

Do you agree with the
view that by essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In my opinion the concept 'angel of the house' was still very much intact in 1882, although perhaps not quite to the extent that it was in earlier times. Source F written by Caroline Norton goes against the view that women are the angels of the house. Caroline Norton went against her husband's wishes, and didn't live up to the angel of the house role. The fact that although the woman was supposed to be the domestic goddess of the house, and the main person who took care of the children, women did still not have custody of their children were they to get a divorce from their husband.

The fact that Caroline wasn't allowed to see her children greatly upset her. 'What I suffered on my children's account, none will ever know or measure. Source G a cartoon taken out of the Police News supports Source F. Before this time divorce was practically unheard of, it was just not done. Divorce completely went against the angel of the house concept. An angel of the house was supposed to be the perfect women.

A woman on a 'higher moral plane.' It was considered that if a woman were a proper woman then a man would never have any need to complain. It was considered a woman's fault if her husband was led astray or beat her. The fact that the Police News publicized this cartoon, making women appear to be disobeying men and speaking for themselves tells us that the idea of the angel of the house may be slowly fading. Although you could also argue that Source G is just taking a shot at those 'silly women' that do not go by the angel of the house concept.

They could be encouraging the concept by taking a shot at woman who were not living up to the standard. Source H I think contradicts both of the other

sources. Written by a recent historian she takes on an objective view, neither on the side of men nor women. The source does support the angel of the house concept.

The source states that women were the 'safe sex' and that the female sexual behavior was 'benign and moral' this is how an angel of the house was considered to be. Men and women were considered to belong to 'separate spheres' there was no equality, and the angel of the house concept massively played up to this. Women were only needed to care for the home, do domestic jobs, and care for her husband and their children. If a man was unfaithful to his wife, it was the wife's fault. Somehow in him doing that, the wife must have been doing something wrong and not being an angel of the house. A married woman also had no legal identity, therefore any property or earning a woman may have had before she became married was immediately given to the husband after the marriage.

This fitted into the concept of the angel of the house, because when you were an 'angel' you needn't worry about property and finance, that was the man's job. A man could also refuse his wife access to their children. This happened in the Caroline Norton case in which we saw in Source F. There were a few happenings in the late 1800's that may suggest that the angel of the house concept may be slowly fading from people's minds. Firstly there was Caroline Norton. Caroline campaigned to gain the right to have custody of her children, she did this by writing pamphlets, she then persuaded an MP to support her case and it was taken to the House of Commons.

In 1839 she succeeded and the bill was passed into a law, called the Custody of Children Act 1839. This Act gave mothers the right to gain custody of children under 7, but only if the Lord Counselor agreed to it. Caroline Norton had managed to overcome the separate spheres terminology. She had achieved something and had proven that a woman could get things changed and understand politics, the angel of the house concept was that women were too stupid and uneducated to understand anything important, such as politics, Caroline proved otherwise.

The Married Women's property acts also went against the angel of the house philosophy. In 1854 Barbara Leigh Smith began a campaign to change the laws on property. The bill that the campaign produced was withdrawn, however finally in 1870 the first Married Women's Property Act was passed, this allowed women to keep up to £200 in earnings and property. A second act then gave them the right to control all property and money they bought with them into the marriage.

This was a huge milestone in women's status. Instead of being a husband's property and anything that was a women's, given to the husband when they wed, women could actually own and control their own earnings. The Married Women's Property gave women a tiny little bit more equality than what they had had previously. Although they were still very much inferior to men, and many men believed that this act was only put in place to placate women from fighting for the right to vote. Men were still under the impression that women could not deal with anything important or significant, such as politics.

So in conclusion I do agree that by 1882 the 'angel of the house' concept had been challenged, and many more women and men, were thinking more about equality between the sexes. And that perhaps women may be able to do more than just menial domestic jobs. However there was still a long, long way to go before the 'angel of the house concept' had been fully overturned. Men were still unwilling to give any real 'important' rights to women and still thought them to be hugely inferior to themselves.

It was still a women's place to be in the house, looking after the children, looking after the husband, to be weak and unintelligent. This stereotype of women had not changed and wouldn't for a long while yet.