Of course, she is making her case. It is subjective and one-sided as she is describing the men involved as sworn enemies who are unbending conservatives.

The biographies show how inseparable was Emmeline's life from politics, and how her character determined the course of the movement. Each of the authors takes on a different approach. Pugh writes about the females of the Pankhurst family, providing a complex and interrelated view of the women, and the complicated relationships. He is critical of Emmeline's strategy in the WSPU, which is criticized by reviewers as he is adopting Sylvia's views. Bartley wrote mainly a defense of Emmeline, who she portrays as a determined leader with a vision, and thus, Purvis decided to write more accurate

version. She admits her admiration at the beginning, but also is clear about Emmeline's imperfections and autocracy. The biographers vary in the portrayal of Emmeline as a mother and wife, being either strict or loving, as well as they observe how Emmeline approached the topic of the working class. According to defensive Bartley and Purvis, she was determined to proceed with the social reform, while Pugh criticizes Emmeline for not including women of working class into the WSPU movement, since the WSPU campaign excluded these women based on the property qualifications. The biographies also differ in discussing whether Emmeline shifted ideologically during the war to more right-wing politics, becoming a traitor to a socialist cause, or whether it was a part of the strategy of not only the women's suffrage but also the social change. Pugh's biography is narrow in scope as he thinks of her as an opportunist and despot. Bartley provides explanations and influences that led Emmeline to the path of militancy, and Purvis conducted a vast research of primary resources to give a comprehensive revisionist depiction of Emmeline, concluding that Emmeline was a charismatic autocrat, but does not defend her.

Emmeline's character appears in the movie *Suffragette* only for a brief part, inciting the suffragettes to more militancy. Her legacy is supporting them in never giving up. The movie rather shows the terrible conditions of the working class women, whose lives Emmeline attempted to change, so it is a faithful picture of the movement, the violence, and the struggles the women suffered. The TV series *Shoulder to Shoulder*, on the other hand, shows the upper class women strategizing to gain the voting rights. Emmeline is a crucial part of the series as she is the leader, while Christabel Pankhurst is the politician and agitator. Emmeline is here depicted as an autocrat, who, although pursuing a great cause, is willing to sacrifice family and even some of her principles. Thus, another issue needed to be considered is to what extent Emmeline was deciding about the WSPU activities, or to what degree she was just the public figure in the movement, because she is giving credits to her beloved daughter Christabel in her memoir, speech, and TV series.

A century later, there are still gaps in gender equality, including in the first world countries, because women are still not equal to men in education, wages, and even the political representation. Emmeline's legacy is alive and unfinished. Suffragettes might have achieved women's suffrage, but Emmeline attempted much more – a social reform to provide all women, regardless the class, a better living conditions. Her strategy was uncompromising, but it became a motto of the movie *Suffragette* “never surrender, never give up the fight.” The First World War interrupted the suffragette movement, and the

involvement of women during the time was critical to becoming enfranchised, thus the prevailing question is to what degree the militancy also reflected on the decision of the government to grant the right. Being an autocrat, however, her legacy became criticized and questioned due to the tactics used, nevertheless, Emmeline was an amazing orator and a leader, who inspired and incited women to fight and to stand behind their opinions.

RESUMÉ

Emmeline Pankhurstová byla významnou sufražetkou, která se na začátku 20. století snažila o sociální reformu ve Velké Británii. Ačkoliv si byla vědomá podřadného postavení žen od dětství, během její práce jako ochránkyně Chudinského práva a během členství ve školní radě v Manchesteru si uvědomila, jak špatné jsou pracovní a životní podmínky žen, které nemají žádné zastání v zákoně. Prvním krokem ke zlepšení situace podle ní bylo získání volebního práva, a proto založila Sociální a politickou unii žen (WSPU), organizaci, jež požadovala ženské volební právo a později adoptovala militantní taktiku, aby získala pozornost vlády i veřejnosti.

