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# Facsimile:

## The Makings of the Similar in Graham Rawle's Collage Novel *Woman's World*

Mikko Keskinen

### *Abstract*

This article reads Graham Rawle's collage novel *Woman's World* (2005) by utilizing the literal and metaphoric meanings of the facsimile as critical tools. *Woman's World* is an assemblage of circa 40,000 fragments cut and pasted from over a 1000 copies of British women's magazines of the early 1960s. These snippets are reproduced in facsimile and thus feature a jerky variety of font types, cases, and sizes. *Woman's World* does not only present a facsimile of its found graphic materials but it also studies, in my reading, the "facsimile" (similarizing, imitating, copying) qualities of gender identification, adopted discourses, (cross-)dressing, and the novel's own construction. The "varieties of similarity" within the facsimile that the novel presents relate to its thematic concerns. The visible outlines of the materials mark breaches in the concepts of gender and discourse as unified entities. The forms and degrees of facsimile also seem to pluralize, and relativize, the very idea of making similar and thus the very concept of identity—typographic, gender, or other.

### *Résumé*

Cet article propose une lecture de *Woman's World* (2005), un roman-collage de Graham Rawle, à la lumière de la notion de fac-simile, au sens littéral et figuré du terme. Le roman se compose de quelque 40.000 fragments prélevés dans plus ou moins 1000 livraisons de magazines féminines britanniques du début des années 1960. Ces fragments sont reproduits comme des fac-similé, ce qui introduit dans le texte une succession chaotique de caractères, types et corps de lettres. Or, le texte ne se contente pas de produire un fac-similé de ses sources, il cherche aussi, telle est du moins mon hypothèse, à réfléchir sur les rapports entre fac-similé (normalisation, imitation, copie) et identification genrée, adoption de discours sociaux, de modes vestimentaires et de travestissement, et enfin la construction du roman lui-même. Les « variations du similaire » dans le fac-similé qu'on trouve dans le roman renvoient aussi à ses propres thèmes. La forme visible des matériaux réunis ouvre la voie à une réflexion sur les notions de genre et de discours comme unités homogènes. Les formes et les degrés du fac-similé tendent aussi à rendre plurielles, et partant à relativiser, la notion même de normalisation, puis celle d'identité même, qu'il s'agisse de typographie ou de questions de genre, entre autres.

### *Keywords*

facsimile; Rawle; *Woman's World*; collage novel; experimental narrative; found texts; multimodality; identity

Graham Rawle's collage novel *Woman's World* (2005) is an assemblage of circa 40,000 fragments cut and pasted from over a 1000 copies of British women's magazines of the early 1960s. These snippets, ranging from single letters to whole sentences and images taken from magazine articles, editorials, romantic short stories, and advertisements, are reproduced in facsimile and thus feature a jerky variety of font types, cases, and sizes. The collage form of this kind and length is exceptional in narrative fiction.<sup>1</sup> *Woman's World* has received some perceptive critical readings that connect its unusual and intriguing form to its theme and subject matter (Gibbons 167–207; Swenson) as well as to wider textual and ideological strata (Brillenbug Wurth). While all these readings touch upon the novel's basic facsimile quality, there is no systematic application of this potentially heuristic concept to its various facets. *Woman's World* presents a facsimile of its found graphic materials but it also studies, in my reading, the "facsimile" qualities of gender identification, adopted discourses, (cross-)dressing, and the novel's own construction.

Facsimile is about making or being similar. The word facsimile (from the Latin *fac simile*, 'make alike') refers to "making of a copy of anything, especially writing; imitation" and to "an exact copy or likeness; an exact counterpart or representation" ("Facsimile"). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the aspiration to "reproduce exactly a manuscript, drawing or engraving" had to depend on the mechanical technologies of copying and printing (Pernoud 352). Copying or engraving by hand could not reproduce the minute material qualities of the original. They only became possible along with the new technologies of photography, electrographic copying, and electronic scanning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Schwartz 191–95). This development also meant a shift of emphasis from craft to transparency, from virtuosity to simulation. Artistic use of facsimile did survive in some original works by such authors as Stéphane Mallarmé, Rodolphe Töpffer, and Alfred Jarry (Pernoud 353–58). On the "unoriginal" side of facsimile, collage authors and artists of the Dadaist movement celebrated the diversity and discrepancy of everyday textual material (Cran 14, 17). The latter tendency also shows in the majority of contemporary collagists.

Facsimile informs *Woman's World* both as a principle of its graphic makeup and as a metaphor for its characters', especially protagonist's, being and behavior. A collage novel with the outlines of its constituent pieces clearly visible in facsimile, *Woman's World* invites an attentive reading of its most distinctive formal feature. Equally conspicuous is the novel's theme of gender construction. The novel thus consists of images of words, which form (figurative) images of female and male genders. Both types of images relate to making alike or similar. They either feature the materially faithful reproduction of the original print source or the discursive miming of some recognizable characteristics of being woman or man in a given culture. I will read these two prominent characteristics in tandem, trying to find out how they cohabit within the bounds of one novel, how uniform

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<sup>1</sup> Collaging tends to operate with larger textual units and diverge from their original layout in narrative fiction. The novels that are made up entirely of previously published fiction and come in facsimile reproductions or rearranged original pages are almost solely limited-edition artists' books, perhaps for copyright reasons. These include Joseph Kosuth's *Purloined* (2000) and Sally Alatalo's (aka Anita M-28) *A Rearranged Affair* (1996). Works that are material-wise totally unoriginal but turn the copy into uniform text include Moore Lande's (aka Doug Houston) *Vast: An Unoriginal Novel* (1994) and Eduardo Paolozzi's *Kex* (1966).

