Model Presswomen: 'High-Minded' Female Journalism in the Mid-Victorian Era

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D.Phil Thesis

English



Abstract

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This study contributes to current critical discussions about the figure of the Victorian woman journalist. Most previous scholarship on nineteenth-century female journalism has focused either on women’s anonymous writings or on their contributions to conventionally feminine genres like serial fiction and prose articles on domesticity and fashion. Although women’s campaigning journalism has attracted some attention, especially from historians of feminism, its role in the professionalization of women writers has gone largely unexamined. Consequently, it has been assumed that female journalists did not write on social and political issues, unless they wrote anonymously or as reformers with little interest in developing careers as presswomen. This thesis radically revises this view by showing the mid-century rise of female journalists who wrote on serious social and political topics and earned national and international repute. They broke the codes of anonymity in a number of ways, including signing articles in their own names and developing distinctly female personae. They presented themselves as model middle-class professional authors: knowledgeable, financially independent and vocationally committed. They proved, by example, women’s fitness for conventionally masculine lines of journalism. By

examining their careers in the periodical press, my thesis offers the first in-depth analysis of 'high-minded' female journalism in Victorian England.

Beginning with the 1850s, the thesis is organised around certain key developments in the periodical press, such as the debates about professional authorship, discussions of the plight of single women and the nature of female work, and the advent of signed publication. It examines the rise of prestigious presswork by women through the study of three distinct, yet overlapping models of the female professional journalist: the feminist journalist, the mainstream reform journalist, and the foreign correspondent. It then discusses the representation of women's high-minded journalism in the domain of fiction. The study ends in the 1880s, noting how these mid-Victorian models of women's presswork influenced the discussion and practice of female professional journalism in the 1890s.

[315 words]

Acknowledgements

My supervisor, Professor Sally Shuttleworth, provided invaluable support at every stage of this project. Her close, careful and prompt responses to my writing alerted me to many conceptual and stylistic flaws and also led me to exciting ideas. Dr. Stefano Evangelista, Dr. Sophie Ratcliffe, Professor Robert Douglas-Fairhurst and Dr. Michèle Mendelssohn offered helpful feedback at the transfer and confirmation stages of the D.Phil. I would also like to thank the late Professor Sally Mitchell and Professor Kathryn Gleadle for helping me to access valuable research materials on Frances Power Cobbe and Eliza Meteyard. Thanks are also due to Professor Hermione Lee, my college advisor, and to Dr. Clare Broome Saunders for their support and encouragement.

I am indebted to the Felix Scholarship for funding my D.Phil. My thanks to the staff of the following libraries for helping me procure materials onsite as well as distantly: The Bodleian Libraries; The English Faculty Library, University of Oxford; Wolfson College Library; Harris Manchester College Library; Girton College Library, University of Cambridge; The British Library; National Co-Operative Archive, Manchester; The Huntington Library, California.

I owe an immense debt to teachers, friends and family in India. In particular, to Professor Sambudha Sen, whose extraordinarily stimulating teaching first drew me to Victorian literature. He has seen this project develop from its most nascent stages and has provided generous support throughout. To Dr. Sharada Nair, who responded to unwieldy, early drafts of chapters with characteristic warmth and critical rigour. To Nitin, whose love, understanding and patience kept me going. To Vaibhav for unfailing love, compassion and sage advice. To Shivani for her poetry, friendship and hospitality. To Vebhuti and Mridula for hosting and visiting me in England, armed with spices, sweets and Hindi film music. To my grandmother, Satyavati, and to Lalita, Rama, A.S. Raju, Pranathi, Divya, Deepak, Brinda and Medha for their affection and support.

Thanks are also due to the many precious friends in England. Sakshi, Grace and Isabel offered, at all times, kindness, humour and strength. To Akshi, Amelia, Kalika, Amoghavarsha, Arunvinay, Abhishek, Niharika, Gautam, Mohsin, Sarah, Hussain, Sarah Barnette, Ushashi, Andra, Ciara and Jerry for their warmth and generosity. To my aunt Usha Raju and my cousins Sravya and Preeti for their love and hospitality.

My greatest debt is to my parents, Sitha and Ramanamurthy Raju, without whose immeasurable love and support none of this would have been possible. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Copyright Acknowledgement

The following articles have been published from material in the thesis. ‘Novel Networks: The “Specialité” of the *English Woman's Journal*’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 47.4 (Winter 2014), 597–612; ‘Crossing the Final Frontier: Harriet Ward as Mid-Victorian War Correspondent’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 49.2 (Summer 2016), 305–332; ‘Going Places: Harriet Martineau’s “Letters from Ireland” and the Rise of the Female Foreign Correspondent’, *Women's Writing* (Special issue on Journeys to Authority: Travel Writing and the Rise of the Woman of Letters, August 2016) <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09699082.2016.1207906>. I am grateful to the Mistress and Fellows, Girton College, Cambridge, for providing access to the Personal Papers of Bessie Rayner Parkes. I would also like to thank the National Co-Operative Archive in Manchester for providing access to the Personal Papers of George Jacob Holyoake, the Huntington Library in California for providing access to the Frances Cobbe Papers, The Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, for permission to cite from the Autographed letters of Frances Power Cobbe. My thanks to Tate Britain’s Creative Commons for access to Mary Osborn’s painting, ‘Nameless and Friendless’, and to Proquest for permission to use the images from *Fraser’s Magazine*. The images from *Fraser’s Magazine* were produced by Proquest as part of *British Periodicals*. Inquiries may be made to: http://www.proquest.com

Table of Contents

Introduction **8**

Professional Journalism and the Status of Women Writers, 1830s–1850s 9

In Woman's Name: Rethinking the Anonymity of Female Journalists 16

The Rise of Model Presswomen in the Mid-Nineteenth Century 22

Presswork for Women: The *English Woman's Journal* **33**

Starting Anew: The Emergence of Mid-Century Feminist Journalism 36

Breaking New Ground: The 'Specialité' of the *English Woman's Journal* 43

Novel Networks: The Structural Advantages of a Feminist Journal 48

Holding Their Own: The *English Woman's Journal*'s Survival Strategies 53

The Special Abilities of 'Born and Bred' Ladies: The *English Woman's Journal*'s Representation of Middle-Class Professions 64

Of Professional Worth: Evaluating Women's Authorship 72

Projecting a Model of Women's Reform Journalism 77

Unabashedly Professional: Assessing the *English Woman's Journal*'s Model of Feminist Journalism 85

Signature Seriousness: The Woman Writer as a Professional Political Journalist **96**

Tracking Silverpen: Eliza Meteyard's Popular Politics 102

'I Can Beg for Others […] But Not For Myself': The Professional Predicament of the Female Political Journalist 125

Professing Womanpower: Frances Power Cobbe's High-Profile Political Journalism 136

The Female Fraserian: The Single Woman as a Distinguished Professional Journalist 153

Writing from the Field: The Female Foreign Correspondent **173**

Crossing the Final Frontier: Harriet Ward as Mid-Victorian Female War Correspondent 177

Sensing War from a Distance: Examining Harriet Ward's Journalistic Prescience 183

Working in the Meantime: Harriet Ward's Tactfully Delayed Reportage 200

Going Places: Harriet Martineau's Letters From Ireland and the Rise of the Female Itinerant Correspondent 214

Writing Ireland: The Constraints and Opportunities of Foreign Correspondence 218

Righting Ireland: Harriet Martineau as Authoritative Commentator 226

Losing Ground: Harriet Martineau's European Correspondence and the Challenges of Transnational Journalism 242

Writing Women: Fictional Representations of the Presswoman 254

Entitling Genius: Women's Property, Propriety and Presswork in Eliza Meteyard's *Struggles for Fame* 259

Discreet and Powerful Presswomen: Anonymous Female Editors and Leader-Writers in Novels of the 1860s 279

Enabling Presswork: The Invalid Woman as Female Journalist and Editor in *The Clever Woman of the Family* 282

The Pleasure of Powerful Presswork: The Female Editress and Leader Writer in *Sowing the Wind* ... 291

Coda: The Presswoman as Unacknowledged Drudge in *New Grub Street* 312

Conclusion 316

Illustrations 322

Figure 1. Daniel Maclise, 'Regina's Maids of Honour' 322

Figure 2. Daniel Maclise, 'The Fraserians' 323

Figure 3. Maria Rye, 'On Assisted Emigration' 324

Figure 4. George Measom and John Franklin, 'Life's Contrasts; or, New-Year's Eve' 325

Figure 5. Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless' 326

Bibliography 327

Introduction

Speaking at the Sixth Annual Conference of the British Institute of Journalists held in Norwich in 1894, Catherine Drew, the only female London delegate to attend the conference, used the opportunity to hold 'a brief […] for her own sex' and claim professional status for female journalists.[1] Like many of her fellow journalists in the 1890s, Drew presented journalism as an 'open profession' which, while not filtering its members through formal educational qualifications and entrance examinations, could only be successfully undertaken by those gifted with the authorial skill and steadfast attitude required for periodical work.[2] However, as Drew noted, there were many who, perceiving women as unsuited for regular presswork, did not regard female periodical writers as full-fledged professionals and denounced their admission to the Institute of Journalists as 'a rash measure […] uncalled for, as the women would certainly prove themselves to be nuisances'.[3]

Making a strong case for 'women as journalists, workers in the same field with the men who have made the Press in England a power, morally, politically, economically, and socially', Drew underlined that women had long proved their mettle as journalists.[4] She noted that even in 'those early days when the professional writer' was a 'small […] factor in production,' there was not only the 'ordinary journalist woman' who 'gave her time to fashion magazines' but also 'the exceptional woman' who 'contributed to the best leading journals of the day able reviews of

[1] 'Record of Events. The Institute of Journalists', *Englishwoman's Review*, 25 (October 1894), 244–51 (p.245). This notice, in the *Englishwoman's Review*, reproduced most of Drew's speech.

[2] For late nineteenth-century definitions of journalism as an 'open profession', see Mark Hampton, 'Defining Journalists in Late-Nineteenth Century Britain', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 22 (June 2005), 138–55.

[3] 'Record of Events', p.246.

[4] Ibid., p.245.

scientific, philosophical, and literary books, with essays on what is now known as sociology'.[5] As 'brilliant examples' of such distinguished female journalists, she named three women whose writings had not only provided them with a steady income but had also helped to bring about reforms in divorce laws, women's education and animal welfare: Caroline Norton, Harriet Martineau and Frances Power Cobbe.[6] My thesis traces some of this history of 'exceptional' journalism by women from the 1850s to the 1880s. It examines the mid-century emergence of 'model presswomen': female journalists who not only stormed male bastions of social and political journalism but also presented themselves as upholders of the highest standards of professional journalistic practice.

Professional Journalism and the Status of Women Writers, 1830s–1850s

Though the unprecedented expansion of periodicals in the 1820s and 1830s made it possible for middle-class men and women to live solely by writing, the status of authorship, particularly journalism, as a respectable middle-class profession continued to be debated throughout the century.[7] In the early nineteenth century, when England was largely governed by the aristocracy and the landed gentry, newspaper journalists 'who wrote for the people and sought to bring the pressure of public opinion to bear on Parliament and the Government by appealing to the

[5] Ibid., p.247.

[6] Ibid. For Drew's invocation of mid-century female journalists to mark 'women's professional promise', see Susan Hamilton, '"Her Usual Daring Style": Feminist New Journalism, Pioneering Women, and Traces of Frances Power Cobbe', in *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle: Making a Name for Herself*, ed. by Elizabeth F. Gray (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.37–52 (p.42).

[7] Linda Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp.1–2.

opinions and prejudices of the people' had a low social status.[8] They usually lacked high family connections, were viewed with hostility by the ruling elite, and were commonly perceived as unscrupulously changing sides in politics for monetary benefits.[9]

Although writing for the expensive quarterly reviews, which catered to an educated upper middle-class readership, was usually considered more respectable than contributing to the cheaper journals aimed at a mass readership, some argued that all periodical writing was inherently more superficial and therefore less socially useful than book-writing.[10] In 1833, Edward Lytton Bulwer, who had himself contributed regularly to periodicals and edited the expensive *New Monthly*, warned that the best writers of the day had started to focus on writing for periodicals like the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review* and consequently produced brief, shallow and ephemeral articles on politics and literature rather than carefully-researched book-length works.[11] Many saw the journalist as a hired hack who worked primarily for money and it was 'precisely because contamination by the mere "trade" of journalism was thought to be incompatible with the status of a gentleman that the identity of such contributors had to be protected' through anonymity.[12]

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[8] A. Aspinall, 'The Social Status of Journalists at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century', *The Review of English Studies*, 21 (July 1945), 216–32 (p.220).

[9] Ibid., pp.220-22.

[10] Dallas Liddle, *The Dynamics of Genre: Journalism and the Practice of Literature in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), pp.21–22.

[11] Edward Lytton Bulwer, *England and the English*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), II, pp.61–66.

[12] Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.31.

A number of practising journalists countered these fearful views of journalism by underlining its potential to spread knowledge and bring about social reform.[13] As the century advanced, the entry of university-educated men into newspaper journalism helped to raise its social profile.[14] By 1855, as Dallas Liddle has shown, anonymous journalists came to be commonly considered not as 'masked ruffians or demagogues (the favorite images of press critics in the 1830s and before)' but as 'teachers of the nation'.[15] The rapid expansion of high-profile periodicals between the 1850s and 1870s also made journalism seem more respectable.[16]

In his seminal 1847 article on authorship as a profession, G.H. Lewes emphasized that by writing for the periodical press, authors not only earned a 'decent subsistence' for themselves but also offered valuable knowledge to the reading public: 'a brilliant essay, or a thoughtful fragment, is not the less brilliant, is not the less thoughtful, because it is brief'.[17] Drawing on mid-century descriptions of middle-class professions as driven by an ethic of social-service (unlike the supposedly predominant market-interest of trade), those claiming a professional status for authorship often represented journalists as respectable, educated men working tirelessly to raise the intellectual and moral standards of society.[18] As noted by Walter Houghton,

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[13] For a brief overview of mid-century articles celebrating the many social benefits of journalism, see Liddle, *Dynamics of Genre,* pp.23–25.

[14] Aspinall, 'The Social Status of Journalists', p.230.

[15] Dallas Liddle, 'Salesmen, Sportsmen, Mentors: Anonymity and Mid-Victorian Theories of Journalism', *Victorian Studies*, 41 (Autumn 1997), 31–68 (p.39).

[16] Christopher Kent, 'Higher Journalism and the Mid-Victorian Clerisy', *Victorian Studies*, 13 (December 1969), 181–98 (pp.181–88).

[17] [G.H. Lewes], 'The Condition of Authors in England, Germany and France', *Fraser's Magazine,* 35 (March 1847), 285–95 (pp.292, 289).

[18] Stefan Collini, for example, has noted the 'culture of altruism' as central to mid-century conceptions of Victorian professionalism. Jennifer Ruth has pointed out that middle-class professionals claimed to be driven by an ethic of disinterested social service. Susan Colón has discussed more widely, the non-market ideals of mid-century

idealistic conceptions of the periodical critic envisioned him as extremely knowledgeable, possessing not only 'a broad education in the "great books" of the past' and a strong grasp of current affairs but also an ability to 'think for himself […] and […] to think disinterestedly, free from the distortions of practical, party or personal considerations'.[19]

In practice, of course, such high standards were seldom met and some critics used the review essay to explicitly aggrandize the power and prestige of the press. In his review of an 1843 collection of Lytton Bulwer's prose work, for example, John Robertson ignored Bulwer's reservations about journalism and claimed that all writers, including journalists, were widely honored for advancing the public good.[20] Unless a man was greatly talented, 'he could not maintain himself by journalism at all'; even those working 'at [the] lowest' levels of journalism were 'merchants or craftsmen of knowledge'.[21] Underlining the lofty intellectual and ethical standards of professional journalism, Robertson proclaimed: 'To be a high-minded journalist

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professionalism. *Public Moralists*, p.85; Jennifer Ruth, *Novel Professions: Interested Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in The Victorian Novel* (Ohio: Ohio State University, 2006); Susan E. Colón, *The Professional Ideal in the Victorian Novel: The Works of Disraeli, Trollope, Gaskell, and Eliot* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For excellent accounts of Victorian discourses of literary professionalism, see Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Daniel Hack, *The Material Interests of the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005); Clare Pettitt, *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[19] Walter Houghton, 'Periodical Literature and the Articulate Classes', in *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings*, ed. by Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp.3–27 (p.10).

[20] R [John Robertson], 'Art. II.', *Westminster Review*, 39 (February 1843), 33–69.

[21] Ibid., p.68.

asks more virtue than perhaps any other profession requires, and, we maintain, as many noble spirits are to be found among them as in any pursuit whatever'.[22]

Both Lewes and Robertson, like many other commentators at the time, represent high-minded journalism as the domain of men. In Robertson's review, professional journalists are 'men of letters'.[23] It is only with deep contempt that Lewes mentions women writers: 'idle' and 'ill-trained', they, like 'barristers with scarce briefs, physicians with few patients, clergymen on small livings, […] rich men, and a large crop of aspiring noodles', lack the skills, commitment and rigour of full-time journalists and encroach upon a professional field that rightfully belongs to the high-minded male journalist.[24] As Terence Hoagwood and Kathryn Ledbetter have stated, throughout the 1830s and 40s women writers were entering the literary market 'in record numbers' and such dismissive accounts of their work as Lewes offered can be seen as expressing the 'paranoia felt by some male writers' about the potential loss of their own literary dominance.[25]

Similar anxieties can also be seen at work in articles and sketches that relegated women writers to a domestic sphere of literary production. A symptomatic early nineteenth-century representation of professional women writers, *Fraser*'s 'Regina's Maids of Honour' [Fig. 1], depicted eight of the leading women writers of the day as seated around a drawing room tea-table, associating the woman writer with the private sphere in sharp contrast to the same journal's depiction of male 'Fraserians' congregated around a table in a public, club-like setting

[22] Ibid., p.66.

[23] Ibid., p.67.

[24] 'The Condition of Authors', p.285.

[25] Terence Hoagwood and Kathryn Ledbetter, *Colour'd Shadows: Contexts in Publishing, Printing, and Reading Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.76.

[Fig. 2].[26] Except for Harriet Martineau, all the women in Regina's group portrait were writers who followed the conventional genres of women's writing: 'poetry, fiction, and light essays and editing literary annuals and women's magazines'.[27]

Evidently, the immense popularity of the *Illustrations of Political Economy* made it impossible to keep Martineau out of any contemporary account of famous women writers. The sketch accompanying the portrait underlines her anomalous status by describing her as singularly gloomy, stating that she was 'meditating, grimly', with a 'serious brow' about social problems.[28] In an individual portrait of Harriet Martineau, published in November 1833, the magazine criticizes Martineau even more trenchantly for writing on serious, masculine subjects.[29] For Maginn, Martineau's discussion of issues like population control in her *Illustrations* made her even more 'disgusting' than 'Mother Wollstonecraft' who, in 'some of her shameless books […] boasts that she spoke of the anatomical secrets of nature among anatomists "as man speaks to man."'[30] By presenting the female political writer as an aberration, such articles attempted to limit female authors to a narrow range of conventionally feminine subjects.

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[26] 'Regina's Maids of Honour', *Fraser's Magazine*, 13 (January 1836), 80; 'The Fraserians', *Fraser's Magazine*, 11 (January 1835), 2–3. A verbal sketch, written by editor William Maginn, was accompanied with drawings by Daniel Maclise. The women included in the portrait are Laetitia Landon (L.E.L), Caroline Norton, Lady Blessington, Mary Russell Mitford, Mrs. S.C. Hall, Lady Morgan, Miss Jane Porter, and Harriet Martineau. For more on this sketch, see Peterson, *Becoming a Woman*, pp.15–16; Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.174.

[27] Peterson, *Becoming a Woman*, p.16.

[28] 'Regina's', p.80.