Emmeline byla význačnou osobností v britské politice, přesto její život a práce nebyly velmi dobře zdokumentovány. Teprve až v 21. století byly o ní vydány tři komplexní biografie. Předchozí monografie se zaměřovaly hlavně na britské sufražetky a jejich boj za práva žen obecně. V roce 2015 měl premiéru film *Sufražetka*, který znovu otevřel téma rovných práv žen a mužů, i odkazu Emmeline Pankhurstové a její inspirativní oddanost s jakou se snažila dosáhnout získání volebního práva. Tato práce analyzuje její memoár *Můj Příběh* (*My Own Story*, 1914) a řeč „Svoboda nebo Smrt“ („Freedom or Death“), kterou pronesla v USA v roce 1913. Zároveň se zaměřuje na vyobrazení Emmeline v biografiích a filmografii. Tato diplomová práce tedy nabízí souhrn různých pohledů na Emmeline jako na autokratku i na oddanou osobnost, která obětovala svůj život boji za právo žen volit.

Významným dílem popisující hnutí sufražetek je Emmelinin memoár *Můj příběh*, který byl sepsán za účelem obhajoby jejich rozhodnutí a vedení WSPU. Emmeline v něm popisuje svou cestu od formativních vlivů v dětství po radikalizaci hnutí a obhajuje precedent násilí iniciovaného ženami, které se snažily získat pozornost vlády, jež ignorovala jejich žádost. Memoár poskytuje přímou zповěď Emmeline, jejíž postoj k politikům je v tomto díle velmi negativní. Cítuje a nepřímou zesměšňuje jejich agitaci proti návrhu ženského volebního práva. Ačkoliv se snaží o objektivitu, už jen název knihy vypovídá o tom, že Emmeline měla vlastní agendu a pohled na hnutí. Emmeline byla velmi přesvědčivý řečník, ale i v této knize dokázala velmi věrně popsat nespravedlnosti vůči ženám a jejich právům. Vyjadřuje v něm rozhořčení nad vládou, přístup policie k ženám, ale také opakuje otázku, proč nikdo nezpochybňuje právo mužů násilně bojovat za svá práva, ale kritizují je, ženy, za používání násilných militantních taktik. Stejnou myšlenku sdílí i ve své řeči „Svoboda nebo smrt.“ Vysvětluje hlavní důvody, které ji

vedly k iniciaci militantnosti a opět poukazuje na špatnou situaci žen, obzvláště těch v dělnické třídě. Lidé obdivovali její řečnické nadání a schopnost přesvědčit diváka. Na pódiu zůstávala klidná, byla velmi přímočará a často sdílela anekdoty z vlastního života, aby navázala vztah s posluchačem.

Dalším z analyzovaných děl je biografie Martina Pugh *The Pankhursts* vydané v roce 2001. Jak napovídá název, tato biografie se zaměřuje na ženy v rodině Pankhurstových, tedy život Emmeline a všech jejích dcer. Sylvia Pankhurstová byla taktéž významnou sufražetkou a na začátku spolupracovala se svou matkou i sestrou Christabel ve WSPU, nicméně její levicové smýšlení vedlo k tomu, že byla z WSPU vyloučena a s rodinou zpřetrhala vazby. Její následný negativní postoj k matce a sestře ovlivnil mnoho autorů, kteří psali historii hnutí sufražetek, a Pugh je jedním z nich. Zajímá se o kontroverzní části Emmelinina života a vyobrazuje ji negativně, jako například její ambici dostat do lepší společnosti vyšší sociální třídy, manželství z rozumu pro vylepšení si společenské situace, či kritizuje nedostatek žen dělnické třídy ve WSPU a naznačuje tak, že Emmeline byla nekompetentním vůdcem WSPU. Paula Bartleyová vydala v roce 2002 biografii *Emmeline Pankhurst*, která se zaměřuje hlavně na veřejný život Emmeline, a snaží se vysvětlit, proč se Emmeline tolik zajímala o ženská práva a ženy dělnické třídy. Obhazuje ji jako skvělého стратега, jejíž rozhodnutí uchýlit se k militantním metodám pramenilo z nedostatku jiných možností. June Purvisová v roce 2003 vydala třetí biografii o Emmeline, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, jež byla reakcí na všechny předchozí biografie a monografie, které podle ní nereprezentovaly Emmeline věrně, protože vynechaly její snahu o dosažení komplexní sociální reformy, nejen volebního práva žen. Tato biografie je založená na rozsáhlém výzkumu primárních dokumentů a poskytuje revizionistický pohled na Emmeline. Ačkoliv Purvisová připouští, že Emmeline měla své chyby a často se chovala autokraticky, obhazuje ji jako dobrou vůdkyni hnutí i jako matku.