The tendency to use newspaper and other found printed text as raw material goes back to the early days of historical avant-garde literature. In his "Pour faire un Poème Dadaïste" (1920), Dada poet Tristan Tzara introduced the technique of pulling clipped words out of a hat (Cran 14), but he did not suggest that the text thereby generated be reproduced in facsimile; even his own works are reset in typefaces imitating the original fonts. The same tendency can be seen in André Breton (the collage poem ending his 1924 "Manifeste du Surréalisme") or in many of the Russian Zaum works from the same period. However, some of the newspaper collages published in the journal *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution* (1930–33) reproduce the found material in facsimile.

a whole the textual and the thematic constitute. In doing this, I also pay attention to the ways in which the two variables relate to the (art historical and literary) traditions of the collage.

Graham Rawle is a British writer, graphic designer and collage artist, whose adult-aimed oeuvre include three novels, of which *Diary of an Amateur Photographer* (1998) and *Woman's World* are collage works, while in *The Card* (2012) visuality operates on the level of subtly signifying book design, typography, and illustration. *Woman's World* is narrated by the first-person homodiegetic narrator, Norma Fontaine, who lives, seemingly, with her brother Roy Little and their mother Mary in suburban England in the early 1960s. Norma and Roy appear to be in their mid-twenties. She is obsessed with fashion, beauty, housekeeping, and other stereotypically “feminine” interests. Norma learns tips for these skills from women’s magazines which she reads avidly and quotes verbatim in her discourse. Towards the middle of the novel Norma is revealed to be cross-dressing Roy’s other, transvestite or transgender self. In Kiene Brillenburg Wurth’s reading, “Roy has internalized the gender identity of his sister, who died in a car accident when they were children” (126). Norma occasionally appears in woman’s outfit and disposition in the storyworld. Norma also has the priority of narrating the whole story, even the happenings which she does not actually witness, as well as the minds of other characters.

### **Collage as Facsimile Images of Words**

It is trivially true that language consists of words, phrases, and expressions already used in other contexts. While this state of affairs is a linguistic commonplace, encountered in both mundane and literary situations, it becomes prominent and exciting in cases where language is not divorced from its original material support. The rare works of facsimile collage fiction reuse verbal expressions complete with the immediate context of their graphic articulations. This makes the collaged text minimally multimodal in the sense that the facsimile snippets of printed language not only transport the visual connotations of its original context but also bear the wear and tear of the years passed, the material evidence of its departure from the contemporaneity of their sources. The words, or parts of words, appear as images, as do such purely visual, nonverbal materials as pictures and illustrations often included in collage.

*Woman's World* consists of materials drawn from women’s periodicals (weeklies or monthlies) and not of newspapers proper in the classic collage fashion. David Banash notes the persistent “obsession” with newspapers in collage artists, both visual and literary (105, 115). Newspapers have been the most important material of collage because they are ubiquitous and therefore allow for radical juxtapositions of media content (109,119). Women’s magazines or magazines in general are of a different order from newspapers but they do share a similar mixture of editorial and commercial content, the visible presence (if not ubiquity) of the medium in everyday life. Women’s magazines are emphatically gendered, or gender-specific, in that they are explicitly aimed at female readers. Furthermore, the communicative function of the materials does not solely pertain to the truthful representation of actual events but to tips and advice on the everyday matters of fashion, cosmetics, house-keeping, and cooking. A large part of the materials consists of fictional romance stories, predominantly by women authors.

Both the newspapers and magazines feature advertising and the general structure of various sections within one medium. As for the magazine, the very name of the print medium suggests a compartmentalized whole,

a textual department store of sorts, with various consumer goods in different product categories to offer. The commercial aspect is indeed prominently present in *Woman's World*, in the form of facsimile logos, brand-specific specific font types, cases, and type sizes, as well as brand names themselves.

It is noteworthy that Rawle seems to be using the collage techniques in the manner of the visual artists rather than the writers in the first decades of the twentieth century. Picasso's newspaper clippings were either arbitrary pieces of text or contemporary news items that retained their legibility (Cran 6). Braque pasted paper so that the elements of color and form were separately discernible in his work (Cran 16). In both practices, the mass-produced media, or its material support, were inserted as such in the artwork. In the literary or verbal collage of the same period, the raw material tended to be streamlined by separating it from its original print form and resetting it for publication (cf. footnote 1, above).

The typographical and even textual origins of *Woman's World* are, however, more complex than the roughly sketched visual-literary traditions of the collage can grasp. In "The Making of the Book" section of his novel, Rawle describes the phases of his creative process as follows:

I started writing this book in the usual way. When I had completed a rough draft, I then searched through hundreds of women's magazines, cutting out anything that seemed relevant to the scenes I'd written—sentences and phrases that, when joined together, could be rearranged to approximate what I wanted to say. These cuttings were then filed and from them I began to reassemble my story. Little by little, my original words were discarded and replaced by those I'd found. Once the transition was complete, I could start pasting up the pages as artwork.

The method was primitive: scissors and glue.

(Rawle, "The Making of the Book" 439)

One could see the collaged text as an attempt to make a content-wise similar version of the rough draft, a facsimile of signifieds as it were. The uniform word-processed text hence turns into a multitude of typographical variation and graphic nuance, inevitably adding visual meanings and cultural overtones.<sup>2</sup> For instance, logos are words as images as such, but, appearing as facsimile cuttings in the novel's layout, they are also images of words as images. The use of found textual constituents also brought about lexical deviations from the draft; as Rawle puts it, "collected material meant surrendering my writing to the elements of chance and forced me to be inventive with the words that were available" (Rawle, "The Making of the Book" 439). Both constraint and randomness thus inform the text, on and off the page.