[29] [William Maginn], 'Gallery of Literary Characters. No. XLII. Miss Harriet Martineau', *Fraser's Magazine*, 8 (November 1833), 576–77.

[30] Ibid, p.576.

Lewes himself advanced a similar view of 'Lady Novelists' in his eponymous 1852 article for the *Westminster Review*.[31] While he asserted, in sharp contrast to his earlier article in *Fraser's*, that 'the right of Woman to citizenship in the Republic of Letters' was unquestionable, he conceded to women no more than 'a place in literature correspondent with that [*sic*] she occupies in society': the domain of domestic fiction.[32] Moreover, since reviewers commonly used the term 'feminine' to describe writing that was 'domestic, didactic, limited, silly, superficial and second-class', while identifying masculinity with 'high culture […] with intellectual qualities, with originality, with power, and with truth', they reinforced the pre-eminence of male writers even as they drew attention to women's writing.[33] Although Hannah More's (1745–1833) forays into topics like public education, which had been controversial in her own life-time, were posthumously applauded by critics, her public work was re-imagined as an extension of her domestic duties.[34]

The high-minded woman writer of the early nineteenth century was largely represented as an 'Angel out of the House', one who, despite writing successfully on public issues, did not challenge the leadership of men over the literary market.[35] Thus, while a number of women

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[31] [G.H. Lewes], 'The Lady Novelists', *Westminster Review*, 58 (July 1852), 129– 41.

[32] Ibid., pp.141, 132. For how Lewes reinforced gendered norms of writing in his literary reviews, see Barbara Caine, 'G.H. Lewes and the "Lady Novelists"', *Sydney Studies in English*, 7 (1981–82), 85–101.

[33] Nicola Diana Thompson, *Reviewing Sex: Gender and the Reception of Victorian Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p.20. Also see Patricia Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour, 1848–1890: Refining Work for the Middle-Class Woman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.104.

[34] Alexis Easley, *First-Person Anonymous: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830–70* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004), pp.22–23.

[35] The phrase 'Angel out of the House' was first used by Helsinger, Sheets and Veeder to describe a Victorian myth of women's place within society which recognised that men and women were fundamentally different and encouraged women's unique contributions to public, philanthropic work. Elizabeth K. Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets and William Veeder, *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837–1883*, 3

wrote for and even edited periodicals, sometimes in their own names, they continued to depend, as Margaret Beetham has shown, 'on the construction of reading as an essentially domestic activity, of writing as a task which could be undertaken at home, and of certain genres—notably fiction and improving or domestic articles—as potentially feminine in character'.[36] As the century progressed, an increasing number of anthologies, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, portraits, articles and reviews focussed on the figure of the woman writer and enhanced her public influence but they also made women vulnerable to being perceived as driven by an inappropriate and 'unfeminine' pursuit of fame.[37]

In Woman's Name: Rethinking the Anonymity of Female Journalists

Women's relation to market success and authorial celebrity continued to be problematic, making the anonymity of the periodical press particularly attractive to female writers. The anonymous periodical essay, as Hilary Fraser and Daniel Brown have observed, was 'the Trojan horse that allowed women writers to enter the male preserve of professional writing'.[38] It enabled women writers to dodge negative stereotypes of female writing as frivolous and to write on such serious subjects as slavery, industrialism and parliamentary reform.[39] Critical investigations into the work of the faceless majority among the 1500 women known to have contributed to the

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vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), I, pp.14–20. For More's contributions to nineteenth-century models of female philanthropy, see Dorice Williams Elliott, *The Angel Out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002).

[36] Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800–1914* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.41.

[37] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, pp.23, 25.

[38] Hilary Fraser and Daniel Brown, *English Prose of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longman, 1997), p.21.

[39] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, pp.2–3.

Victorian periodical press have proved to be truly revelatory. [40] Following Barbara Onslow's groundbreaking work on women's wide-ranging participation in the nineteenth-century periodical press, a number of studies have added to our knowledge of the influential reviewing careers of prolific writers like Margaret Oliphant, Anne Mozley, and Christian Johnstone.[41] Marianne Van Remoortel's recent study explores 'new ways of dealing with the pervasive anonymity of the Victorian periodical press' and examines why women poets, editors, compositors, decorators, who successfully earned a substantial income from their periodical work, publicly supported the very gender ideologies that prescribed women's confinement to home and household.[42] Although women like Harriet Martineau did publish books on issues like political economy in their own name, the hostile criticism directed at such work made them deeply appreciative of the cover offered by anonymous publication; many, including Martineau herself, used it to publish fitting rebuttals to such prejudiced critics.[43] For Easley, the era starting from the 1850s expansion of the periodical press and ending just before the onset of signed articles in 1870, when the number of female contributors to middle-class mainstream magazines increased dramatically, marks 'a golden period of women's journalism'.[44]

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[40] This numerical estimate was first outlined in Carol T. Christ, '"The Hero As Man of Letters": Masculinity and Victorian Nonfiction Prose', in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse: Renegotiating Gender and Power*, ed. by Thaïs E. Morgan (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp.19–31 (p.21).

[41] Barbara Onslow, *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Joanne Wilkes, *Women Reviewing Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Critical Reception of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Easley, *First-Person Anonymous.*

[42] Marianne Van Remoortel, *Women, Work and the Victorian Periodical: Living by the Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.2.

[43] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, pp.41–42.

[44] Ibid., p.5

However, such analyses of Victorian women's journalism tend to ignore those women who foregrounded their social and political articles as women's writing. By concentrating on Victorian women's surreptitious rise to authority and influence, such scholarship assumes that, in public, the female journalist remained confined to conventionally feminine topics. This thesis radically revises this view by showing that the mid-century era was, in fact, marked by the rise of prominent female social and political journalists. These trailblazers, many of whom were at the forefront of the mid-century women's movement, broke the codes of anonymity in a number of ways, including signing articles in their own names and developing distinctly female personae.

Given that we appreciate, rightly, the pull of anonymity, we must take equally seriously the attractions of signature for women journalists. If writing signed books and anonymous articles on serious issues simultaneously enabled women like Harriet Martineau and Frances Power Cobbe to widen the remit of women's writing whilst continuing to assume, via journalism, the greater authority of an implicitly male persona, why did they put their signatures to some of their most radical essays and articles? Given that Martineau took great pains to ensure that her Irish correspondence for London's *Daily News* was indistinguishable from that of male correspondents, why did she speedily bring out a signed collected edition of these articles and proclaim their provenance in the preface? There were several other women who, despite never identifying themselves individually and/or writing only under initials or pseudonyms, adopted explicitly female personae, asserting that their social and political articles were indeed women's writing.

This thesis argues that through such articles, female journalists made a strong case for women's ability to work as professional journalists: to meet strict deadlines, to adapt their writing styles according to the editorial policies of individual journals, and to hold their own

against some of the best male journalists of the day. Such journalistic self-fashioning also involved a range of tactical measures that are comparable to women's strategic deployment of anonymity. It entailed, for example, being keenly aware of certain changes in public opinion and the periodicals market that opened new windows of opportunity for women writers. Their success shows that the cultural injunction against women's political writings was far less rigid than is usually assumed.

Some of these female journalists have attracted attention, especially from historians of feminism who have mined their articles to trace the development of the discourse of women's rights. Kathryn Gleadle, for example, has shown that feminist arguments were already widely advanced in the radical press of the 1830s and 1840s.[45] Helen Rogers has noted the critical role played by the nineteenth-century periodical press in enabling women to participate in radical politics, both as individual reformers and as organized bodies of female activists.[46] In *Women Making News*, Michelle Tusan focuses on women's political journals from 1856 to 1930, exploring how such forms of print journalism facilitated the advocacy of social reforms for women and enabled them to construct political identities as citizens.[47] Sarah Richardson begins her recent book on Victorian women's political activity by stating that, in the wake of this long line of historical scholarship, it is redundant to ask whether or not women participated in politics

[45] Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement*, 1831–51 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

[46] Helen Rogers, *Women and the People: Authority, Authorship and the Radical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

[47] Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

in the nineteenth century: 'the debate has now moved on' to 'what were the nature and extent of their political worlds'.[48]

However, such studies approach the press as simply one amongst several means utilized by female activists and reformers to disseminate their views, failing to take into account the professional skills required to publish in the periodical press. By not adequately recognizing the role of editors, readers and other writers in shaping the terms of periodical debate, they overemphasise the agency of reform journalists. Female political journalists could not simply insert their slogans into journals. They had to enter ongoing debates in the press and tailor their writings to suit the editorial lines and intended audiences of specific periodicals. Susan Hamilton's recent study of how the mainstream location of Cobbe's journalism influenced her writing was a step in this direction.[49] But even Hamilton focused largely on how Cobbe's articles provided a popular, mainstream platform for feminist ideas rather than on how Cobbe developed a unique model of women's professional journalism.

This thesis addresses this gap by placing such writings squarely within the context of 'the widening sphere' of female professions in the mid-nineteenth century and studying them alongside other social and political presswork, like foreign correspondence, which are not explicitly related to reform journalism.[50] By bringing together what is usually kept apart, women's political writing in mainstream and specialist journals, I show that the relation between the mainstream and the specialist press was not simply oppositional or competitive, but also

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[48] Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p.1. Also see, Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture in Britain, 1815–1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[49] Susan Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe and Victorian Feminism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[50] *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, ed. by Martha Vicinus (London: Methuen, 1980).

mutually sustaining. While earnings from the mainstream press enabled women to write for minimal or no charge for specialist reform journals that paid little or nothing, unpaid journalism and campaign writing reinforced women's credibility as socially-concerned writers. As I will demonstrate, the claim to high-mindedness was at the heart of women's self-presentation as social and political journalists. It helped them to assert their ability to write for the periodical press with intellectual sophistication and vocational commitment, the very markers of professional journalism that male journalists like Lewes sought to reserve exclusively for men.

Taking a methodological cue from Linda Peterson's work on how Victorian women writers presented models of female professional authorship through their autobiographical writings, I examine how women's entry into social and political journalism was 'considered privately and debated publically' by mid-century female journalists.[51] In taking on the lines of serious journalism usually reserved for men, female journalists not only risked personal ridicule but also a dismissal of the various social and political reforms they advocated, as well as a strengthening of existing prejudices against women's entry into the journalistic profession. Throughout, the thesis is underpinned by the notion that in order to gain a fuller understanding of women's professional journalism in the mid-nineteenth century, we must pay closer attention to women's actual practice as journalists: to how they presented themselves to readers, editors and peers as reliable professional newsmakers; to the ideals they espoused, the personal and professional networks they created, and to their commentary on women's periodical work.

[51] *Becoming a Woman*, p.6.

The Rise of Model Presswomen in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

My thesis begins in the 1850s, when, in the wake of the expansion of the periodical press and widespread concern about the plight of single women (as publicised by the 1851 census), the debates about female work drew special attention to journalism as a remunerative occupation for women. The early to mid-1850s, as shown by Peterson, 'proved a pivotal moment in defining the professional woman of letters', and Anna Jameson's configuration of women's work in her two lectures, *Sisters of Charity* (1855) and the *Communion of Labour* (1856) played a critical role in this redefinition.[52] Jameson 'partially repeated feminine self-constructions of the 1840s but also offered new terms for women's professional labor': while she retained the idea of women's public work as philanthropic and thus above financial interests, she argued that both men and women have private and public duties, disrupting 'the conventional binary of the early nineteenth century […] which placed women in the home (doing domestic and moral service) and men in the public sphere (doing business and politics)'; 'instead of an *either/or*', the model became a '*both/and*'.[53] Jameson also incorporated the entrepreneurial ideal of work as promoting self-improvement, self-dependence and self-help in her conception of women's public work. [54]

By emphasising this aspect of women's work, a number of younger women writers and artists, many of whom Jameson mentored, made a bolder case for women's entry into various professions hitherto dominated by men.[55] This study shows how such mid-century redefinitions

[52] Ibid., p.45.

[53] Ibid., p.46.

[54] Ibid. p.47. For how Jameson's adaptation of the entrepreneurial ideal facilitated women's paid work, see Ellen Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Routledge: London, 1999), pp.151–55. For a broad discussion of the entrepreneurial ideal, see Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1990).

[55] *Becoming a Woman*, p.47.

of women's public work critically influenced women's writing in the periodical press and enabled the emergence of influential models of high-minded female journalism. In tracts and journal articles, reformers like Bessie Rayner Parkes and Barbara Bodichon cited the widespread practice of anonymous journalism by contemporary women as proof of their ability to enter and excel in other male dominated lines of paid work.[56] Far from being edged out of serious journalism by the expansion of high-profile journals and the emergence of signature in the 1860s and 70s, a number of women capitalized on these developments to create new models of female journalism. Since women's issues featured prominently in topical discussion — in such social and political 'news' as parliamentary reform, divorce legislation, employment and emigration — those advocating women's rights in the press could present their work as 'serious' professional journalism.[57]As I will show, some of the most established male journalists wrote on women's issues and by debating with them, female activists and writers could emphasize their own professional expertise. The emergence of an organized women's movement also enabled some female journalists to present themselves more prominently than ever before. Focussing on their work makes it clear that the 'golden period' of women's journalism certainly did not end in the 1870s. In fact, as I will show, it continued into the late nineteenth century and laid firm foundations for the emergence of the New Woman journalists at the *fin de siècle.*

The bulk of the thesis examines the rise of prestigious presswork by women through the study of three distinct, yet overlapping, models of the female professional journalist. These are:

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[56] Barbara Bodichon, 'Women and Work', in *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and the Langham Place Women*, ed. by Candida Ann Lacey (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp.36–73 (p.54); [Bessie Rayner Parkes], 'On the Adoption of Professional Life by Women', *English Woman's Journal*, 2 (September 1858), 1–10 (p.4).

[57] Laurel Brake, "The *Westminster* and Gender at Mid-Century", *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 33 (Fall 2000), 247–72 (p.247).

the feminist journalist, the mainstream political journalist, and the foreign correspondent. I illustrate the rise of each of these models by focussing on instances of path-breaking political journalism by women. I explore the emergence of feminist journalism by focusing on the *English Woman's Journal* (1858-64), the first magazine to be owned, managed and written by those involved in the mid-century organized women's movement.[58] It championed women's professional authorship, and was one of the earliest periodicals of its time to carry signed political articles by women. To trace the emergence of the female political journalist in the mainstream press, I turn first to Eliza Meteyard, one of the most prolific female reform journalists of the early nineteenth century and then focus on Frances Power Cobbe, the only Victorian woman known to have sustained a middle-class lifestyle primarily through her political writing for high-repute journals.[59] I explore women's forays into foreign correspondence by examining in detail the reportage of Harriet Ward, the earliest known female war correspondent, and Harriet Martineau, one of the first women to do investigative political reportage for a daily newspaper, who also worked as a transatlantic correspondent for an American anti-slavery journal.[60] In the fourth and concluding chapter, I turn to fictional representations of the female journalist. By exploring both the practise and representation of journalism by women, I show the

[58] Though the term *feminism* is anachronistic for this period, I believe it can be usefully applied to these women. As Barbara Caine has pointed out, 'no other term suggests adequately the extent or the intensity of their concern about the situation of women or their sense of the need to remove the injustices, the obstacles, and the forms of oppression which women face'. *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.6. The term is now widely used in scholarship on Victorian writers and reformers who sought to improve the social and political condition of women. It is in this sense that I use it throughout the thesis.

[59] Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.7–8.

[60] 'Foreign Correspondent', *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), pp.224–25. The entry mentions Ward's work but not Martineau's, partly because it does not provide an exhaustive list of female foreign correspondents.

boundary between real and imagined models of writing to be distinct, yet permeable. Novels about female professional journalists, for example, unmistakeably took their inspiration from historical women journalists, and the public perception and status of women's journalism, in turn, was influenced by such fictional representations.

There were, of course, several other 'exceptional' female journalists in mid-century England. Before becoming the famous female novelist George Eliot, Marian Evans had worked as the assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, the first instance of a woman wielding editorial influence over a prestigious quarterly journal.[61] Eliza Lynn Linton joined the staff of the *Morning Chronicle* in 1848 to become the first female journalist in England to draw a fixed salary.[62] However, such strictly anonymous writing falls outside my study's concern with public models of female writing. I also do not cover all areas of periodical work undertaken by the subjects of my thesis. Harriet Martineau's and Frances Cobbe's influential careers as anonymous newspaper leader writers, for example, are not analysed. [63]

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[61] Fionnuala Dillane, *Before George Eliot: Marian Evans and the Periodical Press* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.13.

[62] Nancy Fix Anderson, 'Eliza Lynn Linton (1822–1898)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16742> [accessed 23 September 2015]. Henceforth, *ODNB*. The work of Caroline Norton, who despite being invoked in the 1890s as an exemplary political journalist had written most of her political prose in tracts rather than periodicals, is also beyond the purview of this thesis.

[63] Deborah Logan notes that to date, 1642 *Daily News* leaders have been identified conclusively as Martineau's. Hamilton has identified some of Frances Power Cobbe's leaders for London's *Echo* newspaper by clues found in Cobbe's scrapbook and has discussed Cobbe's leader-writing. However, as Hamilton herself notes, many of the pages in the scrapbook are missing and in the absence of conclusive evidence, much of the identification is based on stylistic clues. *Harriet Martineau and the Irish Question: Condition of Post- Famine Ireland*, ed. by Deborah Logan (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2012), p.1; Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, 182 n. 13. Leaders, like other anonymous writing, are not central to the thesis' focus on publically available models of women's writing and the identified corpus of Martineau's and Cobbe's leaders is too vast to be considered in passing.

Rather than attempting to discuss all models of political and social journalism by Victorian women, I provide an in-depth analysis of the three above-mentioned periodical avenues through which Victorian women rose to prominence as serious professional journalists. By drawing attention to the high professional stakes of such writing by women, I hope to open the field for further inquiries into these and other lines of influential periodical work by Victorian women, including leader-writing and editorship.

The power and agency of these female journalists was, of course, always mediated by various factors, including editorial interventions, political orientations of individual journals, and market pressures. The periodical is one of 'the most ephemeral of printed forms' and the appearance of an ensuing number could make any article published in the previous issue, however well-written, appear redundant and obsolete.[64] Unlike readers of most books, periodical readers are under no obligation to peruse articles in the order in which they are published. They may go straight to the gossip column, or to a snippet about a sensational murder, entirely bypassing, or only skimming through, the erudite commentary offered by distinguished journalists. Throughout the thesis, I examine how female journalists negotiated these conditions of periodical authorship. Some, like the editors and writers of the *English Woman's Journal,* directly requested readers to promote and advertise their writers.

Although the usage of the term 'journalist' to refer to a contributor to periodicals can be traced as far back as the late seventeenth century, it was only with the dawn of the Victorian Era and the concurrent explosive growth of periodicals, that 'journalism' came to be designated as a professional practice where writers took on distinct, specialized roles as editors, correspondents,

[64] Margaret Beetham, 'Open and Closed: The Periodical as a Publishing Genre', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22 (Fall 1989), 96–100 (p.96).

and reporters.[65] The *Oxford English Dictionary* accredits an 1833 article on French journalism, published in the *Westminster Review* as one of the earliest instances of the word.[66] Indeed, the anonymous writer of the article seizes upon the term as a thing most needful and long-awaited: '"Journalism" is a good name for the thing meant […] A word was sadly wanted. […] The intercommunication of opinion and intelligence, as maintained in England and other countries by means of journals, is too important to pass without a name'.[67]

Yet, this early, enthusiastic approval of *journalism* as a succinct indicator of professional presswork would prove to be premature. Even in the late nineteenth century, practicing journalists themselves struggled to define their work. 'One cannot even define a journalist', commented Arthur Shadwell rather ruefully in the *National Review*.[68] If the term was confined to '"persons engaged in the daily production of a newspaper"', it would include office boys and exclude significant contributors like leader-writers, special correspondents, and critics; if the title was reserved for those who earned their livelihood by writing for the Press, then a 'very large and important class of sub-editors' would be excluded in favour of 'a number of highly doubtful hangers-on who live by supplying still more doubtful paragraphs to the news-agencies'.[69] Various ways of designating those who work in this 'amorphous profession' are considered, but discarded as being either too narrow or too broad, and soon, a frustrated Shadwell proclaims, 'I give it up […] I cannot say what he is'.[70]

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[65] Graham Law, 'Periodicalism', in *The Victorian World*, ed. by Martin Hewitt (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp.537–54 (p.540).