Vyobrazení Emmeline ve filmografii není široké. V roce 1974 byl vysílán seriál *Shoulder to Shoulder*, který sledoval život významných sufražetek, včetně Emmeline a Christabel Pankhurstových, jež byly hlavními postavami. Emmeline byla nicméně zobrazena jako autokratická vůdkyně, která byla ochotna obětovat vše, včetně své rodiny i některých vlastních přesvědčení, jen aby dosáhla volebního práva pro ženy. Tento seriál nediskutuje její snahu o celistvou sociální reformu a vyobrazuje Sylvii jako oběť matčina a sestřina politického jednání. Přestože film *Sufražetka* oživil odkaz Emmeline Pankhurstové a podpořil další diskuzi o rovných právech žen a mužů v současné

společnosti, Emmeline není hlavní hrdinkou. Naopak, její postava se ve filmu pouze mihne, ale její přítomnost má velký dopad na morálku a oddanost WSPU sufražetek, jelikož je jejich vzorem, ale také osobou, která je nabádá, aby pokračovaly v militantních taktikách.

Její taktika byla nekompromisní, ale byla schopná získat pozornost britské vlády. Emmeline byla skvělým řečníkem i stratégem, a inspirovala ženy, aby bojovaly za svá práva a stály si za svými názory. I když některé její taktiky jsou kontroverzní, a otázka, zda militantnost pomohla k získání volebního práva, zůstává nezodpovězená, Emmeline je stále vzorem boje pro ženská práva i v současné době.

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APPENDIX – IMPORTANT DATES IN THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

- 1832 First Parliamentary Reform Bill, which introduced electoral changes in England and Wales was introduced.
First women's suffrage petition was presented to the House of Commons.
- 1865 Kensington Society was established.
- 1866 Manchester Society for Women's Suffrage was established.
John Stuart Mill presented Women's Suffrage Petition to Parliament.
- 1867 National Society for Women's Suffrage (NSWS) was established.
Second Parliamentary Bill was introduced.
- 1868 Mr. Chorlton appealed on behalf of Mary Abbot who placed her name in the register, after the names were removed by Mr. Ling. The Court of Common Pleas decided that women are not citizens with statutory rights (Chorlton vs. Ling decision).¹⁶⁶
- 1869 Municipal Franchise Act, which extended the right to vote to women ratepayers in local elections and allowed women to serve as Poor Law Guardians.
- 1870 First Women's Suffrage Bill was introduced.
- 1881 Women were enfranchised on Isle of Man.
- 1884 Third Reform Bill was presented, but the amendment to include women was rejected.
- 1889 Women's Franchise League was established.
"Appeal against the extension of the parliamentary Franchise to Women" was Published.
- 1893 Independent Labour Party (ILP) was established.
- 1894 Local Government Act removes the issue of coverture from franchise reform.
- 1897 National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), so called The Suffragists, was established under the leadership of Millicent Fawcett.

¹⁶⁶ Helena Wojtczak, "British Women's Emancipation since the Renaissance," *History of Women*, accessed October 1, 2016. <http://www.historyofwomen.org/registration.html>.

- 1903 National Convention in Defense of the Civic Rights of women was held in October.
Women's Social and Political (WSPU) was established.
- 1905 The first arrests and militancy begins.
- 1906 WSPU moves its headquarters to London and severs ties with ILP.
- 1907 Men's League for Women's Suffrage, Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association (CUWFA) and Women's Freedom League (WFL) were Established.
The WSPU splits and some of its members were expelled.
- 1908 Hyde Park mass meeting happened.
National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage was established.
- 1909 People's Suffrage Federation (PSF), Church League for Women's Suffrage and Scottish Federation of NUWSS were established.
First hunger strikes and forcible feeding happened.
- 1910 Black Friday
Conciliation Committee promoted the agreed Suffrage bill (Conciliation Bill).
- 1911 Forward Cymric Suffrage Union and Catholic Women's Suffrage Society (CWSS) were established.
- 1912 The WSPU underwent a turmoil as Christabel fled to Paris. The suffragettes initiated the arson campaign, and Pethick-Lawrences were expelled.
NUWSS – Labour Party alliance was established.
Labour Party was in favor of women's suffrage.
- 1913 Emily Davison died in January.
Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act, so called Cat and Mouse Act, was introduced.
- 1914 United Suffragists was formed.
The WSPU claims truce with the beginning of the First World War.
- 1915 Women's Peace Congress in neutral Holland caused NUWSS split.
British section of the Women's International League was established.
- 1916 Consultative Committee of the Constitutional Women's Suffrage Societies, The Independent WSPU, and The Suffragettes of the WSPU were formed.
National Council for Adult Suffrage was formed.