## Magazine Women: Femininity off the Page

Norma is an avid reader of women's magazines, not only the feature articles and romantic short stories, but also the columns, problem-pages, readers' letters, and advertisements. This shows in the discursive makeup of *Woman's World* for Norma is the novel's narrator, and her discourse is permeated with magazine materials in all its variety.

In particular, Norma uses elements lifted from advertisements for garments and clothing care. The following

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<sup>2</sup> An empirical study conducted by Alison Gibbons shows how differently a page from *Woman's World* and its mock-up in "neutral" typesetting are read. The original multimodal typography enhances the effect of advertising language while the "traditional-looking" mock-up draws more likely attention to linguistic anomalies within the text (Gibbons 188–92).

scene depicts Roy inspecting laundry drying on a line out of doors. Norma the narrator reports Roy's meticulous inventory of the garments on the line and gives, again attributed to Roy's perception, a detailed description of a shortie nightdress (146):

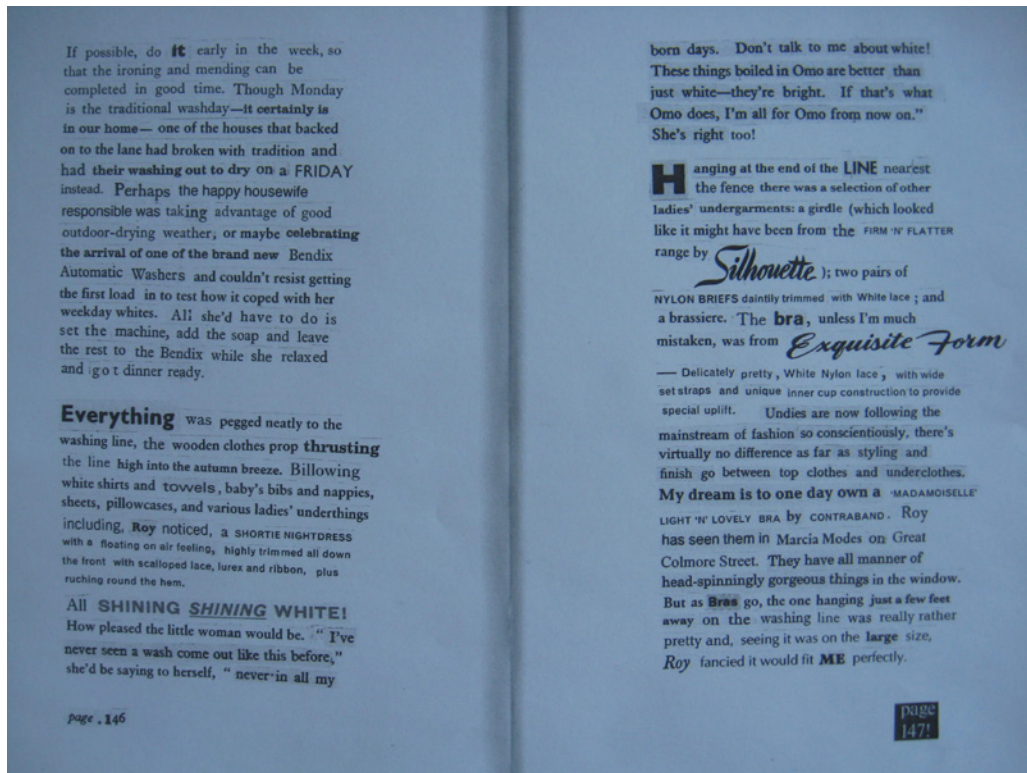


Fig.1 (146–47)

The account clearly derives verbatim from a product description or advertisement, although it seemingly represents Roy's mental processing of the visual data he is receiving. (The facsimile materiality of the segment shows that it is a cut-out from a single print source). This can imply that Roy has learned product information by heart and that the visual stimulus of a nightie triggers the corresponding stock response. Or that the narrating Norma edits Roy's perception in that manner. In either case (which, of course, inhabit the split mind of one person), the articulation of the garment on the line comes off the peg—or, rather, off the page: from the found magazine text collaged in the omniscient narrator's discourse.

Norma's mind, or her way of perceiving and articulating the world around her, is branded with ready-made magazine discourses. But it is also permeated with *brand names* proper. For instance, the description of the drying laundry includes the detergent Omo in its advertisement context as well as items of women's underwear complete not only with product specifications but also with their logos pasted in the text. The brand logos of the Silhouette girdle, the Exquisite Form bra, and the nonexistent but wished for bra by Contraband (147) stand out of the text in their recognizable forms.

It is noteworthy that Norma pays this kind of close, brand- and material-specific attention to "ladies underthings" (146) but not to "white shirts and towels, baby's bibs and nappies, sheets, pillowcases" (146). Men's and infants' clothes do not raise Norma's interest in their sartorial minutiae. In this respect, Norma differs from Patrick Bateman in Brett Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991), whose x-ray vision penetrates men's and women's clothes alike, into the brand labels of outer garments and further, into the minuscule details of

underwear as well.<sup>3</sup>

Norma's mindreading capacities extend to attributing emotions and thoughts to absent people as well. Norma conjures a "happy housewife" in her laundry duties, facilitated by the great inventions of modern home appliance technology and chemistry of cleaning, Bendix Automatic Washer and Omo detergent. Norma hypothesizes, miraculously, the inner speech of that little woman for several lines ("How pleased . . . She's right too!"; 146–47).