[66] 'Journalism', *OED*, online edition <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101739> [accessed 24 September 2015].

[67] 'Journalism', *Westminster Review*, 18 (January 1833), 195–208 (p.195).

[68] Arthur Shadwell, 'Journalism as a Profession', *National Review*, 31 (August 1898), 845–55 (p.845).

[69] Ibid, p.846.

[70] Ibid., pp.845–46.

While Shadwell's choice of pronoun shows the continuance of the assumption that the professional journalist was male, his inability to define the limits of this profession indicates one of the reasons why so many nineteenth-century women were able to present themselves as professional journalists. I interpret the term 'professional journalist' broadly and discuss women's own contributions to the wide-ranging definitions of professional presswork.

The tendency to regard journalists whose survival did not depend on their earnings as amateurs is particularly marked in critical appraisals of the feminist *English Woman's Journal*.[71] The first chapter of the thesis revises this view by showing that the journal was far more interested in market profits than was hitherto recognized. Drawing on extensive archival research in Girton College, Cambridge, which holds the personal papers of the journal's founders and editors, I show that the *English Woman's Journal* presented its contributors not simply as reformers, but as accomplished professional journalists who could write rigorously and consistently on social and political issues. Offering the first critical study of the full-run of this journal, I show that it foregounded women's political journalism in an unprecedented manner: it brought together in a single periodical, sometimes even in a single issue, articles by pioneering women such as Elizabeth Blackwell (the first woman to attain a medical degree in America), Emily Davies (promoter of higher education for women and one of the founders of Girton College, Cambridge), and Maria Rye (founder of the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society), and underlined women's ability to write on topics ranging from medicine to telegraphy, from

[71] See, for example, Jane Rendall, '"A Moral Engine"? Feminism, Liberalism and the *English Woman's Journal*', in *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800–1914*, ed. by Jane Rendall (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.112–38; Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism 1850–1900* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Pauline Nestor, 'A New Departure in Women's Publishing: *The English Woman's Journal* and *The Victoria Magazine*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 15 (Fall 1982), 93–106.

marriage and divorce to the colonial labour market. The *English Woman's Journal* stressed that its female writers provided unique insights into the 'woman's question', which could not be rivalled by other popular and male-dominated journals.

The second chapter, 'Signature Seriousness: The Woman Writer as a Professional Political Journalist', examines the careers of Eliza Meteyard and Frances Power Cobbe, who earned a substantial portion of their income by writing political articles for non-specialist journals. By looking at Meteyard's articles in the 1840s popular radical journals, I show that she built a formidable reputation as a writer who could address critical social subjects, including tabooed topics like prostitution. Yet, as her applications to the Royal Literary Fund in the early 1850s reveal, she herself associated journalism with undignified hack-work, and hoped to shift entirely to book-writing. I discuss how the mid-century expansion of high-repute periodicals inaugurated a new phase of women's presswork, which is best exemplified by the career of Frances Power Cobbe. Cobbe wrote consistently in prestigious journals, debated spiritedly with celebrity male journalists, and earned a steady middle-class income amidst stiff competition from university-educated men. By tracking her signed articles across periodicals, especially *Fraser's*, I demonstrate that she offered a new model of women's mainstream journalism.

My third chapter, 'Writing from the Field: The Female Foreign Correspondent', considerably revises the assumption, widespread in criticism of Victorian journalism, that the first foreign correspondents were men — that Russell reporting from Crimea, for example, was the first recognized war correspondent. Drawing on extensive research in military periodicals, newspapers, diaries, autobiographies, journals and letters, I paint a very different picture: one where Victorian women posed fierce competition to such male journalists, taking on a range of gruelling field-based assignments, including the dangerous task of war correspondence. Offering

the first critical study of the journalism of Harriet Ward, an army wife who reported on the Seventh Frontier War (1846-47) in South Africa, I show that she capitalized on the unique stylistic and generic features of war reportage in order to present herself as an even more astute observer of war than hardened military men. The chapter also looks at Harriet Martineau, who, as a travelling Irish correspondent for London's *Daily News,* reported on the political and economic state of post-Famine Ireland, showing that women could provide in-depth and extensive ethnographical reportage. I also study Martineau's work as European Correspondent for New York's *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the official weekly newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In this assignment, undertaken from 1859–62, Martineau provided detailed commentary on a range of political issues, including wars in Europe and the colonies, maritime laws, and the American constitution. She also foregrounded the female journalist's international reach and her ability to participate in an important international political struggle against slavery.

The last chapter, entitled 'Writing Women: Fictional Representations of the Presswoman' offers the first systematic examination of novelistic representations of the female journalist from the 1840s to the 1880s. Unlike novels about domesticated women writers, these novels present the female author as working in close proximity with men, often under the gaze of a male editor. They formulate new codes of feminine behaviour in order to make women's co-operative, remunerative work with men in such mixed-gender spaces as newspaper offices seem respectable. These depictions present the female journalist in a positive light, highlighting her commitment to improving the intellectual and cultural standards of her readers through her periodical work. In this, they present a critical alternative to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's famous mid-century portrayal of Aurora Leigh's journalism as denigrating hack-work.[72] The

[72] Liddle, *Dynamics of Genre,* p.14.

thesis will end in the 1880s, 'a decade of institutionalization', when the establishment of institutions like the Society of Authors and the National Association of Journalists in 1884 revived debates about the status of authors.[73] I will conclude my study by noting how these mid-century models of female presswork shaped the practice and discourse of women's journalism in the 1890s.

As the thesis will reveal, the emergence of these 'high-minded' female journalists had a far greater impact on Victorian print culture than has been hitherto recognized. They arrived on the scene at a time when the demand for female suffrage coincided, and shared much common ground, with the advocacy of signed journalism. As Easley has pointed out, while 'the advocates of signature believed that writers would become more honest and socially responsible if they were forced to attach their names to their work' the champions of female suffrage argued, in a parallel mode, that 'the vote would enable their constituencies to express their political viewpoints in more socially responsible ways'.[74] These debates brought renewed attention to questions of individual social responsibility and 'delineated a new kind of subjectivity for the middle-class woman', wherein 'she must have political viewpoints separate from those of the men in her life, perspectives that were developed and refined through education and purposeful reading'.[75] For women like Frances Power Cobbe, who fiercely advanced the demand for female suffrage, signing political articles was both a way of protesting against their political disenfranchisement as well as a means of offering proof of women's fitness to participate in electoral governance. Some, like Barbara Bodichon, Emily Davies and Emily Faithfull, spearheaded changes in women's legal and social status, showing that female journalism could

[73] Peterson, *Becoming a Woman*, p.49.

[74] *First-Person Anonymous*, p.134.

[75] Ibid., p.135.

change the world in concrete ways. Others, who did not individually identify themselves but still marked their political articles as the work of women, also foregrounded women's political acumen in important ways. After all, the demand was for a collective vote for women, under the provisions of a secret ballot. The broader constituency of female political journalists covered by this thesis harnessed this ability to represent women collectively in support of the larger movement for political representation.

Writing at a time when public opinion still weighed heavily against women's participation in political affairs, the 'high-minded' presswomen of mid-Victorian England wrestled with the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the periodical press. Operating largely within the terms of serious, yet polite public discussion, they successfully claimed a place for women in the ranks of professional journalism and paved the way for the rise of the more overtly rebellious 'New Woman' writers of the *fin de siècle*. This thesis will address a range of issues concerning what the practise of professional journalism entailed for the high-minded women journalists of the mid-Victorian era. How did they ensure that women's writings were not treated as unworthy of payment even as they claimed to be driven by higher motives than mere money-making? How did they make up for their lack of a university education and their inability to access male professional networks and clubs? In what ways did they persuade their readers to invest time and money in their writings? How did they convince their editors to entrust them with topics of national and international significance? How did they ensure that the changes in their own perspectives on issues did not diminish their journalistic credibility? By engaging with these and other related questions, this thesis attempts to add to current critical understanding of the wide-ranging and influential presswork of Victorian women.

Presswork for Women: The *English Woman's Journal*

The *English Woman's Journal* (*EWJ*) was launched in March 1858 as a one-shilling monthly dedicated to improving the condition of women in nineteenth-century England. It was particularly concerned with expanding the avenues of remunerative employment for women. Listed as a joint-stock company, the *EWJ* was collectively owned by a group of mid-century feminists.[1] Its principal shareholder, Barbara Bodichon, and its chief editor, Bessie Rayner Parkes, were close friends who, having been born into prominent Unitarian families with a long history in radical politics, had received a far more rigorous education than most contemporary middle-class women and had already published on women's legal and social issues.[2] Bodichon had published the influential political pamphlet *A Brief Summary, in Plain Language, of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women* (1854) and the treatise *Women and Work* (1857); Parkes had written *Remarks on the Education of Girls* (1854) to advocate reforms in women's

[1] Outlining the constituency of the promoters of the *EWJ*, Pam Hirsch notes, 'According to law they needed seven shareholders. Barbara [Bodichon] was the major shareholder with sixty shares (in Nannie's [her sister] name, as married women could not hold property in their own right), Bessie had five shares, Matilda [Hays] had five and Maria Rye had one. Of the three male shareholders, Samuel Courtauld and James Vaughan […] held four shares each, and William Strickland Cookson, a Unitarian lawyer held five. These seven shareholders were the directors of the new company, with Cookson assuming the role of chairman'. *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon 1827–1891: Feminist, Artist and Rebel* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1998), p.187.

[2] Bodichon was the illegitimate daughter of the radical M.P. Benjamin Smith and his partner, Anne Longden. Her father, like her grandfather, the abolitionist M.P. William Smith, was Unitarian. Bessie Parkes was born to the Birmingham lawyer and Unitarian social reformer Joseph Parkes and Elizabeth Rayner Priestley Parkes, the granddaughter of Joseph Priestley. Joanne Shattock, 'Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829–1925)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41193> [accessed 11 January 2015]; Pam Hirsch, 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827–1891)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2755> [accessed 11 January 2015].

education.[3] They had also published articles in liberal journals like the *Birmingham Journal* and *Hastings News*. The *EWJ*'s initial co-editor, Matilda Hays, had translated the works of George Sand into English.[4] As Pam Hirsch has noted, the offices of the journal, housed at 19 Langham Place from late 1859, 'acted as a focus and magnet for several interrelated women's issues', attracting pioneers like Emily Faithfull and Jessie Boucherett who went on to found the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women in 1859 and the Victoria Press in 1860.[5] The constitution of the 'Langham Place Group' and the inauguration of the *EWJ* have been appraised as events that marked the emergence of 'organised feminism' in Britain.[6]

Previous studies of the *EWJ* have highlighted its status as a 'pressure-group periodical […] which virtually brought the British feminist movement into existence in the 1860s'.[7] Within such a framework of analysis, the *EWJ* is perceived as an 'essentially amateur' periodical that reflected 'the attitudes of a unified, culturally-concerned segment of the society'.[8] Even Sarah

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[3] Barbara Bodichon, *A Brief Summary in Plain Language, of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women* (London: John Chapman, 1854); *Women and Work* (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 1857); Bessie Rayner Parkes, *Remarks on the Education of Girls* (London: Chapman, 1854).

[4] *The Works of George Sand*, trans. by Matilda Hays, 6 vols (London: E. Churton, 1847).

[5] *Barbara Bodichon*, p.191.

[6] Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.149.

[7] Brian Harrison, 'Press and Pressure Group in Modern Britain', in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, ed. by Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, pp.261–95 (p.282). For other discussions of the *EWJ*'s role within Victorian feminist discourse, see Jane Rendall, '"A Moral Engine", pp.112–38; Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism*; Philippa Levine, '"The Humanising Influence of Five O'Clock Tea": Victorian Feminist Periodicals', *Victorian Studies*, 33 (Winter 1990), 293–306; Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists*; Pauline Nestor, 'A New Departure in Women's Publishing'; Fraser, Green, and Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*.

[8] Sheila R. Herstein, '*The English Woman's Journal* and the Langham Place Circle: A Feminist Forum and Its Women Editors', in *Innovators and Preachers: The Role of the Editor in Victorian England*, ed. by Joel H. Weiner (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp.61–76 (p.62).

Dredge and Janice Schroeder, who have studied how the *EWJ* 'drew itself further into the mainstream' by engaging in debate with influential mid-century journals like the *National Review* and the *Saturday Review*, have described it largely as a cash-strapped reform publication that strove valiantly to capture a foothold in the mid-century journalistic field, rather than as a professional periodical in its own right.[9] This chapter revises this view by showing that the *EWJ*, in fact, presented itself as a model of women's high-minded professional journalism and claimed a central position in the mid-century periodicals market. Whereas previous scholars have focussed on articles by particular individuals or on specific topics, I offer the first in-depth study of the journal as a whole. By paying close attention to a largely ignored aspect of the journal — its unique structure — I demonstrate that the journal's dedicated coverage of women's issues, unparalleled by any other journal at the time, enabled it to present itself as an utterly novel publication well-worth the reader's time and money.[10] As a journal devoted to the promotion of paid work for women, the *EWJ* played a critical role in shaping the mid-century discourse of female professional authorship, especially journalism. By focusing on both the self-presentation of the *EWJ* as well as its representation of female periodical writers, this chapter will show that this pioneering feminist magazine offered an important mid-century model of women's social

[9] Sarah Dredge, 'Opportunism and Accommodation: The *English Woman's Journal* and the British Mid-Nineteenth-Century Women's Movement', *Women's Studies*, 34 (March 2005), 133–57 (p.137); Janice Schroeder, '"Better Arguments": The *English Woman's Journal* and the Game of Public Opinion', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 35 (Fall 2002), 243–71.

[10] Unlike *Eliza Cook's Journal* and the *Howitt's Journal*, which published feminist prose along with fiction and articles unrelated to the 'Woman Question', the *English Woman's Journal* was particularly devoted to covering the debates of mid-century feminism. Unlike a campaign journal such as the *Governess*, which focused on a particular line of female employment, the *English Woman's Journal* discussed a wide range of women's issues.

and political journalism. I shall begin this chapter by outlining the practice of radical political journalism by early nineteenth-century women and discussing how the *EWJ* differed from them.

Starting Anew: The Emergence of Mid-Century Feminist Journalism

As Barbara Taylor, Helen Rogers and Kathryn Gleadle have shown, 'feminism was alive and kicking in early nineteenth-century Britain'.[11] Women participated in a wide range of radical movements in the 1830s and 40s and made effective use of the periodical press to propagate their ideas, setting new models of female journalism. The Owenite Anna Wheeler, for example, translated the work of the French Saint-Simonian feminists for the Owenite press, published articles promoting women's rights in Owenite newspapers, and wrote essays in Co-operative journals under the pseudonym 'Vlasta' indicting the social systems that perpetuated the subjection of women.[12] The freethinker Eliza Sharples, who, during Richard Carlile's imprisonment, worked as chief lecturer at his Rotunda and entered a free-love union with him, edited a feminist weekly dedicated to the women of England, entitled *The Isis*.[13] Described by Gleadle as the 'first "feminist" journal to be edited by a woman', *The Isis* championed female education and emancipation.[14] Though Sharples' *Isis* articles, which largely consisted of the lectures she delivered to fill the lacunae 'made in the philosophical business of the Rotunda, by the imprisonment of Messrs. Carlile and Taylor', were earlier thought to have been composed by

[11] Kathryn Gleadle, *Radical Writing on Women, 1800–1850: An Anthology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.1; Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Virago Press, 1983); Rogers, *Women and the People*.

[12] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.60; Dolores Dooley, 'Anna Wheeler (c. 1785–1848)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46577> [accessed 1 July 2015].

[13] Gleadle, *Radical Writing*, p.134; Ian McCalman, 'Females, Feminism and Free Love in an Early Nineteenth Century Radical Movement', *Labour History*, 38 (May 1980), 1–25 (pp.19–20).

[14] Gleadle, *Radical Writing*, p.2.

Carlile, closer reading of these articles by Rogers has indicated that Sharples co-authored them.[15] The radical unitarian circles in London included prominent female journalists like Harriet Martineau and Anna Jameson, and female editors like Eliza Cook and Mary Howitt, whose cheap and popular journals consistently pressed for a range of women's issues, and also provided a platform for feminist journalists like Eliza Meteyard.[16] Prominent female Chartists like Mrs. Lapland, the chairwoman of the Women's Political Union (founded as an auxiliary of the male Chartist Birmingham Political Union), did not write for the press, but their speeches emphasizing women's contribution to political reform, were published in chartist periodicals like the *Birmingham Journal*.[17]

Although the radical female journalists of the 1830s and 40s differed widely in their visions of reform, they nevertheless drew on each other's language and imagery to describe women's public and political roles. In the early 1840s, as Rogers has observed, Susannah Inge, the secretary of the London-based Female Chartist Association, emphasized women's potential for political leadership by using the 'very same' image of a'woman steering the boat of liberty through stormy waters' that had been used by Eliza Sharples in 1832, though Sharples herself supported an individualistic model of social reformation and was doubtful of the collective forms

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[15] [Eliza Sharples] 'The Preface', *The Isis*, 1 (February 1832), v–vi (p.v); Rogers, *Women and the People*, p.52.

[16] Rogers, *Women and the People*, pp.126, 131-32. Meteyard's career is discussed as an example of women's political journalism in the next chapter. The term *radical unitarians* is used by Kathryn Gleadle to refer to a network of radical reformers that revolved around, and was greatly influenced by, the ministry of William Johnson Fox at South Place Chapel. They 'were inspired by the political and intellectual basis of Unitarianism, but wary of its social conservatism'. Gleadle, *Radical Writing*, p.6. For an extended discussion of this group, see Gleadle, *The Early Feminists.* I use the term *radical unitarians* in this sense throughout the thesis, and follow Gleadle in not capitalising *unitarian* in this phrase, in order to distinguish it from mainstream Unitarianism.

[17] Rogers, *Women and the People*, p.87, 117 n 25. The female Chartist speakers, unlike most of the above-mentioned women, belonged to the working class.

of social action endorsed by the Owenites and Chartists.[18] Similarly, drawing on the rhetoric used by Joanna Southcott, a self-styled working-class female prophet, the Owenite Catherine Barmby wrote a series of articles on women's issues under the pseudonym 'Kate' in the radical newspaper, the *New Moral World*, in which she often evoked the figure of the female messiah.[19] Southcott, who claimed to be pregnant with the new messiah, died in 1814, following a delusionary delivery, and the millenarian Southcottian movement led by her followers was 'not inherently radical', but its vision of women's redemptive role was used by both male and female socialist journalists.[20]

Since the above-mentioned movements shared certain common feminist concerns, the work of radical female journalists was published in a range of journals which extended their influence well beyond the specific groups with which they identified. For example, the Owenite press often reprinted the work of female radical unitarians like Harriet Martineau, Mary Grimstone and Anna Jameson, albeit with editorial commentary that placed it within an Owenite context.[21] Occasionally, a common commitment to women's issues on the part of editors and female journalists helped to override other differences. For example, although the freethinking feminist Sophia Dobson Collet (who would go on to associate closely with leading Victorian feminists like Frances Power Cobbe) disagreed with the secularist George Jacob Holyoake on religious issues, she published a number of articles on women's rights in his periodical the

[18] *Women and the People*, pp.111, 63.

[19] Barbara Taylor, 'Catherine Isabella Barmby (1816/17–1853)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41339> [accessed 1 July 2015].

