



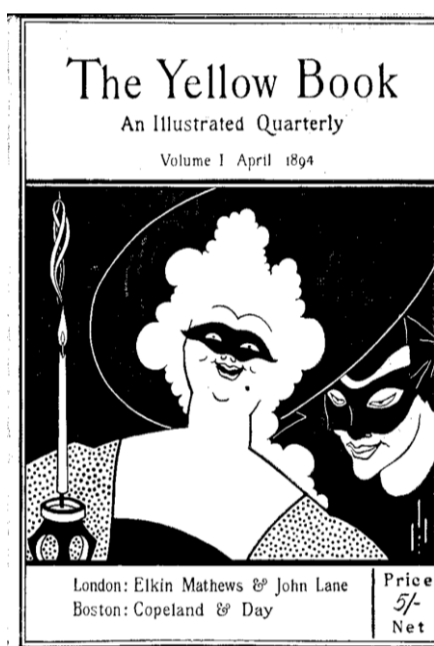
# Women (re)writing the short story in Britain (1880-1910)

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Project funded by FWO-Vlaanderen, supervisor: E. D'hoker

## 1. Introduction

1880-1910:

- emergence of the modern short story (↔ traditional 'tale')

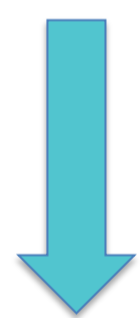


- it became a separate genre
- formal experiment and innovation
- published in avant-garde literary magazines (*The Yellow Book*)

- the 'Woman Question'



- questioning the nature and role of women
- the figure of the 'New Woman'



BOOM OF FEMALE SHORT STORY WRITERS  
WHOSE CONTRIBUTION TO THE MODERNIZATION  
OF THE SHORT STORY HAS BEEN NEGLECTED IN  
LITERARY HISTORY

Objectives:

- reinsert women writers in the history of the modern short story
- analyse the interaction between
  - modernization of short story form
  - thematic (feminist) content

## 3. Methods

- close-reading and comparative analysis
- double theoretical context
  - short story theory
  - narrative theory
  - gender studies
  - women's studies

## 2. Preliminary Conclusions

Modern formal techniques:

- In medias res, open ending
- Subversion of male focalizing gaze
  - Female gaze
  - Multiple points of view
- Subversion/appropriation of editorial narrator
  - Interior monologue
  - Stream of consciousness
- Unreliable male narrators



Form of the short story:

- Moving from telling to showing
- Questioning authoritative narratives

5 recurrent thematic issues

- Marriage
- Motherhood
- Art and Literature
- Education and employment
- Sexuality

Running through all themes:

- influence of urbanization, commercialization
- use of (pseudo-)scientific theories



Thematization of:

- Women's struggle for equality
- Women's questioning of patriarchal authority

Interaction between  
form and content

## 4. Corpus

- Short fiction of major and minor *fin de siècle* women writers
  - published in periodicals
  - collected in volumes
- Authors: Olive Schreiner (1855-1920), George Egerton (1859-1945), Vernon Lee (1856-1935), Ella D'Arcy (c. 1857-1937), Netta Syrett (1865-1943), Sarah Grand (1854-1943)