But in view of the novel's collage principle that generates assembled characters, minds, and perceptions, Norma's capability of mindreading of the absent may not be as supernatural as it seems. As a "woman" formed out of found discourses of advertising, Norma can give a likely approximation of another woman's feelings and thoughts on the basis of their shared textual-material world, without having to recourse to paranormal clairvoyance. The two persons' mental faculties can be seen as facsimiles of ready-made phrases derived from the commercial print media.

It is emblematic that Norma's pursued gender and one of the magazines with which she is constructing it bears the same name, *Woman*. Similarly, Rawle's novel is the exact namesake of the magazine *Woman's World*. The eponymous title of the magazine does not, however, appear in facsimile on the cover Rawle's novel. The word *woman* within the novel comes in dozens of facsimile versions, and usually "in some bold or decorative script," as Rawle states in an interview (Kachka, "40,000 Not-Very-Easy Pieces"). This may suggest the inner variability of a seemingly uniform category, or, reversely, the inevitable categorization of variation into given possibilities, be they typefaces or gender roles. The general/singular dichotomy is indeed crucial in the protagonist's pursuits. Roy does not simply want to act or dress like *a* woman in general or but simulate a singular individual, his dead sister. The two siblings are permutations of the same alphabet of sex chromosomes, the XY sex determination system. But rather than becoming a facsimile of his corporeal sister, Roy wishes to make himself similar to her gender identity as manifest in appearance and conduct. Dressed in her clothes for the first time, the boy Roy "could image it was **ME** standing" in the mirror (267).<sup>4</sup>

### Facsimile Fragments of Received Discourses

The facsimile principle of *Woman's World* extends to character's discourses as well, in the sense that verbatim quotations from pre-existing print sources are used in new contexts, including speech or thought representations. *Woman's World* appears to combine the discursive ethos of both Gustave Flaubert's *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (1911–3; written in the 1870s) and Roland Barthes's *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (1977). Flaubert and Barthes demonstrate, respectively, the linguistic behavior of the aspiring petty bourgeois and the earnestly amorous as being similarly clichéd or at least formulaic to a degree of high predictability. In *Woman's World*, the fashion discourse in advertising and feature stories on clothes turns out to schematic and fixed like the patterns of the garments themselves. The same tendency shows in other linguistic realms of life as well.

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<sup>3</sup> Both Norma Fontaine and Patrick Bateman are related to Norman Bates in Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film *Psycho*, which is, in Marjorie Garber's (115) words, a "cross-dressing landmark".

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of simplicity, I give, in short quotations, word-processed approximations of the fonts used. When the outlines of the facsimile cut-outs are crucial to my analysis, I indicate them in my text or give scans of the original pages.

In the opening scene of the novel, the automatic quality of language manifests itself in a comically disproportionate manner. The everyday and the exceptional meet in the exchange between Norma and an unsuspecting postman:

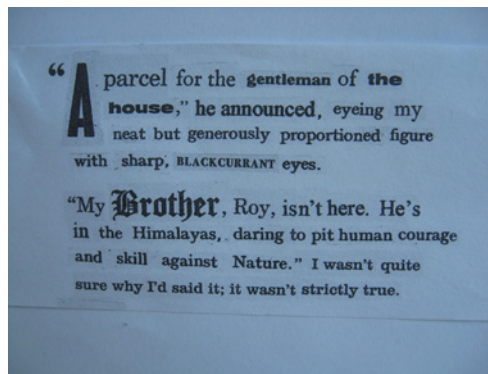


Fig.2 (20)

The realms of mundane suburban life and international adventure clash on the doorstep of Norma’s house, perhaps emphasizing the breach between the actual and the imaginary so pertinent to the novel’s thematics.<sup>5</sup> But there are several other passages in the novel where exactly the opposite is at the fore. The following section from a single magazine feature story on “entertaining at home” resembles Flaubert’s *Dictionnaire* in its explicit guidance into succeeding in social situations of the preferred class:

Practical hints on topics such as the etiquette of invitations and acceptances, party conversation, (how to make a joke sound funny when you tell it, how to think up three conversation pieces in advance; how to use Persian proverbs as icebreakers) (101–02)

This originally earnest segment of text becomes, in the context of Rawle’s novel, as ironic as Flaubert’s pieces of advice.

The Barthesian vein of ready-made language surfaces in Roy’s contrafactual speculation on an amorous scene:

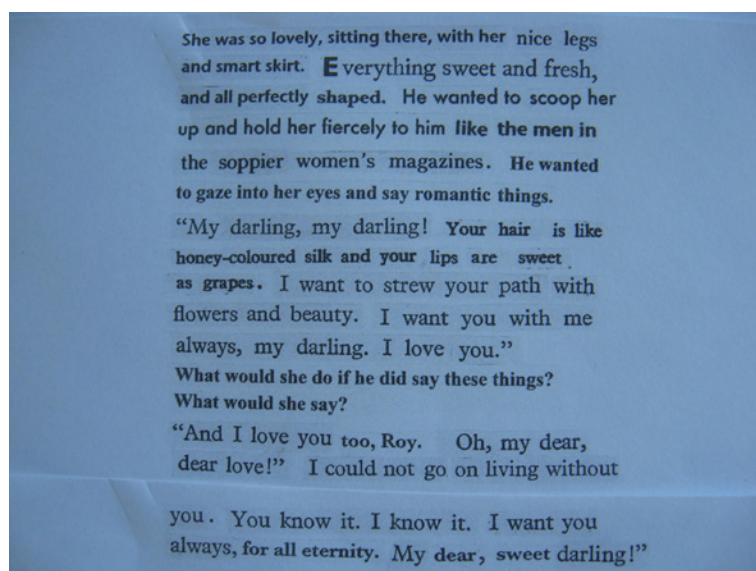


Fig.3 (165–66)

The fonts and the outlines of the cutouts give away that the section itself is a combination of two or three

<sup>5</sup> The Himalayas segment clearly comes in its untampered entirety from another story, and as such shows how Rawle utilizes the cues of found material instead of simply transforming his typed draft into a word-for-word collaged text.



separate texts. However, they are interlaced in such a manner that they form, stylistically, a unified whole of fully compatible discourses. The words do run smoothly together but the facsimile reproduction of the snippets, with the spaces between them clearly visible, discloses the textual breaches in their origins.