[20] Gleadle, *Radical Writing*, p.215. For how the Southcottian vision of the female redeemer influenced the male Owenite journalist, James Smith, see, Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.167–68.

[21] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem,* p.62.

Reasoner, under the pseudonym, 'Panthea', and even went on to publish, with her own money, an appraisal of his life and work.[22]

Rogers has persuasively demonstrated that radical women in the nineteenth-century 'did not always, or only, identify themselves as "women"'; 'motivated by a fervent commitment to the rights of "the People"', they conceptualized women's issues as part of larger 'People's' movements.[23] However, despite their attempts to appropriate a populist idiom, their authority as women journalists was restricted, partly by the fragmentary and uneven accommodation of women and women's issues within these dissenting and socialist movements. Feminist discussion within Chartist, Owenite and Carlilean circles, as Gleadle and Taylor have shown, tended to be highly diffused and 'male agendas […] could be widely at variance with the needs and desires of female activists'.[24] The use of a pseudonym by radical female journalists like Catherine Barmby, Anna Wheeler and Sophia Collet suggests that they felt some anxiety about addressing the mixed-gendered audience of these reform journals.

In fact, sensing the need for a magazine specifically dedicated to women's issues, Barmby made several attempts in the 1840s to found a feminist journal but could not succeed, partly due to ill-health.[25] Her friend, the radical editor George Jacob Holyoake, also wrote articles promoting the idea of a feminist journal, which he saw as one of the standard 'constitutional modes of obtaining redress' that women must utilize in order to successfully

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[22] Kathryn Gleadle, 'Sophia Dobson Collet (1822–1894)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41272> [accessed 1 July 2015].

[23] *Women and the People*, pp.1–2.

[24] Gleadle, *Radical Writing*, p.3.

[25] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.282; Barbara Taylor, 'Catherine Isabella Barmby (1816/17–1853)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41339> [accessed 1 July 2015].

achieve political rights.[26] Holyoake states that such a journal would not only serve as a mouthpiece for women's political demands but also help women hone their ability to engage in serious public discussion:

> We ought to have a Woman's Journal—edited by women, contributed to by women, and in every sense an exponent of womanly thought and advocate of women's rights. […] When women begin to […] discuss their own questions in public—there will be blunderings committed, weaknesses displayed, exaggerations perpetrated ; but let them remember that men blundered, erred, and exaggerated, times without number, before they arrived at their present facility. Failure must be ventured or efficiency will never be won.[27]

Holyoake's endorsement of a feminist journal, though enthusiastic, is injudicious. Taking little cognizance of the practical difficulties that women might face in gathering the intellectual and financial resources needed to start a periodical, he attributes the absence of a feminist journal to women's own lack of an '*esprit de corps*'.[28] He recommends that women's rights advocates simply plunge into print and learn the lessons of political journalism on the job, failing to acknowledge that committing 'blunders' in public could permanently damage women writers' personal reputation and political credibility.[29]

In the 1830s, Eliza Sharples had attempted to present herself as a leader and representative of the working classes but failed, partly because she had misguidedly based her

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[26] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem,* pp.282–83. G.J.H. [George Holyoake], 'Hints to the Advocates on the Rights of Women', *The Reasoner*, 3, no. 63 (1847), 429–37 (p.434). This copy of *The Reasoner*, available through google books, is not individually dated. Only volume and number are listed.

[27] Ibid., p.435.

[28] Ibid., p.433.

[29] Ibid., p.435.

own authority on her respectable middle-class origins.[30] Her free-love liason with Carlile, which drew severe attacks from anti-freethought Christians, also curtailed her journalistic reach.[31] Even the far less iconoclastic Harriet Martineau was caricatured in the 1830s, as noted earlier, for writing on serious, masculine subjects like social reform and political economy.[32] Although other middle-class radical female journalists and editors, like Eliza Cook and Mary Howitt, had managed to evade social censure, their success derived partly from disavowing overtly feminist editorial personae. While Howitt foregrounded her marital status, Cook, punning on her name, likened her editorial work to cooking a 'plain feast[…] wholesome and relishing' for 'a host of friends'.[33] Moreover, the collapse of the Chartist and Owenite movements in the 1840s and the failure of the radical unitarian magazines of popular progress in the late 1840s and early 1850s, demonstrate the difficulty of making a reform journal financially sustainable. It is not surprising, therefore, that a feminist journal was not inaugurated either by Barmby, or indeed by any of the women whom Holyoake personally approached for this purpose at that time. Interestingly, amongst those who did not act on Holyoake's advice were the very women who would ultimately launch the pioneering feminist *EWJ,* Bessie Rayner Parkes and Barbara Bodichon.[34]

In the 1840s, Parkes and Bodichon were cutting their journalistic teeth on local newspapers and radical journals. They published poems and articles in the *Hastings and St.*

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[30] Rogers, *Women and the People,* pp.62–63.

[31] Ibid. p.65.

[32] [William Maginn], 'Miss Harriet Martineau'.

[33] Eliza Cook, 'A Word to My Readers', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 1 (5 May 1849), 1 (p.1).

[34] Holyoake notes in this autobiography that previous to writing his articles, he spoke with Bessie Rayner Parkes, Barbara Bodichon, Emelie Venturi, Sophia Collet, Harriet Martineau and 'other ladies interested in the public action of women', and that none thought his suggestions were 'practicable'. George Jacob Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, 6th edn, 2 vols (London: Fisher Unwin, 1900), p.225.

Leonard News and the *Birmingham Journal*. The latter was a Chartist paper that had been owned by Bessie's father, the liberal M.P. Joseph Parkes till 1844.[35] In 1848, Parkes sent a series of letters to Bodichon, advising her on such practical journalistic affairs as signing her postal package 'on the outside' while sending articles to Frederick Feeney, the new proprietor of the *Birmingham Journal*.[36] Parkes also provides detailed feedback on a draft of Bodichon's article, suggesting that words like '"abominable"' might be too 'strong […] for the public press', and even noting a possible proofing error.[37] They evidently wanted to come across as thorough professionals, rather than as women who simply tried to publish by using their familial connections to the radical circles.

In the 1850s, Parkes and Bodichon also published in a Glasgow-based radical fortnightly newspaper called the *Waverley Journal*. Founded in 1856, this journal supported the nascent mid-century women's movement that had sprung up from the campaign for married women's property rights. The *Waverley* not only carried articles by Parkes and Bodichon but also enabled them to acquire new feminist recruits such as fellow contributor Isabella Craig. In 1857, Parkes assumed editorship of the *Waverley*. Her extant correspondence with George Holyoake, starting shortly before her editorship of the *Waverley* and ending shortly after the founding of the *EWJ*, shows Parkes's remarkable awareness of the challenges of starting a feminist journal.

Parkes wrote to Holyoake in 1857, asking him if his journal, *The Reasoner*, could carry her translation of the French feminist Jenny D' Hericourt's polemical rebuttal to the sexist essays

[35] 'Birmingham Journal (1825–1869)', *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, p.56.

[36] Bessie Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 22 May 1848, Cambridge, Girton College Archive, Personal Papers of Bessie Rayner Parkes, GCPP Parkes 5/24.

[37] Bessie Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 23 May 1848, GCPP Parkes 5/25.

of Proudhon.[38] However, she also emphasized that Holyoake must 'carefully' suppress 'all mention of me as Translator', as I have quite enough to bear of my own contests, without adopting those of other people!'.[39] While keen to use *The Reasoner* to spread French feminist ideas amongst the English and to develop transnational feminist networks (she urges Holyoake to send Madame D' Hericourt a copy of her translation, should he decide to publish it, so as to facilitate the exchange of 'more newspapers and periodicals with the French Liberals'), Parkes is also careful not get drawn, by association, into the problems of Holyoake's free-thinking cause.[40]

Breaking New Ground: The 'Specialité' of the *English Woman's Journal*

Even in 1857, while still editing the *Waverley*, Parkes was thinking of how best she could turn it into a journal where 'everything connected with professional life for women' would be dealt with 'unsparingly', to make it more of a mouthpiece for women's reforms than it had been under the management of former female editor Eleanor Duckworth.[41] Parkes's promotion of remunerative work for women was part of a wider feminist advocacy of paid work as the only means of ensuring that single women, who far outnumbered their male counterparts at mid-century, were spared destitution for want of a husband. The issue of remunerative labour was a nodal point for a range of mid-century feminist campaigns. It not only carried forward the concern for women's economic rights, which had been at the heart of the 1856 campaign for a married woman's right to own property, but also underpinned demands for revising women's

[38] Bessie Parkes to George Holyoake, 30 January 1857, Manchester, National Co-Operative Archive, Personal Papers of George Jacob Holyoake (GJH), 888.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Bessie Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 14 May 1857, GCPP Parkes 5/84. Biographical information about Eleanor Duckworth is scarce.

education to increase their employment opportunities, for the admission of women to hitherto male-dominated professions, and for rethinking women's domestic and social roles more generally. Thus, in vowing to treat the issue of women's work 'unsparingly', Parkes was proposing to turn the *Waverley* into a journal that would reflect the interrelatedness of the various issues raised by the mid-century women's movement.

Parkes considered announcing the journal's special support for women's reforms by adding the subtitle, 'Conducted by Women', but decided against it.[42] Writing in support of Parkes's decision, her friend Marian Evans, drew on her experience as assistant editor of the *Westminster Review* to state that while 'every new or renovated periodical should have a specialité — do something not yet done, fill up a gap, and so give people a motive for taking it', she did not 'at all like the specialité' suggested by Parkes's proposed subtitle.[43] Solveig Robinson and Janice Schroeder have seen Eliot's comment as a warning against assigning a female signature to the *Waverley* lest it be dismissed, as women's writing often was, as trivial and amateur.[44] By contrast, Pauline Nestor has viewed Eliot's comment as cautioning Parkes from foregrounding the *Waverley*'s feminist agenda lest she alienate potential readers by seeming to challenge traditional gender roles too brazenly.[45] Apart from overstating Eliot's

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[42] Copies of the *Waverley* under Parkes's editorship have not been found, and hence it is difficult to ascertain whether the journal ever carried this masthead. George Eliot's remark, that she was 'very glad' that Parkes was 'going to do away with it' suggests that the title had been considered seriously (if not briefly tried in print), and then dismissed. George Eliot to Bessie Parkes, 1 September 1857, *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954–78), II (1954), p.379.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Solveig Robinson, '"Amazed at Our Success": The Langham Place Editors and the Emergence of a Feminist Critical Tradition', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 29 (Summer 1996), 159–72 (p.159); Janice Schroeder, '"Better Arguments"', p.254.

[45] 'A New Departure', pp.98; 105 n 25.

misgivings about women writing in their own names as well as her discomfort with the women's movement, such analyses miss the main editorial issue that is at the heart of Parkes and Eliot's correspondence: how best to distinguish a new journal from the existing pool of periodicals, and whether female editorship was itself an apt indicator of a distinctly feminist journal. [46] Radical magazines of popular progress like *Eliza Cook's Journal* and *Howitt's Journal* (which carried the names of both William and Mary Howitt on its cover) had already foregrounded female editorship. Even fashion magazines that had little to do with the women's movement had been edited by women (or carried female editorial personae).[47] Given that the marked feminist agenda of the renewed *Waverley* was its most obvious novel contribution to the mid-century press, it seems that Eliot was in fact, advising Parkes to advertise rather than conceal this novelty.

For Eliot, novelty did not simply make literary work commercially viable. It was the main attribute that distinguished productive and socially-committed authors from hack-writers, who carried on authorship on 'the principle of the gin-palace', feeding off readerly addiction to

[46] Eliot did not think that all women who wrote in their own names were subjected to damning chivalry by male reviewers. For example, she stated that truly gifted writers like Harriet Martineau and Mrs. Gaskell had been treated 'as cavalierly' by critics ' as if they had been men'. [George Eliot], 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists', *Westminster Review*, 66 (October 1856), 442–61 (p.460). As various critics have demonstrated, her own decision to write under a pseudonym was not entirely due to her gender, being driven partly by the social scandal surrounding her unmarried cohabitation with George Henry Lewes. The anonymity of her own assistant editorship of the *Westminster Review* was partly necessitated by the male editorial voice of the journal. Though Eliot herself would have been acutely aware of the authority commanded by such a masculine persona, she would hardly have recommended that a similarly male voice be adopted for a journal dedicated to women's issues. Nowhere in her correspondence with Parkes does she explicitly recommend concealing the female authorship of the *Waverley*. Moreover, as Gillian Beer has shown, Eliot's own writing 'engaged with the vocabulary and the ideas of the women's movement' (p.180). *George Eliot* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1986).

[47] Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, pp.37–39.

stale ideas.[48] Eliot notes that though the market encouraged authors to simply rehash existing literary productions, authors themselves could, and should, hold themselves to a higher standard and only publish new literary work. Only then could authors stem the degeneration of public intellect and taste by an endless circulation of unoriginal writing, and make the literary trade a site of 'lawful' exchange, where an author gets 'as good a price as he honourably can for the best work he is capable of'.[49] As Catherine Gallagher has observed, for Eliot, such high-minded authorship 'must break with the commercial literary economy and yet remain an economy, a sphere of exchange'.[50] Unsurprisingly, Eliot held her friend's journal to this high moral standard of authorship and wanted the *Waverley* to attract readers by offering them something new. Parkes herself wanted to produce nothing less than a pioneering feminist publication. But having no ownership over the *Waverley*, her ability to transform it was severely constrained. As she told Bodichon, the *Waverley* is 'ours for all practical purposes, not for propagandist purposes […] because it is not our property, to risk'.[51] High-minded innovative feminist journalism could not be undertaken without incurring financial risk.

Parkes was well aware that for all its novelty, the *EWJ*'s demands for women's social and economic status made it a difficult journal to sell. Some months before the *EWJ* was founded, Parkes had written to Bodichon that she was 'more afraid of Woman's Rights than ever'.[52] This

[48] George Eliot, 'Authorship', in *Essays and Leaves from a Note-Book* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1884), pp.353–62 (p.359).

[49] Ibid.

[50] Catherine Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*: The Prostitute and the Jewish Question', in *Sex, Politics, and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp.39– 62 (p.47).

[51] Bessie Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 14 May 14 1857, GCPP Parkes 5/84.

[52] Bessie Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 6 December 1857, GCPP Parkes 5/86.

apprehension came from a sense that, though there was an 'immense feeling' in favour of helping destitute middle-class women, British public opinion was largely resistant to rethinking the principles of domestic and social life so as to encourage paid work for women.[53] Carefully weighing their options, Parkes and Bodichon consulted the solicitor George Hastings, and on his advice, abandoned their initial plans of buying the *Waverley*. They briefly considered purchasing the title and copyright of the feminist-sounding *Englishwoman's Review*, a paper edited by the *Waverley*'s former editor Eleanor Duckworth.[54] Parkes shrewdly requested that Holyoake 'find out privately' if 'the ER is to be had reasonably', since 'it wd only raise the price for me to enquire'.[55] On learning that the journal was embroiled in certain legal and financial entanglements, Parkes and her colleagues decided to steer clear of the journal and launched a brand new feminist magazine, the *EWJ*.[56] As is evident from the above, the *EWJ* was never envisioned as a purely philanthropic amateur publication. It was launched as a high-minded, yet commercially sound publication. Its female editors and authors were particularly careful to appear not as novices or amateurs, but as serious social and political journalists.

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Duckworth's *The English Woman's Review of Social Progress, Literature and Art* is not to be confused with the *Englishwoman's Review* founded in 1866 and edited by Jessie Boucherett. As Kathryn Ledbetter has noted, though Duckworth stated that she had no wish to 'prate of "woman's rights"', she reinterpreted traditional ideas of the separate spheres to argue that professional work such as nursing and authorship, in being primarily aimed at social service, were extensions of women's domestic roles as caregivers and helpmates to men and could thus be respectably undertaken by them. *British Victorian Women's Periodicals: Beauty, Civilization and Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.34–35.

[55] Bessie Parkes to George Holyoake, 15 December 1857, GJH, 971.

[56] The above letter, GJH 971, has another letter, from one 'A.H', appended to it. 'A.H.' writes that though there was a 'dispute just now with two or three persons as to the proprietorship of the paper', the copyright was not likely to sell for much after the dispute was settled. GJH, 971.

Novel Networks: The Structural Advantages of a Feminist Journal

The *EWJ* reproduced what Beetham and Boardman call the 'characteristic elements of that kind of magazine which addressed women', including general articles, fiction, poetry, biography, reviews, advice columns, readers' letters, and snippets of news.[57] Unlike broadly liberal drawing-room journals such as the *Ladies' Cabinet* or general illustrated magazines such as the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, which published a few articles on women's political and social issues, the *EWJ's* feminist politics suffused its contents. The seventy two pages of each issue of the *EWJ* brought together speeches on women's employment, reports on the working of the 1857 divorce law, fiction, correspondence between readers on the above issues, notices of important political developments around the world, and reviews of books recently published. Conventionally feminine topics such as women's dresses were discussed in relation to the abysmal work conditions of seamstresses.[58] Even those sections that were not overtly feminist, such as its short stories, poems, or records of recent events, were presented in light of its calls for reform.

Like any other periodical, the *EWJ* could either be read piecemeal or as a whole. While either approach would construct the meaning of the journal differently, the novelty of the *EWJ* lay in making the interrelatedness of the women's movement an inherent part of its message. For example, even if the reader of the first volume were to turn directly to 'Bradshaw the Betrayer', a short story about a male traveller mislead by George Bradshaw's *Continental Railway Guide*, he/she would have to flip through, however cursorily or mechanically, articles that were overtly

[57] *Victorian Women's Magazines: An Anthology*, ed. by Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.5.

[58] 'Warehouse Seamstresses', *EWJ*, 3 (May 1859), 164–71.

feminist.[59] The first page of 'Bradshaw the Betrayer' also included the conclusion of a biographical sketch which celebrated the public vocation of the female Methodist preacher Mary Bosanquet. This placement of an article that encouraged women's participation in the public sphere above 'Bradshaw the Betrayer' made it impossible for the reader to stay oblivious to debates about women's work. Moreover, the story's named author, Amelia B. Edwards, subverted assumptions that women writers were unable to speak of anything but domestic matters by telling a travel story through a first-person male narrator. The radical impulse behind Edwards's signature was more likely to get noticed in the explicitly feminist *EWJ* than in other women's magazines.

The journal stressed its special ability to portray the interrelatedness of the various issues addressed by cross-referencing individual essays. An article published in March 1862 entitled 'A Physician's Memoranda: By a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians', containing simple do-it-yourself chemical experiments by which housewives could keep their homes free of hazardous substances like spurious paraffin, was appended with an editorial note referencing 'Emerald Green', an essay published in July 1861 about the deleterious effects of arsenic-coated artificial flowers on female workers.[60] This editorial note framed the two articles as continuous despite their different subject matter and tone as well as their separation by almost a year's time. It implied that the health hazards involved in the unscrupulous manufacture of domestic objects, which the 'Emerald Green' article had outlined through an anecdotal report, were now being revisited through the scientific perspective of 'A Physician's Memoranda'.

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[59] Amelia B. Edwards, 'Bradshaw the Betrayer', *EWJ*, 1(March 1858), 36–56.

[60] 'A Physician's Memoranda: By a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians', *EWJ*, 9 (March 1862), 45–51; M.N. [unidentified], 'Emerald Green', *EWJ*, 7 (July 1861), 308–14.

The editors suggested that middle-class women should be more vigilant about what they bought for their homes in order to safeguard their own families and the health and well-being of destitute flower-makers, who were forced to produce whatever the market demanded. They closely linked the journal's appeal to middle-class women as consumers to its demand for better work conditions and alternative employment opportunities for all working women. By including articles about destitute female workers, they underlined that the *EWJ* was not indifferent to the plight of working-class women despite being produced by and for literate middle-class women.