- 1917 Speaker's Conference recommended women's suffrage, upon which Cabinet agreed to proceed with the reform bill and the House of Commons voted for the women's suffrage clause in the reform bill.
- 1918 Representation of the People Act extends the vote to women over thirty years old who were also local electors or the wives of local government electors.
- 1919 Women's Emancipation Bill was debated in Parliament.
NUWSS was renamed to NUSEC.
- 1921 Six Point Group and Consultative Committee of Women's Organizations were established.
- 1924 Conservative Party supports equal political rights.
- 1926 Hyde Park mass meeting for equal franchise.
- 1927 Cabinet agreed to equal suffrage legislation.
- 1928 Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act enfranchised women aged twenty-one and over.
Emmeline Pankhurst dies.
- 1929 General Election in which fourteen women became Members of Parliament, and Margaret Bondfield became the first woman Cabinet Minister.
Millicent G Fawcett dies.

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ABSTRACT

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Title of Thesis: The Legacy of Emmeline Pankhurst in the British Society

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Keywords: Emmeline Pankhurst, WSPU, Women's Social and Political Union, suffragettes, suffragette movement, women's suffrage, Freedom or Death speech, *My Own Story* (1914)

Emmeline Pankhurst is one of the most important figures of the British suffragette movement. She was a charismatic leader of the WSPU, but many find her controversial for the support of the violent militant tactics the WSPU was using. Emmeline was an uncompromising character, who is often being questioned for her autocratic methods in leading the WSPU, but despite that, she is an inspiring figure who stood up for what she believed in, advocating for the social reform and equal rights of women and men. The thesis is a multi-layered work analysing Emmeline's memoir *My Own Story* (1914) and her speech "Freedom or Death" (1913) as well as her portrayal in biographies and filmography in order to discuss her legacy in the contemporary society. Only in the 21st century three complex biographies were written about her as the previous works focused more on the movement itself. In filmography the story of this powerful suffragette is still missing. The thesis, thus, provides different perspectives and invites the reader to consider Emmeline Pankhurst' autocratic behaviour and absolute devotion to the cause of getting women the right to vote.

ANOTACE

Autor: Bc. et Bc. Kateřina Polanská

Název práce: Odkaz Emmeline Pankhurstové v britské společnosti

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D.

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Studijní obor: Anglická filologie

Rok obhajoby: 2016

Klíčová slova: Emmeline Pankhurstová, WSPU, Sociální a politická unie žen, sufražetky, *Můj Příběh* (1914), ženské hnutí za volební právo

Emmeline Pankhurstová byla jedna z nejvýznamnějších britských bojovnic za politická práva žen na začátku 20. století. Emmeline byla zakladatelkou a vůdčí osobností WSPU, organizace požadující volební právo žen, a její charisma a oddanost jsou pověstné. Zároveň je ale některými považována za kontroverzní osobnost kvůli militantnosti a násilí, které ženy z WSPU používaly během protestů a k získání pozornosti. Emmeline byla nekompromisní člověk. Zavrhlala dokonce i část rodiny, která nesouhlasila s jejími názory, a často byla nazývána autokratem kvůli jejímu nesmlouvavému vedení WSPU. Emmeline je nicméně inspirativní postava, která se nevzdala svého přesvědčení a snažila se dosáhnout sociální reformy a rovných práv pro ženy a muže. Tato práce analyzuje její memoár *Můj Příběh* (*My Own Story*, 1914) a řeč „Svoboda nebo Smrt“ (“Freedom or Death”), kterou pronesla v USA v roce 1913, ale práce se zároveň zaměřuje na její vyobrazení v biografiích a filmografii. Teprve až v 21. století byly vydány tři komplexní biografie o Emmeline, jelikož předchozí práce se hlavně zaměřovaly na britské sufražetky a jejich boj za práva žen obecně. Tato diplomová práce tedy nabízí souhrn různých pohledů na Emmeline jako na autokrata i na oddanou osobnost, která obětovala svůj život boji za volební právo žen.