Later on in the novel, the newly-engaged couple absorbs in the well-worn mode of intimate discourse:

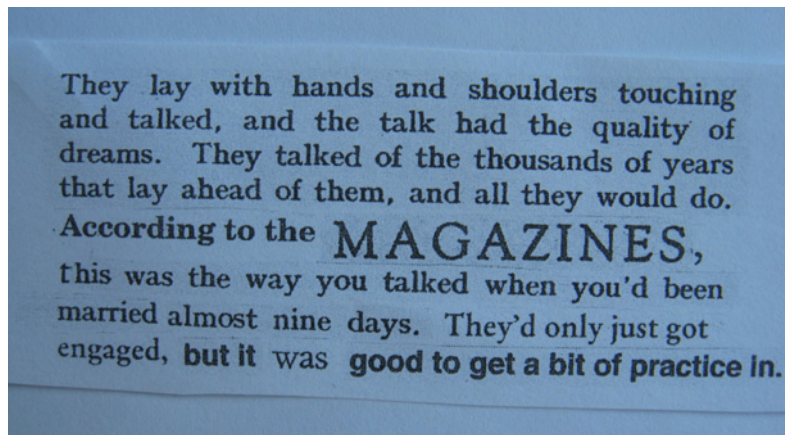


Fig.4 (386)

The majority of the section consists of one source, interrupted by the phrase “according to” and the typographically prominent source word “magazine.” This kind of cuddling pillow talk finds its ironic counterpart in the similarly formulaic and predictable juridical discourse. The discourses of love and law, of courting and court, meet in Norma’s imagined juridical interrogation when she thinks that she has killed the photographer Mr. Hands. It is noteworthy that she is asked to “describe to the court the events of the evening in question” in her “own words” (238). Her description, however, clearly consists of at least five different pasted clippings of quoted speech, including *other* witnesses’ testimonials, fictional or not, mixed with lines from romantic short stories. This principle of the ready-made also applies to the judge’s plea, which derives verbatim from some prior source in its entirety (and is almost as ritualistic as the so-called Miranda warnings).

### **Cross-Dressing: Making Similar and Different**

Cross-dressing and transvestitism are prominently present in *Woman’s World*, but not solely in the form of men wearing women’s clothing, as one would expect on the basis of Roy’s orientation. Under the false belief of having accidentally killed the harassing photographer Mr. Hands, Roy dressed as Norma escapes the scene of crime by putting on the victim’s trousers to pass as a man. In other words, he “cross-cross-dresses” by adding a layer of male clothing on top of his female outfit, returns to the male gender, at least half-way, by literally getting into another man’s pants. As a woman, Norma dresses to kill; in male disguise, she tries to avoid a manslaughter charge.

Another curious twist in the logic or practice of cross-dressing occurs when Roy is trying to find a way of dumping the suitcase filled with Norma’s clothes. Roy is stopped by two policemen. When inspecting the contents of the suitcase, the policemen (whom Roy names after two TV series characters) show seemingly teasing but perhaps genuine interest in trying on women’s garments:

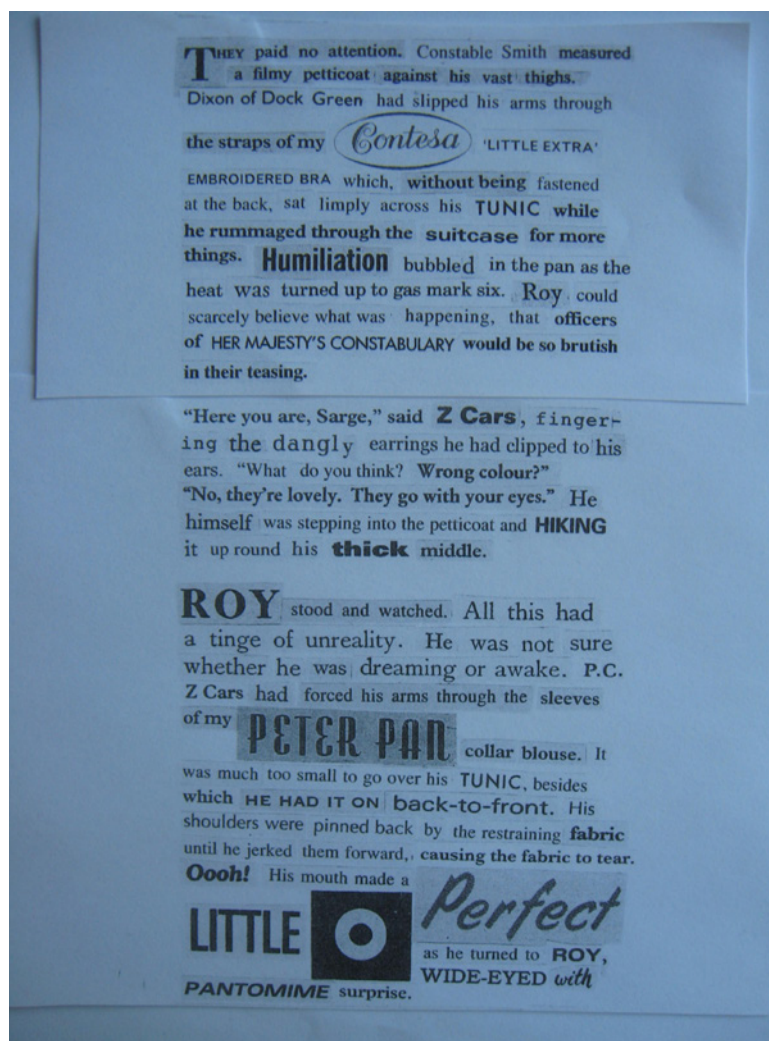


Fig.5 (269–70)