While the *EWJ*, like other magazines, carried reader correspondence, some of the letters published in this section, 'Open Council', seem strikingly out of place. They appear without the characteristic address to the editors or references to articles in the magazine. Like essays, they make independent arguments. A representative example is a letter entitled 'Women and Work', which radically unsettled the generic difference between correspondence, fiction, and theoretical non-fiction.[61] It takes its title and theoretical arguments in support of women's work from Barbara Bodichon's 1857 article. The writer recounts her experiences at a women's party where Bodichon's pamphlet had been discussed. She states that some of the women had expressed doubts about whether it was possible, and suitable, for women to take on physically strenuous work. She claims that she had affirmed women's ability to do so by reading an excerpt from Frederika Bremer's book, *Life in Dalecarlia* (1845), about Fraulein Lotte.[62] Lotte, an impoverished single gentlewoman, becomes a successful farmer and uplifts her family's fortunes

[61] 'Women and Work', *EWJ*, 1 (May 1858), 209–13.

[62] Frederika Bremer (1801-1865) was a nineteenth-century Swedish writer. Her novels advanced a strong case in favour of single women's right to undertake public work. *Life in Dalecarlia* (1845) was translated into English by William Howitt. Frederika Bremer, *Life in Dalecarlia: The Parsonage of Mora*, trans. by William Howitt (London: Chapman and Hall, 1845). Helena Forsås-Scott, *Swedish Women's Writing 1850-1995* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), pp.34–51.

without compromising her respectability. The *EWJ*'s correspondent reproduces the above extract from Bremer's book in her letter and presents Lotte as a 'model for young ladies' in England.[63] The placement of the above piece in the correspondent's section enhances the *EWJ*'s reformist image by suggesting that it was more concerned with covering topics that were useful to the improvement of women's lives than in adhering to the usual periodical categorization of content.

In framing the *EWJ* as a women's reform magazine, the editors also contested the standard definition of periodical novelty as the articulation of new ideas. As Parkes noted in the conclusion of her 1859 essay, 'What Can Educated Women Do?', even articles that merely repeated what 'has all been said over and over again in the last twenty years' would have the novel effect of furthering social change.[64]A 'new range of readers' would be won over by 'systematically urging these things in a monthly periodical'.[65] When assessing the performance of the journal retrospectively in 1864, Parkes reasserted her conviction of the value of consistent, even repetitive, writing. She noted that such repetition was inherently creative in imagining a better world and encouraged others to work towards this goal: 'It is not this or that number of a magazine, this or that article from a given pen, which does the work; it is partly the effect of repetition--line upon line--and partly the knowledge that there is in the world a distinct embodiment of certain principles'.[66]

In the 1850s and 60s, gender figured prominently in social and political news, and commenting on gender issues became a means by which periodicals signalled their 'interest in

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[63] Ibid., p.213.

[64] [Bessie Rayner Parkes], 'What Can Educated Women Do?', *EWJ*, 4 (December 1859), 217–27 (p.226). Though published anonymously, this article has been identified as Parkes's by Lacey. *Barbara Bodichon,* p.150.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Bessie Rayner Parkes, 'The Use of a Special Periodical', *The Alexandra Magazine & English Woman's Journal*, 1 (August 1864), 257–63 (p.258).

the topical', reinforced their identity as 'politically progressive or conservative', and established their 'position in the market'.[67] If the *EWJ* was to reform contemporary public opinion successfully, it had to compete with mainstream periodicals which also wrote on women's issues. The single surviving issue of the *English Woman's Journal Advertiser*, issued roughly after the first six months of the journal's founding, strikingly demonstrates that the journal's commitment to social reform was also its primary sales pitch.[68] An editorial note to the readers printed on its first page stated, 'this Journal cannot rival amusing periodicals in its circulation, neither, being serious in its character, can it rely upon that principle of cheapness, which might otherwise ensure a large trade sale'.[69] Claiming that the journal was unpopular due to its principled and consistent airing of significant social problems, the editors seek the 'unrelaxing exertions' of its subscribers towards ensuring 'its continued prosperity'; they call on readers, particularly those living outside London, 'to make the Journal known as widely as possible in the towns where they reside'.[70] The reader was thus invited to emulate the editors of the journal under whose name the advertisement appeared in order to spread the word and capture the market.

In being collectively written and edited by women, the *EWJ* could claim to speak with greater authority and authenticity on women's issues than other journals. However, in making the writings of the first organized feminist group available in a consolidated manner, the *EWJ* made both the feminists associated with it, and their many causes, particularly vulnerable to

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[67] Schroeder, '"Better Arguments"', p.255; Brake, 'The *Westminster* and Gender at Mid-Century'.

[68] 'A Few Words to Our Friends and Subscribers', *The English Woman's Journal Advertiser,* The Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition Online <http://www.ncse.ac.uk/index.html> [accessed 15 July 2015].

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

attack from opponents of the mid-century feminist movement. Even slight errors in their arguments could be seized upon as evidence of women's inherent inability to remark cogently on serious political issues or to initiate responsible public action. Moreover, for supporting the expansion of women's remunerative occupations, the writers of the *EWJ* could be branded as too unfeminine to deserve a hearing as representatives of women. Within a few months of entering the periodicals market, the *EWJ* was attacked on precisely these grounds; through its innovative responses to these attacks and show of collective strength, the *EWJ* claimed a position of journalistic authority for the mid-century feminists.[71]

Holding Their Own: The *English Woman's Journal*'s Survival Strategies

On 10 April 1858, the *Saturday Review* published a scathing review of the very first issue of the *EWJ*, taking the feminists to task over what it saw as their inaccurate grasp of political economy.[72] Apart from dismissing the *EWJ*'s fiction as 'rather stupid', and its 'disquisitions on political subjects' as 'very ordinary', the *Saturday Review* argued that the *EWJ*'s demand for expanding women's employment opportunities betrayed their ignorance of the labour market and the basic principles of political economy, and that an increase in paid female labourers would result in a 'a very great lowering of wages and salaries'.[73] By the mid-nineteenth century, as Sarah Dredge has observed, the male-dominated discipline of political economy was 'an established Victorian institution' which 'fixed the terms for any proposed social transformation', and in order to demand a change in the social position of women, the *EWJ* had to prove women's

[71] In her article, 'Better Arguments', Janice Schroeder has discussed some of the articles and letters examined in the ensuing section. However, she focuses on the tone and manner assumed by the *EWJ* rather than on how it presented itself as the preeminent journal on women's issues.

[72] 'The English Woman's Journal', *Saturday Review*, 5 (10 April 1858), 369–70.

[73] Ibid., p.369.

ability to participate in this powerful discourse.[74] The *EWJ* promptly published a rebuttal in which it put down the *Saturday Review*'s cutting description of its fiction and political writing to a mere difference in taste; and proceeded 'to meet our critic even upon the forbidden ground of political economy'.[75]

Challenging the *Saturday Review's* contention that women had already entered all lines of work suited to them, it pointed out that although women were perfectly capable of working as clerks, physicians, proctors and undertaking 'innumerable' other employments, they were unfairly excluded from these by existing 'custom and prejudice'.[76] They underlined that female labour was a critical and much-misunderstood aspect of political economy and stated that they were 'too good political economists' to assume beforehand, 'like our critic, […] that the world wants but one kind of worker, and [to] determine to supply no other'.[77] As experts on the various adverse social, financial, and political consequences of restricted female labour, they claimed to bring a far more nuanced perspective to the prestigious discourse of political economy than competitors like the *Saturday Review*.

However, this position was not readily conceded to the *EWJ*. Even the *National Review*, a Unitarian quarterly that was more sympathetic to reforms in women's education and employment than the overtly conservative *Saturday Review*, published scathing reviews of its reform agenda. The editors of the recently launched *National Review* were fully aware of the topical relevance of women's issues, and commissioned one of their most trusted journalists,

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[74] 'Opportunism and Accommodation', p.137.

[75] '"The Saturday Review" and the "English Woman's Journal": The Reviewer Reviewed', *EWJ*, 1 (May 1858), 201–04 (p.202).

[76] Ibid., p.204.

[77] Ibid.

William Caldwell Roscoe, to review a series of mid-century feminist writings including Bessie Rayner Parkes's *Remarks on the Education of Women* and the *EWJ*.[78]

In his article, published in October 1858, Roscoe berated the mid-century feminists as 'modern Amazons', unmarried man-haters whose demands that the 'arrangements of society' be 'upset and remodelled' were dangerous for society and unrepresentative of the majority of women.[79] Following Bessie Parkes's advice that 'all young women should be taught every thing, and […] immediately', he argued, would only expose women to knowledge that was inappropriate for their age and sex.[80] He recommended, instead, that women's education be altered only slightly so that women could become better wives, and if single, become capable of earning their livelihood without turning unfeminine.[81] Presenting the unmarried status of the *EWJ* women as a sign of their aberration from normative womanhood, he noted, 'it should be remembered that of women these are the least truly women, and that it is most misleading to assume them [*sic*] as representatives of their sex'.[82] So as not to be perceived as a backward-looking conservative, Roscoe admitted to the need for moderate reform in women's work. Although maintaining that 'many phases of the life of industry' were 'totally unfitted for women', he held 'that the number of unmarried women in modern society requires a wider field of industry than the middle classes at least have hitherto had opened to them'.[83] The need of the hour, he proclaimed, was 'a nice discrimination and cautious judgment to select those in which she [woman] is most competent to succeed, and which are most in consonance with her nature as

[78] Schroeder, '"Better Arguments"', pp.251–52. The *National Review* was launched in 1855.

[79] [William Caldwell Roscoe], 'Woman', *National Review*, 14 (October 1858), 333–61 (pp.343, 350).

[80] Ibid., p.348.

[81] Ibid. p.351.

[82] Ibid. p.350.

[83] Ibid., p.359.

it is', suggesting that it was the *National Review* and not the 'female-right vindicators' of the *EWJ* that could provide such sage advice to the reading public.[84]

This attack by the *National Review* had far greater impact than the unsurprisingly hostile review published by the conservative *Saturday Review*. When Anna Jameson, an old friend of Bessie Parkes, came to know of it, she rushed to console her even before reading the *National Review*, and reassured her that the article would soon be forgotten and not cause any lasting harm to the *EWJ*.[85] Bessie's father, Joseph Parkes, himself a veteran Unitarian reformer and journalist, was deeply concerned that Bessie should not expose herself to such attacks in the future; he wrote a stern letter admonishing her for not writing with greater caution.[86] He agreed with the *National Review* writer that Parkes's recommendation, in her *Remarks*, of 'George Sand[&?] — [sic] Dryden, Chaucer, Ben Johnson & Fielding' as suitable reading for women was 'nonsense'.[87] He pronounced that, at the time, Parkes had been 'as qualified to write publicly on the Education of Girls as an unborn female Baby; either by experience or by acquired wisdom', and had deserved being reprimanded for writing on a topic about which she knew so little.[88] He noted similar signs of shoddy research in an article on 'domestic life' in the latest issue of the *EWJ*, which had quoted the number of prostitutes in London to be eighty thousand although

[84] Ibid., pp.359, 349.

[85] Anna Jameson to Bessie Parkes, October 1858, GCPP Parkes 6/26. Jameson had only heard of the *National Review* article, and had not yet read it. Schroeder reads another letter from Anna Jameson to Bessie Parkes as encouraging Bessie to publish a response to the *National Review* article by quoting selective passages. However, that letter, GCPP Parkes 6/ 35, contains detailed discussion of an article on female education, and on closer reading, seems to refer to an article that Parkes was editing for publication in the *EWJ*. Even the Girton College catalogue states that this letter was probably written in October 1859, a year after the above-noted controversy. For these reasons, I have not treated it as a response to the *National Review* article.

[86] Joseph Parkes to Bessie Rayner Parkes, 6 October 1858, GCPP Parkes 2/64.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

'known & reliable statistics tell a different & very less number'.[89] He advised her not to publish a rebuttal to the *National Review* article, maintaining that if the *EWJ* 'unwisely' provoked the **'**opposition of other & more popular Periodicals than the National Review', it would 'speedily smash' itself.[90]

The editors of the *EWJ*, contrary to Joseph Parkes's advice, published a witty rejoinder to the *National Review*'s attack, and they seem to have paid more heed to his feedback than has been recognized by critics.[91] In their response, the editors underline their knowledge of the field of female labour, addressing Joseph Parkes's concern that the *EWJ* must not risk appearing a frivolous enterprise undertaken by enthusiastic but uninformed young women. They point out that although some female reformers may have impractical ideas and may be 'moved by enthusiasm approaching revolutionary zeal', they did not constitute the 'general character of the advocacy in this country of an improvement in the position of women'.[92]

It is this 'general', well-informed body of opinion that the *EWJ* claims to represent. 'Is the reviewer aware', the writer asks, 'that all question of the admission to or the exclusion of the female sex from industry, has been long since settled by the people themselves beyond appeal'; and cites the census's statistics of paid female labourers as proof of her contention that the people of England had already accepted that women had to work for money.[93] The use of statistical data, here and elsewhere in the journal, foregrounds the *EWJ*'s preparedness to speak

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[89] Ibid. The article Parkes refers to is 'Domestic Life', *EWJ*, 2 (October 1858), 73–82.

[90] Ibid. Bessie Parkes's reply to the above letter by her father, if written, has not survived.

[91] 'The Reviewer Reviewed', *EWJ*, 2 (January 1859), 336–43;Schroeder '"Better Arguments"', pp.251-52. Schroeder notes that the article 'was unsigned, but was undoubtedly authored by Parkes's. However, since there is no substantial evidence to establish this, I have not ascribed its authorship to Parkes.

[92] 'The Reviewer Reviewed', p.342.

[93] Ibid.

of women's labour and also underlines the urgency of their proposed reforms. The writers reproduce the liberal-sounding passages from the *National Review* article, to show that the rival journal was, in fact, parroting the *EWJ*'s own ideas.[94] In this, they present the *National Review* writer as a petty rival who denies the *EWJ* its due, exposing in the process, his own prejudice against female reformers, and his inability to engage in a fruitful discussion with other players in the periodicals market: 'The reviewer […] in his desperate thrusts at a revolutionary monster, in his sarcasms at strong-minded-ism, is simply fighting with his shadow'.[95]

Although the tone adopted by the *EWJ* was, as Schroeder notes, polite enough to appeal to middle-class readers and serious enough to resist the assumption that women lacked the rational skills required to participate in public debate, it was also richly satirical.[96] Far from remaining 'within the limits of an available and widely-accepted model of feminine behavior', the *EWJ* showed female journalists as perfectly capable of matching wits even with the veteran male journalists of the *National Review*.[97] In July and August 1859, the journal ran two articles entitled 'Things in General' ascribed to 'Nobody in Particular', foregrounding the *EWJ* as offering the most trustworthy and comprehensive reportage on the woman question.[98] The title and signature underlined the journal's collective and inclusive nature.

The first article criticized the *Saturday Review,* referred to by two dashes and quotations from its recent article on Elizabeth Blackwell, for being run by a coterie of conservative men.[99] Calling the struggle for women's improvement 'the greatest movement of modern times' the

[94] Schroeder, 'Better Arguments', p.253.

[95] The Reviewer Reviewed', p.342.

[96] "'Better Arguments'", pp.262–63.

[97] Ibid. p.263.

[98] 'Things in General', *EWJ*, 3 (July 1859), 289–301; 'Things in General', *EWJ*, 3 (August 1859), 361–68.

[99]'Lady-Doctors in America', *Saturday Review*, 7 (28 May 1859), 650.

writer suggested that the *EWJ's* dedicated coverage of women's issues made it a cutting-edge publication.[100] By contrast, the *Saturday Review*, 'comparatively a young periodical', is described as wearing a 'grey head on green shoulders', taking the same conservative line as the *Times* and *Blackwood's Magazine*.[101] The writer predicted that though the *Saturday Review's* writers 'persist[ed] in ignoring and ridiculing' the women's movement, they would brazenly claim credit for having supported it once it gained legal recognition and social acceptance: 'They will turn right round and say "Yes, they always thought so, had always foretold the coming change, and were the only people who had in any refined sense been thoroughly consistent throughout"'.[102] The article pre-emptively protected the *EWJ's* special status as a feminist journal by characterizing any change in the stance of conservative periodicals as mere time-serving, a sign of intellectual vacuity and convenience. It presented the *EWJ's* struggle to articulate emergent ideas as a measure of journalistic honesty.

The second article reinforced this image of the *EWJ* as a site of unbiased debate by having its two characters, 'Nobody in Particular' and her 'Intelligent Friend', critique the previous issue, offering both praise and censure. Both articles invite readerly solidarity by suggesting that those who were truly concerned about the state of affairs must not wait till the movement's eventual success rendered it convenient for them to jump onto its bandwagon but must subscribe and promote the movement and the *EWJ* when it most mattered.

The *EWJ* advertised its novel effects not only through claims of reaching a wider audience but also through reports about the practical enterprises undertaken by the managers of the journal. An article entitled 'A Ramble with Mrs. Grundy: A Visit to the Victoria Press' protested

[100] 'Things in General', July 1859, p.297.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., pp.297–98.

against lack of recognition for the journal's novelty.[103] In the article, the editors are shown taking Mrs. Grundy on a tour of the Victoria Press. Started in 1860 by one of the chief collaborators of the journal, Emily Faithfull, the Victoria Press represented the best face of the *EWJ*'s practical work. It gave employment to lower middle-class women who would have otherwise been destitute, and it was personally managed by Faithfull to ensure that her female compositors showed themselves to be model working women: respectable, ordered, and efficient. It was also undeniably novel, being the first printing press in England to employ female compositors.[104]

After being given a conducted tour of the premises by the anxious editors of the journal and having all her doubts and reservations about the suitability of such work for women answered patiently and comprehensively, Mrs. Grundy remarks, 'clearly woman's work, and if you want me to say more in favor of your pet Journal you must show me something very different to this'.[105] The editors are left with a sinking feeling that she would go on to 'tell her friends and acquaintances that there was nothing new under the sun, and that the "English Woman's Journal" and the Victoria Printing Press were no exception to the rule'.[106] This ending attempts to impress the readers of the *EWJ* with a deep sense of wrong at the journal being denied its due in bringing about unprecedented changes in women's work conditions.

Mrs. Grundy is a female counterpart to the prejudiced, old-world men of the *Saturday Review* that the journal castigated in other articles. Yet this article on Mrs. Grundy is far less caustic than the 'Things in General' article. The editors seem to have recognized that as a

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[103] 'A Ramble with Mrs. Grundy', *EWJ*, 5 (June 1860), 269–72.

[104] Though some semi-experienced female compositors did exist prior to the Victoria Press, they were not brought together, nor systematically trained and employed as they were by Faithfull's enterprise. Nestor, 'A New Departure', p.97; Remoortel, *Women, Work*, pp.122–24.

[105] 'A Ramble', p.272.

[106] Ibid.

feminist magazine, the *EWJ* could not be too harsh on any female persona, however much she represented conservative women's opposition to the journal's message. Thus, throughout the article, the editors of the journal are shown striving patiently and anxiously to win her over. Unlike the transparent reference to the *Saturday Review*, Mrs. Grundy is generic, 'nobody in particular'. Nevertheless, the unmistakably satirical portrayal of Mrs. Grundy tries to firmly enlist the readers' sympathy with the editors of the journal. They are invited to share a joke with the editors at the expense of the conservative Mrs. Grundy. The article, like the journal's advertiser, encouraged readers to be appreciative of the novel ways in which the journal contributed to the improvement of women's lives.