After this cross-dressing incident, in which female clothes are put on top of male police uniforms, the policemen dress up Roy with women's underwear, again adding a layer of clothes on outer wear, and apply lipstick on his face (271–72). These humiliating acts of forced feminizing, clearly intended to mock and degrade the presumed transvestite, formally resemble facsimile, making similar, on various levels. The policemen first simulate transvestite activities, albeit with a mocking difference, and then make Roy look like themselves, or their version of cross-dressing.

Later on in the novel, the film that Roy views with Eve contains a scene of two policemen disguised as women, predictably resulting in a "grotesque caricature of WOMANLINESS" (345). Roy is knowledgeable of the tradition of filmic cross-dressing, into which the two policemen (in both the film and the novel) seem to tap. The farewell words of "Sergeant Dixon" are not only formulaic but also interpretable as commentary on the ordinariness and predictability of (police)men in drag: "Well, thank you for your cooperation, sir. Just routine. We'll be on our way." (273)

Still another variation of cross-dressing can be found in Roy's interest in dressing up Eve. He shops for clothes for her in the same boutique he used for acquiring garments for his "sister" Norma (270–71). Predictably, the connoisseur Roy picks the right dress and the right size for Eve: "The dress was a sensation and she looked sensational in it. He could see it was destined to play an important role in her wardrobe this autumn and winter." (373) In styling Eve, Roy constructs, or at least enhances, a female person's femininity, much

like he conjures markers of the female gender on top of himself when dressing up to become Norma. This “same-sex cross-dressing” dramatizes the sartorial quality of the ordinary and the divergent. Noticing how Eve demonstrates an “innate sense of style,” Roy feels “like coming home” (380) and two pages later he indulges in his private homely practices when Eve catches him “holding one of her dresses up to the mirror” (382). Meeting the stylistic ideals of femininity informs Roy and Eve alike, but he applies the principle of making similar more generally: to his feminine self and to his girlfriend. The stylized makeup of gender also applies to make-up proper. After kissing Eve, Roy notes: “**THE DELICIOUSLY metallic TASTE OF her lipstick WAS ON HIS LIPS**, but little by little he began to taunt himself with doubt. Perhaps it wasn’t *her* lipstick he could taste; perhaps it was *his*.” (304)

Cross-dressing was commonly regarded as a medical or pathological condition, an expression of deviate or dysfunctional sexuality in Britain of the early 1960s. But some segments of *Woman’s World* suggest that the medical gender division is breached from the outset. The novel features a long facsimile quotation from a report on clinical research, stating that “THE STRAWBERRY-TONED RED NO.3A COLOUR ADDITIVE USED IN [---] CERTAIN LIPSTICKS” is banned “BECAUSE TESTS SHOWED THAT LARGE AMOUNTS CAUSED THYROID TUMOURS IN MALE RATS” (279).

Lipstick, according to clinical tests, may prove lethal to *male* rats (and presumably, by extension, to females as well). Therefore the test results can hardly be read as scientific evidence that some male animals are inclined to excessive use of cosmetics or that transgender practices morbidly and even lethally violate the order of nature—at least in rodents. It is noteworthy that both the rats and Roy are forcefully exposed to harmful amounts of substance, either by scientists or officers. Roy himself does object to lipstick overuse in men’s poor attempts to impersonate women, albeit not for medical but for aesthetic reasons (272, 345). Roy/Norma’s view on the proper feminine and masculine looks is definite and based on uniformity.

### Uniform Women, Uniform Men

Clothes and cosmetics, for a substantial part, make men and women in *Woman’s World*. A person’s gender is formed and recognized on the basis of an appearance uniform with the peer group, on identity as similarity. As Norma states in the beginning of the novel:

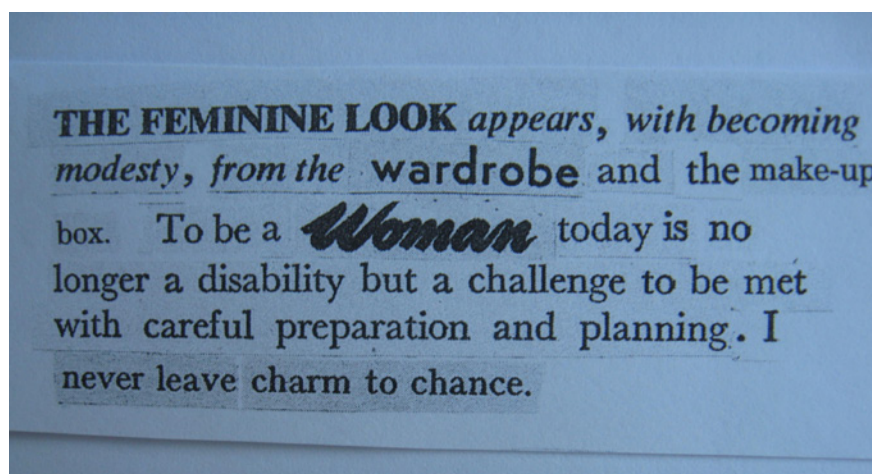


Fig. 6 (6)