Emphasizing its exploratory impulse also enabled the *EWJ* to elide its own limitations and inconsistencies. In an article that rehearses some of the central dilemmas of the mid-century women's movement, such as whether remunerative employment was desirable only for single women, Parkes concludes on a non-committal note, underlining the experimental nature of the journal as a whole:

> That the subject is beset with difficulties we do not wish to deny. […] Happily for us it is not incumbent on the English Woman's Journal that its pages should contain the complete *rationale* of every question which it opens therein. […] We do not propound mere theories;—we watch, report, discuss experiments which are being worked out by society under our eyes and those of our readers.[107]

The discursive framework of an experiment thus accommodated contradictions and inconsistencies between and within individual articles as aspects of a collective, developing endeavour. Parkes claimed that what might seem like a lack of intellectual coherence was, in

[107] 'On the Adoption', pp.9–10.

fact, a mark of the journal's timeliness, its responsiveness to the most demanding and recent problems of its time.

By presenting itself as an ongoing, collective experiment in social reform, the *EWJ* evaded being perceived as dogmatic. After all, the very feminism that made the journal novel could have paradoxically made it seem static; the special focus on women's issues that made the journal commercially viable could adversely affect its saleability. In order to survive in the intensely competitive periodical marketplace of the 1850s, the *EWJ* showed that it could be organised yet flexible, well-defined yet open-ended. To this end, it foregrounded its links to prestigious reform organisations like the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (NAPSS) by printing speeches made by the journal's editors and writers at the association's annual meetings. Its breadth of focus as a general interest feminist periodical helped it to claim everyone interested in women's reform as supporters, including those who were not directly involved with the journal itself. For example, an obituary on George Combe called him a 'kind encourager' of the journal's 'own secondary labors' for having helped women through his work in sanitation and educational reform.[108]

To present itself as providing space for all shades of opinions about the woman question, the *EWJ* even inserted views that were ostensibly opposed to its feminist agenda. In October 1861, the journal ran a letter from a 'West-End Housekeeper' who argued that women must not worry about losing respectability by working as servants since anyone who had to work for money was unfit to be deemed a lady in the first place.[109] This letter seems particularly misplaced in a journal which argued that remunerative labour must not entail a loss of social

[108] 'George Combe', *EWJ*, 2 (September 1858), 53–56 (p.54).

[109] 'Letter from a West-End Housekeeper to the Editors of the English Woman's Journal', *EWJ*, 8 (October 1861), 139 (p.139).

status; indeed, it provoked a barrage of rebuttals. Though the editors issued a statement describing the correspondent's attitude to women's labour as regrettable, they indicated, by publishing it, that the *EWJ* was an inclusive discursive space where the meanings of terms like 'respectability' and 'femininity' were actively debated rather than rigidly imposed on readers. The *EWJ*'s correspondents also emphasized the breadth of its perspective by reporting on women's issues from Germany, Italy, and France. The periodical extended its networks to Britain's colonies, serving as an important nodal point for the exchange of information about the emigration of impoverished middle-class women.

A particularly interesting example of the journal's promotion of its global reach was a 'letter printed by a Hindu gentleman, C. Poorooshottum, Esq., for private circulation among his friends in India', from which the editors extracted a lengthy remark about the *EWJ*.[110] Poorooshottum was, in all likelihood, fictitious, since the honorific title, 'esquire', was hardly ever granted to Indians. In fact, the editors seem to have chosen this incongruous title over the Indian equivalent, 'babu', since the latter was already being used negatively in England to refer to educated Indians as money-minded social-climbers.[111] As 'esquire', Poorooshottum's status is less ambiguous: he is the Indian equivalent of the educated, high-minded British readers of the *EWJ*. As part of the community of patrons envisioned in the journal's advertiser, Poorooshottum

[110] 'A Hindu on the English Woman's Journal', *EWJ*, 12 (December 1863), 288 (p.288).

[111] Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.17. Negative British representations of 'babus' were inspired by early nineteenth-century satirical sketches in Bengal, which first began to mock English-educated Indian 'babus' as pretentious and socially irresponsible. See, Hans Harder, 'The Modern Babu and the Metropolis: Reassessing Early Bengali Narrative Prose (1821–1862)', in *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), pp.358–401.

promotes the *EWJ* across the seven seas. Speaking in glowing terms about the journal, he encloses its prospectus, and requests his Indian addressees to subscribe to it 'in order to shew these parties [the Englishwomen involved in the mid-century women's movement] that we are earnest in the work they have so laudably undertaken'.[112] In hoping that the women who conducted the journal would 'not restrict their benevolent views to their own native sisters', but would 'extend their efforts to their as yet unelevated Indian sisters', Poorooshottum hails mid-century feminism as a marker of British social supremacy, and depicts the *EWJ* as playing a critical role in Britain's colonial civilizing mission.[113]

The Special Abilities of 'Born and Bred' Ladies: The *English Woman's Journal*'s Representation of Middle-Class Professions

The *EWJ* conceived of paid work, as Mary Poovey has noted, as a 'problem' created by the demographic deficit in potential husbands or solvent fathers.[114] However, contrary to what Poovey has claimed, it did not perpetuate 'the belief voiced by conservatives that women's *proper* work was moral superintendence and (unpaid) domestic labor'.[115] For the *EWJ*, the social situation that necessitated women's work was irreversible and the only practicable means of alleviating the distress of single women was to abandon the obsolete ideal of domestic femininity.[116] As one writer stated, 'do we not rather find a new form [a new language and image

[112] 'A Hindu', p.288

[113] Ibid.

[114] Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, p.159.

[115] Ibid.

[116] This idea recurs constantly in the *EWJ* articles. Jessie Boucherett even suggested that the current need for women to take up work might have been a part of God's providential plan since it was improbable that 'large numbers of women were created expressly to be starved to death or supported by charity'. Jessie Boucherett, 'On the Cause of Distress Prevalent Among Single Women', *EWJ*, 12 (February 1864), 400–09 (p.403).

of ideal womanhood], than cling with a perverse tenacity to the dried up and shrivelled husk?'.[117] It was now imperative to think of paid work as 'proper' to women, and it was this new ideal of the respectable working woman that the *EWJ* envisioned.

However, the field of female paid work, as laid out in the journal, was unmistakably graded by class. In an article that explicitly represents the limitations of the *EWJ*'s contestations of earlier ideas of gentility, its editor Parkes stated, 'we are sometimes tempted to regret the false notions of gentility which prevent women working bravely at whatever comes nearest to hand, […] but, […] there is something noble—something beyond a mere effort after "gentility", in the struggle to preserve the habits, the dress, and the countless moral and material associations of the rank to which they were born'.[118] There was a 'real distinction' between 'born and bred ladies' with 'a good and a refined education' who might have subsequently fallen on tough times, and those born into the lower-middle classes.[119] The former were capable of entering conventional middle-class lines of intellectual work and they rightfully baulked at taking up work that would not enable them to sustain the social and financial position into which they were born.

Thus, the *EWJ*'s assumption that 'nonmanual and noncommercial' work was 'more "genteel" [and therefore more suitable to middle-class women] than others', did not, as Poovey argues, reinforce 'the connection between work and moral contamination'.[120] Rather, in trying to persuade lower middle-class women to take up 'non-genteel' work, the feminists constantly underlined that such work was free of any moral or sexual threats. It was through a rhetoric of fitness to station rather than moral probity that the writers of the *EWJ* distinguished between

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[117] A.R.L. [unidentified], 'Facts vs. Ideas', *EWJ*, 7 (April 1861), 73–84 (p.75).

[118] Bessie Rayner Parkes, 'A Year's Experience in Woman's Work', *EWJ*, 6 (October 1860), 112–21 (p.115).

[119] Ibid.

[120] *Uneven Developments*, pp.159–60.

middle-class professions and other forms of paid work that they sought to open to women. Only 'born and bred' ladies are seen as having the vocational impulse and intellectual refinement required for middle-class professions.

The writer of 'Tuition or Trade?', for example, criticized a *Fraser's* article for speaking of governessing as the only employment suited for women, but only because she felt that this attitude was actually ruining the sanctity of teaching by attracting to it lower middle-class women who had no knowledge of the 'grave responsibilities and arduous demands' of teaching.[121] Such women took up teaching 'simply […] because with their preconceived opinions of "ladyism" they can find nothing else to square with them'.[122] The figure of the impoverished governess, as Poovey has shown, enjoyed special attention in periodical debates about women's work partly because of the fear that this line of middle-class work was being increasingly invaded by single women from trading and other lower-middle classes, lacking the moral and cultural values of the middle-classes.[123]

Like other middle-class commentators, the *EWJ* writers also tried to stem the erosion of class barriers within teaching. In order to keep lower-class aspirants at bay without seeming antagonistic towards them, the *EWJ* went to great lengths to show that it was in their own interest to take up other kinds of paid work. Its writers repeatedly argued that lower middle-class women who attempted to acquire gentlewomanly status by taking up middle-class professions like teaching would inevitably fail, and not only cause themselves endless misery but also diminish

[121] A.R.L. [unidentified], 'Tuition or Trade?', *EWJ*, 5 (May 1860), 173– 83 (p.179).

[122] Ibid.

[123] *Uneven Developments*, pp.128–29. Poovey provides an extended discussion of the middle-class cultural anxieties that attached to the figure of the governess in the Victorian period.

the wages of educated governesses. They urged them to take up, instead, various skilled clerical, business, and semi-mechanical jobs.

In order to assure readers that they were not mindlessly inciting them to flout social norms, the *EWJ* writers presented themselves as trustworthy guides who would not lead their readers astray. The journalistic self-presentation of Maria Rye, who initiated a number of new projects in women's work, provides a marked instance of how the mid-century feminists fore-grounded their credibility as pioneering and credible reform journalists. Rye helped to found the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women in 1859, and also opened a law-copying office, founded the Victoria Press with Emily Faithfull, and established a telegraph school for women with Isa Craig in 1860. In May 1862, Rye launched the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society, to help impoverished middle-class women find employment in the colonies. In setting out on a long journey with little protection and often in questionable company, and seeking remunerative work in the colonies, impoverished English gentlewomen risked loss of social caste.[124] The journalist advocating female emigration thus had to prove that she could show how middle-class women could emigrate without compromising their respectability. Unlike Caroline Chisholm, William Rathbone Greg and others who stressed matrimonial prospects in the colonies, Rye promoted female colonial emigration primarily as an employment scheme, although, unlike Chisholm, she could not speak from the authority of personal experience in the colonies.[125]

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[124] James Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration 1830–1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p.12. Poovey, in *Uneven Developments*, has shown that these debates played a critical role in the ideological construction of women's social roles in Victorian England.

[125] Caroline Chisholm arrived in Australia in 1838, with her husband and two sons. She started assisting emigrants while residing there and following her return to England in 1846, founded the Family Colonisation Loan Society in

Although Rye was certainly not the first to promote middle-class female emigration, she describes her own emigration plan as utterly unprecedented, presenting herself as a particularly innovative and visionary reform journalist.[126] After making it 'especially clear' to her female readers that there was, at present, '*no free and no assisted passage offered to any one colony, for any description of women except household servants*', she lays out her plan for a 'new society', wherein 'some of our wealthy English ladies' would assist the emigration of destitute gentlewomen.[127] She proposes to assist 'those who have been accustomed to serve in light business' and those impoverished 'ladies who are not ignorant of or ashamed to join in the household management and duties pertaining to large families'.[128]

Interestingly, the impressive range of statistical data and government information that Rye cites to convince her readers about the feasibility of her proposals pertains mostly to working-class emigration, and thus does little to support her arguments about middle-class emigration [Fig 3]. This mismatch becomes all the more evident since Rye herself states, more than once, that the conditions of middle and working-class emigration are necessarily different. 'Of course educated women could not go out as steerage passengers' she states, only to give the reader a seemingly useless list of contact details for 'The Government Emigration Officers and

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1849, to help prospective emigrants. Joanna Bogle, 'Caroline Chisholm (1808–1877)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5321> [accessed 11 July 2015].

[126] The gold rush, which started in 1852, drew many from the English middle-class and from the early 1850s, emigration propaganda in both England and Australia appealed to middle-class women. Even reformers like Caroline Chisholm and Sidney Herbert began to focus more on middle-class women in these years. Best-selling publications by successful middle-class female emigrants like Mrs. Charles Clacy reinforced this notion that, in the colonies, undertaking menial work did not result in a loss of social caste. Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen*, pp.110–17.

[127] M.S.R. [Maria Rye], 'On Assisted Emigration', *EWJ*, 5 (June 1860), 235–40 (pp.235, 238).

[128] Ibid., p.236.

Offices for Promoting the Emigration of the Labouring Classes'.[129] Why does Rye present the reader with a detailed account, down to the last penny, of a working woman's outfit for Australia, if she realizes that 'of course an outfit for cabin passengers [middle-class passengers] would cost considerably more'?[130]

Evidently, such data is meant more to foreground Rye's own journalistic thoroughness with her subject than to provide a blueprint for her scheme. It also underlines her attentiveness to class distinctions and thereby assures the 'wealthy ladies' whom Rye appeals to for funds, as well as prospective middle-class female emigrants, that her scheme would not compromise the social and cultural status of middle-class women. In other articles such as 'Emigrant-Ship Matrons', Rye similarly shows her concern to keep middle-class women respectfully guarded from the attention of unknown men on board emigrant ships by demanding that trustworthy middle-class matrons be appointed to supervise female emigrants.[131]

Within the pages of the journal, contributors like Elizabeth Blackwell, who had personally transgressed codes of middle-class femininity by breaking into a male-dominated profession like medicine, similarly underlined their deep regard for women's culturally-sanctioned roles. Writing as the first certified female physician and recommending medicine as a profession for women, Blackwell argued that while female physicians may not be wives or mothers themselves, they were far from dismissive of women's domestic responsibilities.[132] Female doctors, she claimed, could enable women to tend better to the health and well-being of

[129] Ibid., p.238.

[130] Ibid., p.240.

[131] M.S.R. [Maria Rye], 'Emigrant-Ship Matrons', *EWJ*, 5 (March 1860), 24–36.

[132] Elizabeth Blackwell and Emily Blackwell, 'Medicine as a Profession for Women', *EWJ*, 5 (May 1860), 145–60. This article is a published version of a lecture delivered jointly by Elizabeth Blackwell and her sister Emily Blackwell, who followed in Elizabeth's footsteps to become a doctor.

their families by imparting sanitary and medical knowledge.[133] Blackwell was also the subject of a biographical sketch, written by her sister Anna and published in the first volume of the journal, which strikingly underlined her acute self-consciousness about her being the only woman at medical school:

> To cause her presence there to be regarded, by those around her, not as that of a woman among men, but of one student among five hundred, […] she restricted herself, […] to a diet so rigid as almost to trench upon starvation, in order that no involuntary change of colour might betray the feeling of embarrassment occasionally created by the necessary plain-speaking of scientific analysis.[134]

This vignette simultaneously underlines Elizabeth's consummate professionalism as well as her indelible femininity. In order to ensure that her training was not affected by her gender, she starves herself till she is too pale to betray, with a blush, her modest misgivings about discussing anatomical issues in a classroom full of men. However, her embarrassment demonstrates her ingrained sense of feminine decorum, showing that she was not an indelicately masculine woman.

The sketch notes that Blackwell's physical and intellectual tenacity helped her become a certified female physician but also highlights her rigid self-denial, a quality conventionally associated with women, to indicate that she had not acquired manly traits. Elizabeth is said to have promptly rejected the suggestion that she 'assume masculine attire' in order to pursue higher studies in schools and hospitals, since such an expedient was both 'repugnant to her tastes' and contrary to her aim of gaining admission for women, as *women*, into the medical

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[133] Ibid., p.149.

[134] Anna Blackwell, 'Elizabeth Blackwell', *EWJ*, 1 (March 1858), 80–100 (p.89). She also includes a brief sketch of her sister, Dr. Emily Blackwell.

profession.[135] Her professional medical practice is also said to have been 'exclusively confined' to women and children, showing that she did not work in unbecoming proximity to men.[136]

Through such representations of pioneers like Blackwell, the *EWJ* imagined the model female professional as someone who, despite undertaking paid public work hitherto thought of as unsuited for women, did not entirely reject accepted norms of middle-class femininity. In order to convince readers that its message of paid work for women was not an impossible ideal, the *EWJ* also cited examples of working women from the past. Such evaluations of the past made it an important repository of women's history that linked Victorian Englishwomen to 'foremothers' who had played influential roles in public and political life.[137]

Ironically, it was in representing authorship, a field of paid work that was widely considered acceptable for middle-class women, that the *EWJ* writers found it particularly difficult to sustain the above-noted distinctions between 'genteel' professions and petty trade, and masculine and feminine work. As Jennifer Ruth, Linda Peterson and others have shown, although mid-century authors claimed professional status, 'the ambiguity of literary work—whether authors were offering knowledge to their readership or selling commodities to publishers—often gave authors pause'.[138] In evaluating writing as viable, paying work for women, the *EWJ* highlighted the very commercial aspect of authorship that undermined the elevated, professional status that it claimed for middle-class female authorship, including its own. Moreover, its attempt to claim a uniquely feminine field of authorial labour conflicted with

[135] Ibid., p.92.

[136] Ibid., p.94.

[137] For example, a biographical sketch of Margaret of Norway drawing attention to women's political participation in the distant past. Amelia B. Edwards, 'Margaret of Norway Part 1', *EWJ*, 3(March 1859), 6–19. 'Margaret of Norway Part 2', *EWJ*, 3(April 1859), 85–95.

[138] Peterson, *Becoming A Woman*, p.2.

its celebration of women's ability to write like men. In the next section of the chapter, I shall examine how the *EWJ* negotiated these difficulties in its representation of female authorship.

Of Professional Worth: Evaluating Women's Authorship

The *EWJ*'s position within the mid-century periodical debates about authorship has gone largely unnoticed. Mary Poovey, for example, does not consider it in discussing the discursive formation of the professional writer.[139] Patricia Zakreski has analyzed the short story, 'A Woman's Pen', published in the first volume of the journal, as an instance of mid-century representations of the domesticated woman writer, failing to note that the story, in fact, presents a model of women's professional journalism.[140] Linda Peterson only mentions, in passing, its articles on women's writing.[141] As I will show, the *EWJ*'s commentary on women's writing, while not lengthy, is certainly rigorous and engaged with the most pressing contemporary debates about professional authorship. I focus on Parkes's articles as they offer the most detailed prose discussions of the authoress within the *EWJ*.

Parkes begins her article, 'On the Adoption of a Professional Life by Women' by claiming that recent scientific inventions such as water-conducting pipes, lifts and 'gas *fires*, like the beautiful and cleanly specimen exhibited in the Crystal Palace, all tend to diminish the amount of the household labor of women' and thus create a 'tendency among our young women to enter upon professional life'.[142] After showing that women's public work, undertaken in such

[139] *Uneven Developments*, pp.89–125.

[140] *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.121.

[141] *Becoming a Woman*, p.48.

[142] 'On the Adoption', p.2.

free-time, was compatible with their domestic roles, Parkes quickly moves on to discussing women's entry into livelihood-generating professional work.

At the top of Parkes's list of women's professions is authorship, a field that women had already entered so successfully that it helps her to show 'what a latent vigor there is in the intellect of women, ready to flow forth into any channels' and to demand that more such lines of middle-class work be opened to women.[143] To underline that it was only lack of opportunity rather than ability that hindered women's professional work, Parkes presents two sharply contrasting images of women's writing, before and after the expansion of the nineteenth-century periodical press.

In the eighteenth-century, so few women wrote that the female authoress was treated like 'a man who walks upon stilts': she was applauded even if she wrote badly, simply for having accomplished a feat unusual for women.[144] Women's periodical work was largely limited to frivolous and scandal-mongering '*Lady's Magazines*' and 'very few women wrote for bread'.[145] However, with the proliferation of periodicals in the nineteenth-century, such journals were replaced by popular, improving titles like *Chambers's Journal* and *Household Words,* and women entered this expanding literary field in large numbers.[146] Women writers, who, till so lately, had been inept, marginal amateurs, seized the opportunities presented by the expansion of the Victorian periodical press with spectacular success, becoming ubiquitous and powerful professionals:

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[143] Ibid., p.4.

[144] Ibid., p.3.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

> The magazines demanded short graphic papers, observation, wit, and moderate learning, —women demanded work such as they could perform at home, and ready pay upon performance; the two wants met, and the female sex has become a very important element in the fourth estate [… T]his direct influence of women […] extends from the quarterly to the monthly, […] to the weekly and daily press, embracing all topics, from the weightiest to the lightest, politics, morals, art, literature, and the ephemera of the day.[147]

Parkes attempts to disassociate the nineteenth-century woman writer from the figure of the leisured woman writer since the latter was characterized within mid-century discussions of authorship as an unskilled amateur, with only a provisional interest in writing. As noted earlier, in G.H. Lewes's 'The Condition of Authors', 'idle women' feature in a condemnatory list of people who wander into writing without training themselves adequately.[148] As Peterson points out, 'all these become, in Lewes's analysis, non-professionals or failed professionals poaching in another man's territory'.[149] Lewes objects to the presence of such interlopers within the market in exactly the same way that the articles in the *EWJ* had responded to the flooding of the market for first-class governesses by lower middle-class women, complaining that they reduced the pay of skilled practitioners by lowering the status of the profession and eating into the demand for that particular form of work.

Women who depended on their writing for their living could, on the other hand, become prime suspects of hack-writing in not pursuing an objective higher than monetary benefit. For writers like Carlyle, writing for money was the mark, not of the professional writer, but of his

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[147] Ibid., p.4.

[148] 'The Condition of Authors', p.285.

[149] *Becoming a Woman*, p.39.

reviled pretender, the literary-hack. Quoting the German transcendentalist philosopher Fichte, Carlyle foregrounds a writer's complete absorption and devotion to a transcendental ideal as the chief mark that set apart 'the *true* Literary Man, […] the *Hero* as Man of Letters, from multitudes of false unheroic': 'Whoever lives not wholly in this Divine Idea, or living partially in it, struggles not, as for the one good, to live wholly in it,— he is, […], no Literary Man; he is, says Fichte, a "Bungler, Stümper"'.[150] Women writers who emphasised their dependence on the market also ran the risk of being associated with the disreputable figure of the prostitute. [151]

In the above essay, Parkes shields contemporary women's writing from these unsavoury associations by speaking of the literary market as an inherently respectable avenue of work, and reinforcing a prevailing mid-century view that the writer 'participated in a free trade of ideas that inevitably rewarded the best man'.[152] In sharp contrast to writers like Thackeray, who invoked eighteenth-century models of leisured writing in their search for a 'supplementary index of value that could mark the writer's superiority to the marketplace', Parkes views the eighteenth-century woman writer's indifference to money as a sign of an underdeveloped literary market.[153] Far from seeking to supplement market-value, she presents the market as an apt arbiter of an author's

[150] Thomas Carlyle, 'The Hero as Man of Letters: Johnson, Rousseau and Burns', in *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1840), pp.183–194 (p.186) . This lecture was originally delivered on Tuesday, 19 May 1840.

[151] For the widespread usage of the author as whore metaphor in Victorian England, see Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*'. In the *EWJ*, authorship is spoken of as one of the many avenues of paid work whose expansion would help prevent destitute single women from turning into prostitutes. For an essay that speaks of paid work as a preventive measure against prostitution, see Frances Power Cobbe, 'The Preventive Branch of the Bristol Female Mission', *EWJ*, 8 (Nov 1861), 145–51.

[152] For this mid-century discourse of authorship, see Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, p.106.

[153] Pettitt, *Patent Inventions*, p.164.

professional value and cites the widespread presence of women in the Victorian marketplace of letters as proof of women's literary merit.

In 'The Profession of the Teacher', Parkes makes a more emphatic claim for those who write for money, stating that 'the smallest aptitude with the pen, and what would appear to be a very average power of arranging ideas in sequence, is not a very widely diffused intellectual gift'.[154] She strikingly echoes J.K. Kaye's famous 1850 defence of the 'dignity of literature'. In his review of Thackeray's *Pendennis* in the *North British Review,* Kaye countered the novel's implication that authorship did not require specific training by stating that even though authorship, especially article-writing, was 'open to the whole world' it nevertheless required rare talent and specialized skill: 'It is not enough to think and to know. It requires the faculty of utterance, and a peculiar kind of utterance. Certain things are to be said in a certain manner; and your amateur article-writer is sure to say them in any manner but the right'.[155]

Female authorship presented a perfect case for the *EWJ* to argue that women's minds were more than equal to the acquisition of professional skill. Nowhere was women's ability to rival men intellectually more evident than in their pervasive anonymous presence in the periodical press. Parkes suggests it was only because women could write in a manner unrecognisable from their male counterparts that the exact number of authoresses in the periodical press was a well-kept editorial secret: 'If editors were ever known to disclose the dread secrets of their dens, they only could give the public an idea of the authoresses whose

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[154] [Bessie Rayner Parkes], 'The Profession of the Teacher', *EWJ*, 1(March 1858), 1–13 (p.9). This article does not carry Parkes's signature in the journal. I have identified it as hers on the basis of it being republished, with minor changes, as 'The Profession of the Teacher', in her volume *Essays on Woman's Work*, pp.85–109.

[155] Kaye, pp.369, 345.

unsigned names are Legion'.[156] On the republication of Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* and some of the novels of the Brontë sisters in 1860, a reviewer similarly applauds Charlotte Brontë's successful impersonation of a male autobiographical narratorial voice in *The Professor* as proof of her professional adroitness: 'Currer Bell has succeeded in making the best of this false position [of speaking as if she were a man], has succeeded so well that women say "it is very natural," just as men compliment Mr. Dickens on his "Confessions of Esther Summerson"'.[157]

However, the *EWJ* was also keen to highlight the specific worth of women's writing as distinguishable from men's. This very reviewer, for example, identified in *Jane Eyre*, two styles of writing that he/she saw as distinctly feminine and masculine: 'No woman had ever before written with this *unfeminine* strength, and yet there are passages in the book which could scarcely have been written by a man'.[158] The issue of the distinct value of feminine professional writing is at the heart of 'A Woman's Pen', the only fictional story featuring the female writer to be published in the *EWJ*.[159]

Projecting a Model of Women's Reform Journalism

'A Woman's Pen' was written by Eliza Meteyard, who had been a regular contributor to the radical unitarian journals.[160] The story, like the articles discussed above, highlights the special

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[156] 'On the Adoption, p.4.

[157] J.A. [unidentified], 'The Three Sisters', *EWJ,* 4 (February 1860), 413–22 (p.413). This is a two-part review. It features in the 'Notices of Books' section. For part 1 of the review, see J.A. [unidentified], 'The Three Sisters', *EWJ,* 4 (January 1860), 338–50.

[158] 'The Three Sisters', January 1860, p.340.

[159] Silverpen (pseud.) [Eliza Meteyard], 'A Woman's Pen', *EWJ,* 1 (June 1858), 246–59. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically. Henceforth, Meteyard's pseudonymous work will be attributed to Silverpen.

[160] Her contributions to these journals are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

qualities of female authorship. However, instead of celebrating the commercial success of female writing, it endorses the value of writing that, in being way ahead of its time, fails to find immediate success in the market. Meteyard raises important concerns about the viability of writing which, like the *EWJ*, had to propound ideas that were not yet popular. Its fictional representation of a female reform journalist offers a powerful alternative to Parkes's championing of market value, and promotes the *EWJ*'s own journalistic model.

The protagonist of the story, an aged erstwhile authoress Mary Cresset, is discovered by a former reader, Andrew Egerton, living in an 'out of the way country village' and earning her subsistence by 'keeping a little shop' (p. 253). Egerton expresses his surprise at this state of affairs as he could not have imagined that the woman who had written the articles which had helped initiate his own astounding success would have to live on such limited means in her old age. It is to Mary's articles that he professes himself 'immeasurably indebted', for facilitating his meteoric rise in life from being 'a poor forge lad […] uneducated, and without a guide' to becoming 'one of the richest iron masters in the world' (pp.252–53). At a time when 'truth abstractedly stated would have had no charm' for him, Mary's articles are said to have taught him, 'through the attractiveness of illustration', to 'comprehend as well as value' truth and to apply it to his 'own acts and circumstances' (p.252).

For Egerton, a writer like Mary, who makes complex ideas widely accessible, is no mere auxiliary to those writers whose ideas she illustrates, but a veritable intellectual and spiritual leader in her own right: 'One of her highest gifts', Egerton notes, is 'this power of leading the minds and giving comfort to the soul of others' (p.251). For another reader, a railway engineer, Mary's writings are valuable not so much for the information they provide as for bolstering his

‘courage to bear difficulty, and to lay out the courses of future good in a way different to what he should otherwise have done’ (p.251).

However, this very pioneering quality of Mary’s writing limits her fame to a few discerning readers. As another reader, Sir Murson, observes ‘many good things of which she wrote, went so far before people’s opinions in those days, that they’re only now beginning to understand ’em, and put ’em into practice’ (p.250). The literary market is seen as inherently conservative, and incapable of justly rewarding visionary writers like Mary. As Murson states: ‘Were people rewarded according to their work, this poor lady’s place would be a very different one’ (p.251). Mary herself stoically accepts her condition, saying: ‘Beyond mere humble independence, those who carry the torch of Time […] must not hope to realise self-benefit in any of its shapes’ (pp.253–54).

Yet, this resignation to limited market success is undergirded with deep pride in her role as a harbinger of social change. Mary’s dedication to the promulgation of her ideas only heightens her authority and creates the context for the story to move towards its resolution whereby she finally attains her well-deserved success. She claims that the ‘deductive faculty’ required for illustrative writing is ‘an essential characteristic of woman’s intellect’ and also predicts that in time to come this ‘peculiar’ female faculty will ‘be recognised as one of intrinsic value in furthering the loftiest purposes of human advancement’ (p.253). She thus envisions female writers as social leaders and as professionally irreplaceable by men.

While most readers are said to be incapable of recognising the value of Mary’s work, those who do are shown to have benefitted immensely from it. The story could have turned into a tale about the reader’s contribution to the value of writing: it is only because Egerton and others imbibe and act upon Mary’s proposed ideas that one knows her work was of any worth at all.

However, by making the readers themselves insist on the inherent value of the writing and intervene in the aged author's plight in an attempt to repay their immeasurable debt to her, the story stays committed to its initial proposition that Mary's writings were inherently valuable. Murson commissions more writing (p.250). Egerton republishes Mary's work after thirty-five years to finally put her beyond financial want (p.258).

Though Mary leads a genteel lower middle-class life by running a shop and eventually achieves success in the literary market, her years of financial struggle raise important concerns about the sustainability of socially-useful writing. After all, most of the magazines of popular progress in which Meteyard and other female radical writers had written as 'advocates and "improvers" of the people', had shut down by the late 1850s, driving Meteyard to apply repeatedly to the Royal Literary Fund (RLF) for financial assistance.[161] In her application, Meteyard presented herself, like her heroine Mary, as an industrious unmarried woman writer devoted to improving her readers' knowledge and tastes. She claims that she would certainly achieve success if the RLF helped tide her over temporary financial distress brought on by factors unrelated to literary merit, such as ill-health and the burden of family responsibilities. However, as I will show in the next chapter, Meteyard was particularly concerned that the low social profile of cheap periodical writing might make her appear ungenteel and she therefore emphasised her desire to abandon the periodical press and shift to book-writing as soon as her financial condition improved. By writing stories championing the impoverished female reform journalist, Meteyard was trying to augment the social profile of the very work from which she felt constrained to distance herself.

[161] Rogers, *Women and the People,* p.133; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Archives of the RLF (microfilm), File No. 1269. For a discussion of the founding and working of the RLF, see Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.8–37.

Lest the reader dismiss the destitute woman writer as lacking literary skill, Mary points out that those very 'feelings of sympathy', the 'rectitude of principle, the purity of life' that made women pre-eminently suited for high-minded authorship, also made them vulnerable to being abused and duped of their money by social and familial parasites (p.255). Echoing Carlyle, Mary states that unless authors pursue ideal aims in their writing, 'literature, more than all other professions, is a pretence and a sham' (p.255). All the more pressing, therefore, is the need to ensure that such morally upright women did not suffer. Mary and her supporters think of ways in which destitute authoresses could be provided with financial assistance. The story's depiction of the market's delayed recognition of Mary's own artistic value underlines the need for extra-market support for destitute writers, especially in their old age.

Echoing writers like G.H. Lewes who had famously demanded state patronage for writers in 'The Condition of Authors', Egerton suggests that State pensions might be a possible way of sustaining aged destitute women writers. Mary rejects such help, stating that it would compromise the author's intellectual autonomy, especially if the writer, like herself, is a crusader for social reform who would need to critique the State. It is of 'the utmost value' to preserve the intellectual freedom of writers, she states, especially 'at a transition period such as this, when so many received opinions will necessarily die out with the inevitable expansion of general intelligence' (p.254).

Egerton then proposes a chivalrous model of male patronage, stating that in 'asking so much at the hands of literary women', men should 'at least […] see that old age and poverty are not contingent in their case' (p.255). Refusing to accept Egerton's paternalistic model of aid, Mary lays out instead an all-woman feminist self-help scheme that closely echoes the foundational premise of the *EWJ*: that at that current moment in history, women were best helped

by their own collective efforts. She states, 'Whatever is done […] women must do for themselves. If they claim independence of action, they must take it with its resultant good and evil; and if they are willing to act for themselves, a principle of self-assistance lies ready in that of Life Assurance' (p.255).

What is particularly striking about this 'self-help' model of insurance is that it is initiated by 'an accumulative fund, aided by gifts and bequests', rather than by instalments paid by women writers themselves (p.255). It is suggested that women writers may also contribute to the fund, but these are evidently not its primary financiers. Though Mary hopes that the Fund would eventually be run 'on the principle of the [working-class] Friendly Societies', wherein the workers themselves contributed termly subscriptions to a Fund in return for old-age, health-care and burial services, the currently outlined model, heavily reliant on donors, is a far cry from those (p.256).

In fact, as later articles on Friendly Societies in the *EWJ* noted, women were generally not allowed to contribute to working-class cooperative funds, partly because they were not considered as full-fledged workers, and partly because it was thought that assisting women during pregnancy would unduly tax the common fund.[162] A closer template for the fund envisioned by Mary is the aid model used by the Governesses Benevolent Institution, as described in the March 1858 issue of the *EWJ*.[163] The Institution had established both charitable annuities (funded by wealthy donors) and provident annuities (paid for by the teachers

[162] 'Friendly Societies', *EWJ*, 6 (October 1861), 107–12 (p.112).

[163] [Bessie Rayner Parkes], 'The Profession of the Teacher'.

themselves).[164] Why does Mary recommend the donor-funded model, and why does she misleadingly call it a 'self-help' scheme?

As persuasively demonstrated by Daniel Hack, those promoting the professional status of authors were particularly 'intent […] on dissociating authorship from begging […] and distinguishing their means of support from one type of gift in particular: charity'.[165] Since begging or receiving charity was associated with unproductivity, dependence and idleness, writers tried to dissociate extra-market forms of authorial aid from charity.[166] Understandably, Mary, who was attempting to envision a fund for female writers without compromising their intellectual autonomy and social dignity, claims exactly such a non-charitable status for her scheme by incorporating into it some donations by the writers themselves. However, what lends further support to her claim is the idea, endorsed throughout the *EWJ*, that all women had a shared interest, and that in helping destitute authoresses, wealthy women were only helping 'themselves' (p.255). As I will show in the next section, this idea of a shared, collaborative female endeavor was critical to the *EWJ*'s self-image.

Mary explicitly mentions that her scheme would also cover 'that large mass of contributors to the Periodical Press, whose number and assisting aid to the great work of education, is one of the most remarkable features of the time' (p.256). This provision is particularly interesting since it rests on an anachronistic model of periodical authorship. Given that most periodical authorship was anonymous by the 1850s, it would have been impossible for readers like Egerton to identify a favourite writer, let alone rescue their careers. The entire plot of

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[164] Ibid., p.3.

[165] Daniel Hack, 'Literary Paupers and Professional Authors: The Guild of Literature and Art', *Studies in English Literature*, 1500–1900, 39 (1999), 691–713 (p.693).

[166] Hack, *Material Interests*, pp.76–79.

the story is triggered by Egerton being struck fortuitously by Mary Cresset's nameplate on the door of her shop: 'the name annexed rouses his heart like the sound of a trumpet' (p.249). The railway engineer claims to have walked 'weekly twelve miles to and fro across one of the most desolate bogs in Ireland, in order to make purchase of some paper or other in which she was at that time writing' (p.251). In fact, Mary Cresset's entire model of journalism, of writing improving articles in a cheap periodical, seems to be modelled on the now defunct radical popular progress that Meteyard had written for under the steadily-adopted and hence easily identifiable pseudonym, 'Silverpen'. In highlighting the benefits of signature specifically for women writers, Meteyard was making a feminist contribution to the mid-century debates on signature.

By entering the periodical field in her own name, Mary makes it possible for her lower-class readers to identify and invest in journals that carry her work and underlines her willingness to stand by the ideas she proposes in writing, even though they are unpopular. In this, she shares a close affinity with two very different images of the journalist identified by Liddle as having been commonly used by signature advocates: the journalist as a salesman who conscientiously discloses his identity to his reading public, enabling them to factor in his past record and make an informed choice as consumers; and the journalist as a gentleman ready to take responsibility for his ideas. [167] Meteyard's heroine thus offers a powerful alternative to the common understanding of the female writer as an anonymous and surreptitious entrant into the periodical field. Moreover, unlike those who viewed the periodical press as a competitive free market, wherein readers would reward the best writing, and held that signature would encourage writers to consistently produce good work in order to maintain their market value, Meteyard highlights the

[167] Liddle, 'Salesmen, Sportsmen', pp.46–49, 36–37.

market's inability to immediately recognise literary talent, and suggests that signature would ensure that visionary writers like Mary did not sink into oblivion.

In March 1859, the same year that *Macmillan*'s initiated the practice of identifying their articles with the names of journalists, the *EWJ* slipped in recognisable initials like 'B.R.P.' for Bessie Rayner Parkes and occasionally cited an author's full name.[168] By identifying female journalists by name, the *EWJ* underlined their commitment to specific causes, and their willingness to be publically accountable for their ideas. The journal formulated a new model of the professional feminist journal through its own self-image.

Unabashedly Professional: Assessing the *English Woman's Journal*'s Model of Feminist Journalism

As is evident from the previous section, the *EWJ* often combined fact and fiction to strengthen the rhetorical charge of its arguments. As Beth Palmer has pointed out, even its 'factual articles concentrating on social or political reform continually slide back and forth from statistics and generalizations to anecdotes and personal stories of female hardship and determination'.[169] For Palmer, the *EWJ's* use of fiction indicates the editors' willingness to compromise their principled distance from the commercial press. She reads it as a sign of the journal's capitulation 'to the lure of creative writing—a lure, simultaneously, to the popular and profitable end of the press'.[170] This reading is based on a much commented-upon passage in Parkes's review of the

[168] For the advent of signature in *Macmillan's* see, Liddle, 'Salesmen, Sportsmen', p.32. For an example of early signed work in the *EWJ*, see the aforementioned articles by Amelia Edwards, published in the first and third volumes of the journal.

[169] Beth Palmer, *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.39.