The same principle can be detected in the passage where Roy conjures his masculine look. Norma narrates how meticulously he shaves, does his hair, and chooses his accessories (83–4). Although Norma states that, “like most men, Roy doesn’t fuss about his appearance — faultless grooming with as little effort as possible — so he requires only the basics to make himself clean and presentable” (85), the male aspects of public personhood are still shown to be constructed or artificial instead of essential or innate: “*WITH* his suit sponged and pressed, and his shirt collar fastened, he picked out a tie that suggested *informality* but really mean business. (83–4) In women, reaching the ideal may mean being in constant flux: “the world’s best-dressed women sometimes have to change 15 times a day. As a woman, you must never look less than your loveliest.” (5–6)

Uniform women and men also appear in more literal senses in *Woman’s World*. The novel’s storyworld abounds with people in uniforms or distinctive sets of work attire. Although no special attention is paid to these outfits, many female and male characters—postmen, milkmen, delivery drivers, post office personnel, and nuns—come and go clad in identifying clothing.

While implicit in the novel’s props, uniform is typographically spelled out on one significant occasion. Explaining to Eve why he is putting a suitcase filled with his sister’s clothes to storage, Roy tells that she will not need them any longer for the Salvation Army provides a “**UNIFORM**” for its workers (286). The word diverges from the surrounding text in two ways. First, it is given in exceptionally large font size (28 points in original), with white text on black background. Second, the text itself is conspicuously uniform (it derives from a single cutout and consists of one consistent font type and size, unlike the other snippets in white font on the same and facing page). The word *uniform* thus differs from the neighboring text but is unvarying in its own typographical whole. The visual-graphic quality of the signifier hence exhibits the very characteristics of the signified: distinctiveness (from without) and identification (within).

The difference between (the uniform as) an official attire and formal or style-conscious clothing may not be radical (cf. Entwistle 141–45; 178–80). One could read Roy’s formulation about Norma’s Salvation Army outfit as indicative of changing one uniform to another instead of substituting civil clothes for official apparels. The breach in the official/unofficial dyad also becomes manifest when Roy mistakes Eve for the laundry receptionist and later refers to her as a woman “[i]n the blue dress” (95). He could have given a much more detailed description of the garment, both its looks and functions, as the narrator’s account of his perceptions reveal: the garment is “Delphinium Blue” in color and a “featherweight, special all-day dress in gossamer linen, all over embroidered and belted with a small, slit sleeve [---],” doing “what a **DRESS** should do for a woman” (94) and looking “like what she was—a live, intelligent, sky’s-the-limit working girl. Not a rich man’s caprice.” (94–95) Eve has, in other words, dressed up as herself, become what she is—in a kind of sartorial version of Nietzsche’s famous Zarathustran imperative.

In his praise for a dress that Eve considers buying, Roy attaches attributes of gender, style, and uniform-likeness to one single garment:

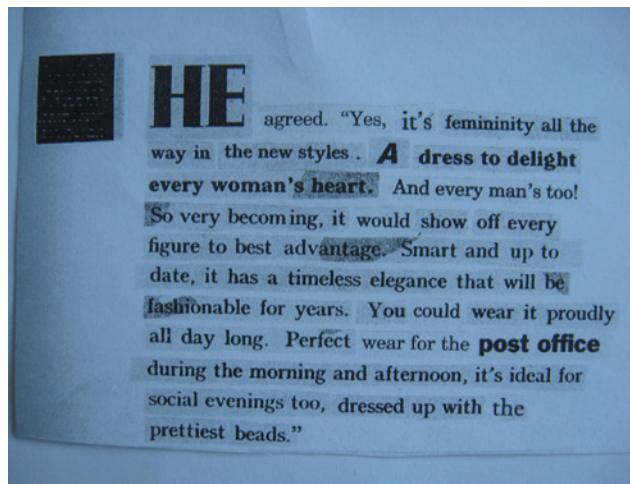


Fig.7 (357)

Another scene in the novel dramatizes the choosing of outfit not as enhancement but as the very selection of gender. Preparing to go to the job interview, Roy/Norma actually chooses between male and female outfits (between a "boring blue two-piece suit" and a glamorous evening dress, respectively)—and between gender looks (33).

### Cut, Paste, and Sew: Scrapbook and Dressmaking

A novel made up entirely of collaged materials, *Woman's World* can also be seen as examining its own principle, method, and constituents of organization. The novel folds in on itself and provides a meta-collage of sorts by dealing with the very makings of making alike.

The cut and paste method of *Woman's World* is reflected across the novel's texture, ranging from the use of metaphors, selection of images, and references to the scrapbook. Only a few pages before the novel ends, Norma gets the idea of collecting a scrapbook of her own.

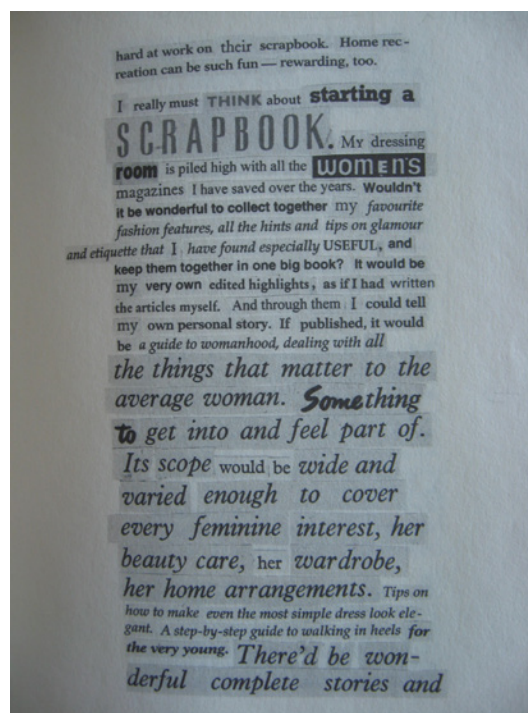


Fig.8 (429)

The description of the materials and the purpose of the project are significant. Appropriately, the magazines occupy her dressing room, the site of becoming a woman (or performing womanhood). The collaging of found or collected materials acquires attributes of creative writing and personal self-expression. Although collected by a very special lady, the book would serve as “a guide to womanhood” and is aimed at the “average woman” (429)—in a word “for ‘everywoman’” (430). The scrapbook of ordinary life is compiled by an extraordinary character. There is reason to believe that the narrator is the designer of the scrapbook that we know as the novel *Woman’s World* and that Norma either survives or becomes ethereal after Roy’s physical death (434–35).<sup>6</sup>

Stretching concepts but not quite tearing them, dressmaking can be conceived of as a sartorial variant of facsimile. Mother Mary is a “wizard with a sewing machine” (4), and she tries to make clothes similar to those featured in women’s magazines for Norma. The results are not always perfect, but the fault is not always Mary’s, either. Significantly, the first more detailed depiction of Mary’s dressmaking effort relates to copying in the second degree. Mary has been trying to conjure a dress on the basis of an artist’s drawing of the garment shown in a magazine photograph, aided by a generic dressmaking pattern (187). The drawing “was similar to, but not quite as nice, as the DRESS we had seen in the **magazine**. The artist had ATTEMPTED TO make it look stylish and modern, but I sensed that in real life it was going to look frumpy and old-fashioned, like something Mary would wear.” (187) And indeed Mary’s version of the dress falls short from the artistic ideal, especially as her choice for its material is a bathroom curtain with tropical fish on it (188). The wild juxtaposition, under Mary’s Singer-operating hand, of the stylish dress design and the outlandish material chosen may trigger surrealistic associations in the vein of Lautréamont’s famous line “la rencontre fortuite sur une table de dissection d’une machine à coudre et d’un parapluie” (Lautréamont 124).

Cutting and sewing cloth are analogous to cutting and pasting paper in collage. Both aim at a new whole that is similar to or at least recognizably resembles an external object or its design. Mary makes clothes for Norma, adapts their patterns so that (s)he could pass for a woman, that is, to create an impression of female-likeness. Norma makes, with a pile of women’s magazines, a pair of scissors, glue, and a blank book, a scrapbook for the same purpose.

Significantly, scissors figure in *Woman’s World* as objects in the storyworld (196), as their images (196), and as idioms (11, 202). Scissors do not only “cut through the material” (196) but also through the novel’s modalities of language, semiotic resources of word and image, and thematic concerns. Using scissors as their tools, Mary makes clothes, and Norma compiles a compendium for women. Both have definitive bearing on the composition of the whole novel.

Rawle himself has called his collage method “writing with scissors” (Rawle, “Writing with Scissors”). The term probably alludes to Henri Matisse, who famously “painted with scissors,” that is, composed collages from paper cutouts in his late career. More accurately, Rawle *rewrote* his original story of *Woman’s World* with scissored magazine material. With that technique he, contrary to what Daniel Swenson claims, “dresses up” his original text, not the cut-ups, so that “the book itself functions as a drag performance” (Swenson). The collage technique, and its facsimile presentation, fits tightly to the sartorial and cosmetic formation of gender and identity in *Woman’s World*, as well as to the acts of compositing the whole novel.

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<sup>6</sup> For the Norma’s indefinite fate, see Gibbons (203–04) and Brillenburg Wurth (123, 126).

## Conclusion

Facsimile informs the collaged material makeup of *Woman's World* but also closely relates to the construction of gender, role of discourses, and conception of (cross-)dressing in the novel. Together, these various facets of facsimile contribute to a meta-collage reading of the novel's own construction. *Woman's World* has come into existence by cutting and pasting printed paper and then scanning the pages thus formed, and it most fundamentally concerns with identity and identity-formation, with similarity and difference.

Facsimile implies, ideally, an exact copy or likeness but it is hardly realized in the material (analogue) world. What I have called facsimile snippets in *Woman's World*, are not in fact precise reproductions of the original textual items. The snippets are given in black and white in the published novel. The sample scans of the novel's artwork at its manuscript stage show how the cutouts were either printed in color or at least bore the shades of sepia on their paper (see Rawle, "Pages"). This adds a significant aspect to the texture of the novel by showing the wear and tear of time in the materials used, as well as the minute differences in the snippets. Rawle and his publishers chose the B/W publication format to keep the printing cost down; but there was also an aesthetic reason for it: "It was important to me that the story should be read and reviewed as a serious piece of writing – a novel, rather than a novel-ty." (Rawle, "Re: Woman's World in colour?") In the perspective of the history of facsimile, the decision can be read as a return from transparency and simulation to craft and virtuosity (cf. Pernoud 353–58). Hence, this less than highly faithful mode of reproduction can be seen as an artistic choice, emphasizing the work as imaginative writing rather than as collaged images of words.

The "varieties of similarity" within the facsimile itself relate to the novel's thematic concerns as well. Not only do the visible outlines of the materials mark breaches in the concepts of gender and discourse as unified entities. The forms and degrees of facsimile also seem pluralize, and relativize, the very idea of making similar and thus the very concept of identity—typographic, gender, or other.

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