[170] Ibid.

journal that appeared in February 1864, where she emphatically denied that the *EWJ* had ever wished to 'come forward in the same field with the able monthlies, which contained the best writing of the day' and asserted the journal's special place in the periodical press in the following terms:

> If it had been wished to start a brilliant and successful magazine, some eminent publisher should have been secured and persuaded to undertake active pecuniary interest and risk; all the best known female writers should have been engaged, 'regardless of expense;' *and then*—good-bye to the advocacy of any subject which would have entailed a breath of ridicule; […] good-bye to the humble but ceaseless struggle of all these years, and to the results which have sprung up around the small office where so many workers collected together, because the purpose and the plan were *honestly conceived and carried out*. [171]

The above passage has been interpreted as indicating the *EWJ's* status as an 'essentially amateur' activist journal, a niche publication that had no desire to compete with mainstream commercial periodicals.[172] However, such a reading takes Parkes's claims at face-value and out of the larger context of the journal's history. It is critical to note that Parkes was forging the above narrative about the *EWJ* in retrospect, hoping to draw readers at a time when dwindling subscriptions threatened to (and soon did) draw the monthly to a close. By foregrounding the *EWJ's* persistent reportage of disturbing truths and tough solutions that, like the proverbial bitter pill, may have no ready takers, Parkes implied that it was far superior in quality to 'able monthlies' that simply produced what was demanded by the market. Far from making an unlikely editorial admission

[171] Bessie Rayner Parkes, 'A Review of the Last Six Years', *EWJ*, 12 (February 1864), 361–68 (pp.364–65).

[172] Herstein, '*The English Woman's Journal* and the Langham Place Circle', p.62.

that the *EWJ* published second-rate literature, Parkes was claiming that it was the intellectually independent and socially responsible feminist journal, rather than celebrity-studded commercial periodicals, that contained the 'best writing of the day'.

In emphasizing the *EWJ*'s relative autonomy from the profit-motive, Parkes was capitalizing on a particular aspect of nineteenth-century professional ideology in order to claim a distinctly professional status for the feminist journal. As Susan Colón has observed, 'Victorian professionalism retained important roots in traditional Christian notions of vocation […] of human obedience to a divine call to a particular mode of service to others'.[173] To 'maintain a gentlemanly distance from trade' and assert a dignified autonomy from market forces, emerging professional classes represented their work as suffused by an ethic of social service.[174] Within mid-century discourses of authorship, the professional writers' commitment to social progress was stressed to distinguish them not only from those plying the 'trades' of bookselling and publishing but also from market-oriented hack-writers and self-indulgent amateur authors.[175] By drawing on this developing professional discourse, Parkes was asserting that the *EWJ's* devotion to social reform, as reflected in its unique structural collocation of various kinds of feminist writing, made it more useful and more professional than commercial journals with a purportedly trader-like indifference to public good.

As part of its wider championing of women's professional abilities, the *EWJ* celebrated even the non-political, artistic work of its supporters. When one of their own, Isa Craig, won the Burns centenary award for her commemorative poem on the poet Robert Burns, Parkes was

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[173] *The Professional Ideal*, p.14.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Peterson, *Becoming a Woman*, p.2. For mid-century debates about the dignity and social utility of professional authorship, see Pettitt, *Patent Inventions*, pp.157–59.

quick to note it in the *EWJ*, highlighting both Craig's literary merit and the fact that such an acclaimed writer was working for a feminist journal.[176] Although this poem, like a few others that Craig wrote for the *EWJ*, is not directly feminist in tone or subject, Parkes nevertheless described the prize as a 'wonderful stroke of luck and genius', knowing full well that such a prestigious award would only further her journal's image as a high-brow, intellectually weighty periodical.[177]

The *EWJ* seems to have indeed been widely perceived as a commercially successful journal. On 25 October 1858, the novelist Dinah Mulock wrote to Parkes recommending a woman writer who, despite being 'a well-known contributor to magazines', was still struggling to make ends meet.[178] Evidently, Mulock thought of the *EWJ* as a well-paying journal, and deduced, from its feminist agenda, that it would support struggling female writers.[179] Indeed, at the end of the first year of her joint editorship of the journal with Matilda Hays, Parkes wrote to Bodichon to report enthusiastically on the growing subscriptions for the journal. She underlined that for a new reform magazine, the *EWJ* had performed spectacularly well:

> Subscriptions come in steadily, we have now close upon 400, & our sales are about 250 a month. This is <u>current</u>; the back numbers keep constantly selling too. To build up the circulation of a new journal is a very difficult task […] & when I think of the number of

[176] 'Isa Craig and the Prize Poem on Burns', *EWJ*, 2 (February 1859), 417–19. The notice is followed by her new poem 'The Ballad of the Brides of Quair', pp.419–20.

[177] Bessie Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 30 January 1859, GCPP Parkes 5/88.

[178] Dinah Mulock to Bessie Rayner Parkes, GCPP Parkes 9/ 46.

[179] Even as late as October 1862, by which time the journal had already run into financial trouble, Mulock continued to have this impression of the journal. She sent some paper to be considered for publication in the *EWJ*, but only 'if you pay- and tolerably well', she told Parkes, 'since […] my chief object is money'. Dinah Mulock to Bessie Rayner Parkes, 14 October 1862, GCPP Parkes 9/47. There is no record of the *EWJ* publishing either the writer recommended by Mulock, or Mulock herself.

> people of all sorts who have been brought into contact & some degree of sympathy with the work, I feel amazed at our success![180]

Despite Parkes's cheerful account of the success of their collaborative journalistic project, she was already finding it difficult to deal with what she called 'the everlasting little nibs by which a business is carried on, when it involves so many hands'.[181] In this very letter, for example, she complains about Eliza Meteyard who, having ignored her editorial suggestions, had sent her article straight to the printer.[182] Parkes states that it was 'far more bother to deal with regular professional writers than with young hands' since the former were 'so dreadfully stuck up in their own estimation'.[183] The details of the episode, petulantly recounted in this letter, suggest that Parkes wished to exercise a measure of editorial authority and control that conflicted with the journal's professed ideal of collaborative journalism: 'I wrote Miss Meteyard a severe note about it for she had no business to alter an editorial correction, & she replied that she considered herself perfectly competent to that part of her work'.[184]

In the ensuing years, the members of the *EWJ* continued to struggle to find a commonly acceptable template of editorial authority. As founding editor, Parkes felt that the journal couldn't flourish unless she supervised its contents and conduct closely, and this belief was only strengthened by her experience in steering the journal through a particularly turbulent phase in 1861-62, when bitter infighting lead to the resignation of the *EWJ*'s initial co-editor Matilda

[180] Bessie Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 5 January 1859, GCPP Parkes 5/87.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid.

Hays. Parkes felt that she had ensured the smooth functioning of the journal through this period of transition by remaining 'absolute Master of the Field as regards the EWJ'.[185]

Others, like Emily Davies, who took over from Hays as Parkes's co-editor, found Parkes's editorial conduct to be both injudicious and inefficient. She felt that on the one hand Parkes's 'extreme care to avoid everything startling in the *matter* of the Journal' had made it 'less interesting & genuinely respectable than it might have been'; on the other hand, due to Parkes's failure to realize the damage caused to the journal's reputation by its association with Hays, who had been involved in an open romantic partnership with the American actress Charlotte Cushman before joining the journal, the *EWJ* was now saddled with 'the credit of Bloomerism' that only made it even harder to publish radical material about the women's movement.[186]

Davies pointed out Parkes and Hays' tardiness in responding to contributors, noting that one contributor named Miss Gimingham had been kept waiting for over a year and a half before she heard back about her article.[187] Davies stated that Miss Gimingham had told her that such unprofessional conduct had 'discouraged people from sending good papers'.[188] She notes that she was having to hold back an article that had summarized 'Mrs. Mill's essay' since she didn't

[185] Bessie Rayner Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 8 December 1861, GCPP Parkes 5/108.

[186] Emily Davies to Barbara Bodichon, 3 December [1862], in *Emily Davies: Collected Letters, 1861–1875,* ed. by Ann Murphy and Deirdre Raftery (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), p.8. For Hays and Cushman's relationship, see Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp.204–06.

[187] Emily Davies to Barbara Bodichon, 3 December [1862], *Collected Letters*, p.7. Miss Gimingham wrote for the *EWJ*. She also published *Types and Antitypes of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (1884). Little else is known about her.

[188] Ibid. Bodichon also noted lapses in Parkes's editorship. In May 1861, the journal had erroneously reported that an atelier in Nantes had trained women to paint church windows. When Bodichon had tried to locate the establishment, she came to know that the institution was in fact in Le Mans. Bodichon was disturbed by what she would sarcastically refer to as 'Journal-like incorrectness' (qtd. in. Hirsch, p.199.)

want to ‘ come out with such a startling manifesto, till the Journal has a little recovered from the reputation Miss Hays has given it’.[189] She also felt that Parkes’s growing inclination towards Roman Catholicism (to which she would convert in late 1864) was inhibiting the journal’s treatment of issues related to that religion, even on such topics as Catholic sisterhoods, which, as an instance of women’s public duties, were directly relevant to the women’s movement in England.[190] She noted that ‘good writers’ would not ‘give us their best, or even […] write for us at all, if it must be under such fettering conditions’.[191]

By 1862, the finances of the journal were dwindling, making it increasingly difficult to continue publication. The editors had to ascertain whether the propagation of their principles in the journal was worth the time and money invested in it. Not having enough money to sustain their periodical was not just a question of whether ‘The Langham Place Women’ would continue publishing through the financial aid of patrons or not. At issue was whether their periodical was of any value if it could not attract enough readers to at least break even. Parkes and Davies held vastly divergent views on the above and this resulted in the development of two distinct models of middle-class feminist journalism.

Davies felt that the arrival of a popular, six-penny weekly ladies newspaper, the *Queen*, ‘which takes our side […] & […] would no doubt be glad to insert any articles we liked to offer, of a sufficiently popular cast’, made it pointless to ‘continue the Journal [*EWJ*], at considerable

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[189] Emily Davies to Barbara Bodichon, 3 December [1862]. As Murphy et al note, the article referred to is probably Harriet Taylor Mill’s essay, ‘The Enfranchisement of Women’. *Collected Letters*, pp.8, 11 n 11.

[190] Davies felt that ‘at this moment, the question of Sisterhoods’, which was taken up in mainstream periodicals such as *Fraser’s* by Cobbe and others, ‘ought to be treated in the Journal’, but neither she nor anyone else could ‘write freely upon it, knowing Bessie’s views’; Parkes had written to Davies ‘very strongly’ about Cobbe’s treatment of the subject in *Fraser’s Magazine*. Emily Davies to Barbara Bodichon, 3 January 1863, *Collected Letters*, p.23.

[191] Ibid, p.24.

cost of money & strength, merely for the sake of existing, as it may have been at first, when there was absolutely no popular or unpopular Magazine open to us'.[192] The *Queen*, started by Samuel Beeton in 1861, was a richly illustrated journal that published a wide range of material, including society gossip, fashion news, sensational crime stories and articles on women's education and public work.[193] Although the *Queen* addressed an upper-class female readership, its inclusion of popular and sensational material made Davies consider it 'a low kind of thing' that 'no educated person would think of looking at'.[194] Davies felt that the *Queen* catered to 'the taste of inferior readers better than the Journal could ever hope to do'; the serious *EWJ* had better appeal to 'the higher class of readers' and it could only do so 'by lifting it[self] to the level of Fraser & Macmillan'.[195] In light of the recent financial struggles of the *EWJ*, Davies felt that even the 'higher class of readers' favoured a general rather than a specialised women's journal.[196] She underlined the *EWJ* would do best to follow the example set by *Macmillan's* in diluting its original objective of being a special-interest journal and becoming an aggressively competitive, general player in the periodicals market.[197]

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[192] Emily Davies to Nannie Leigh Smith, 2 January 1863, *Collected Letters*, p.21.

[193] The *Queen* described itself as a newspaper rather than a magazine. Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, pp.88–89. For its role in the development of late nineteenth-century celebrity media, see Alexis Easley, 'Women Writers and Celebrity News at the *Fin de Siècle*', in *Women Writers and the Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Ann R. Hawkins and Maura Ives (Ashgate: Farnham, 2012), p.134.

[194] Emily Davies to Nannie Leigh Smith, 2 January 1863, *Collected Letters*, p.21.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Ibid.

[197] The shift which Davies talks about is not evident from the content of *Macmillan's* itself, which was launched in November 1859 as a shilling monthly suitable for family readership. She could be referring to a dilution of *Macmillan's* Christian, progressive politics with the inclusion of considerable amounts of fiction. As she told Bodichon, 'my brother says Propagandist things never pay. Macmillan is an instance in point. It has been made to

Her views were strongly supported by Emily Faithfull and the two of them gave their vision concrete form by founding the *Victoria Magazine* in 1863.[198] The journal featured both male and female writers and kept its feminist leanings muted. The first volume of the magazine contained no editorial manifesto. Articles on women's issues like 'The Influence of University Degrees on the Education of Women' featured alongside matter of general interest, such as a witty poem by the famous humourist Thomas Hood entitled, 'A Reason for Beauty'.[199] Although Davies quit the *Victoria Magazine* in 1864, following Faithfull's involvement in the scandalous Codrington Divorce trial, the journal continued until 1880 under the editorship of Faithful herself.[200]

Parkes, on the other hand, tried her best to prevent the *EWJ*'s closure. Her faith in the *EWJ* was not rooted in a blindness to the pressures of the market. Way back in 1862, she had told Bodichon that she realized that 'the periodical market' had 'become the great field for speculation' with 'each serial pitted against the others which shall [buy?] the cleverest article'.[201] However, since the trade itself was so 'very uncertain' that even journals which adopted this

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pay, by diverting it from its original purpose, & making it instead, a Magazine to amuse & please the public'. Emily Davies to Barbara Bodichon, 3 December [1862], *Collected Letters*, p.8.

[198] Maria Frawley, 'The Editor as Advocate: Emily Faithfull and *The Victoria Magazine*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 31 (Spring 1998), 87–104.

[199] 'The Influence of University Degrees on the Education of Women', *Victoria Magazine*, 1 (1863), 266–72; Thomas Hood, 'A Reason for Beauty', *Victoria Magazine*, 1 (1863), 141.

[200] In 1864, Admiral Henry Codrington filed for divorce accusing his wife of adultery. Helen Codrington, in her counter claim, alleged that he had tried to rape Faithfull in 1856, when she was a guest in their house. Faithfull reneged on an earlier agreement to testify on behalf of Mrs. Codrington, and the court did not indict her. In the immediate aftermath of the trial, many of the Laghamites distanced themselves from her. Faithfull went on to fashion a successful career as a writer, editor, printer and public speaker. Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.53–56.

[201] Bessie Rayner Parkes to Barbara Bodichon, 1 April 1862, GCPP Parkes 5/114.

business model failed to secure stable circulation figures, she felt that it was safest for the *EWJ* to steer clear of the 'unwholesome & foolish' race being run by the other journals.[202] She believed that the special feminist *EWJ* would, in fact, survive them all: 'When the people get tired of "starring" articles, & there comes a great collapse & smash, the little *EWJ* will still ride on steadily doing its monthly portion of practical work'.[203] She maintained that the high-minded *EWJ* would continue to command a steady market price because its ethical and intellectual convictions made it far more substantial and worthy than the trading journals which merely relied on the star value of contributors.[204]

Thus, when falling subscriptions and mounting differences amongst its members led to the closure of the *EWJ* in 1864, Parkes promptly started a similar enterprise in the *Alexandra Magazine and the Englishwoman's Journal*. This journal was cheaper than the *EWJ* and addressed the lower-middle-class reader more directly, but reaffirmed the value of a specialised feminist journal. For her, 'a special periodical' dedicated to the women's movement contained 'the best thoughts of the best people': While some amongst its army of feminist writers might write 'somewhat loosely and colloquially', their work, she argued, provided far more valuable social and political insights than the polished, aesthetically refined writing contained in the general periodicals.[205]

Although this journal did not survive beyond a year and Parkes herself, following her conversion to Roman Catholicism, largely withdrew from the women's movement, the mantle of

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[202] Ibid.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

[205] B.R.P. [Bessie Rayner Parkes], 'The Use of a Special Periodical', *The Alexandra Magazine & English Woman's Journal*, 1 (August 1864), 257–63 (p.259).

publishing a feminist journal was taken up by one the *EWJ*'s most committed members, Jessie Boucherett.[206] Boucherett's *The Englishwoman's Review* (*EWR*), a one shilling monthly dedicated to recording and commenting on the progress of the women's movement, was launched in 1866. Although the *EWR* initially failed to gain enough subscriptions to stay afloat, it was saved by Boucherett, who sold off her diamonds to generate the necessary funds and went on to make it a strong advocate of various women's causes, especially female suffrage.[207] It continued till 1910, becoming one of the longest running feminist publications. The lessons in feminist writing that the *EWJ* had taught thus had a long and influential, if varied, afterlife in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[206] Shattock, 'Bessie Rayner Parkes'.

[207] Theodora Bostick, 'The Press and the Launching of the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1866–1867', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 13 (Winter 1980), 125–31 (pp.129–30).

Signature Seriousness: The Woman Writer as a Professional Political Journalist

Writing in the *Ragged School Union Magazine* in September 1850, Eliza Meteyard pointed out that both 'well-meaning writers and the public at large' had mistakenly associated '"cheap literature"' with 'all that is demoralizing and vile'.[1] If a literature that fostered temperance, self-help and self-education could be made available at a low price, it would wean the lower classes away from the 'pernicious' penny-dreadfuls, which not only propagated crime and 'sensual indulgence in every form' but also instigated 'the youthful population of the manufacturing districts' to join violent strikes by spreading 'the false notion that the capitalist is the natural enemy of labour'.[2] Meteyard's unnamed targets include Edward Lloyd and George W.M. Reynolds, owners of numerous sensational penny periodicals and active supporters of the Chartist movement.[3] She foregrounded, as an antidote to cheap publications that incited class tensions, the genre of inexpensive improving journals to which she herself contributed regularly.[4]

Brian Maidment, drawing on a phrase in Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, has termed them 'journals of popular progress'.[5] Usually priced at a few pence and reaching circulation figures between thirty and sixty thousand, these journals were read primarily by the lower-middle and artisan classes. They advocated the principles of self-improvement, industry and cross-class co-operation.[6] While these magazines of popular progress did not have any definite

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[1] Eliza Meteyard, 'Cheap Literature', *Ragged School Union Magazine*, 2 (September 1850), 219–22 (p.219).

[2] Ibid., p.221.

[3] Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People, 1790–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.164–68, 170–74.

[4] 'Cheap Literature', p.219.

[5] Brian Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress And the Artisans', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 7 (Fall 1984), 83–94 (p.83).

[6] Rogers, *Women and the People*, pp.131–32.

party affiliation and did not seek, like Chartist journals, to incite their readers to protest and seize political power, their consistent demand for social, legal and educational reforms made them unmistakably political.[7] Although Meteyard prophesied a 'mighty future' for these cheap, improving journals, they were actually fast declining and would collapse by the end of the 1850s.[8]

Attempting to bolster demand for such publications, Meteyard, like Charles Knight, whose *Penny Magazine* (1832–45) had spear-headed the 'cheap diffusion of wholesome literature', underlined their critical role in maintaining social and political harmony.[9] She claimed that the inexpensive 'progressive' literature, despite being a small portion of available print material, had already 'done for the people, what government or the church has not, namely, educated them to the best of its present ability'.[10] The radical popular journals offered women like Meteyard a critical medium of political participation.

This chapter studies women's political journalism in the mid-century mainstream press. Drawing on recent scholarship on the diverse nature of Victorian political activity, I use the term *political journalism* broadly, to refer to periodical writing on such political topics as governance, law and political economy.[11] Throughout the early nineteenth century, as Kathryn Gleadle and others have shown, a number of middle and upper-class women lived as 'borderline citizens',

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[7] Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', p.83.

[8] 'Cheap Literature', p.222; Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', pp.83–84.

[9] Charles Knight, 'Address to the Reader', *Penny Magazine*, 31 (30 June 1846), 231–34 (p.234).

[10] 'Cheap Literature', p.219

[11] *Women in British Politics, 1760–1860: The Power of the Petticoat*, ed. by Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*; Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*. For a discussion of parliamentary and party-specific journalism, see Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp.54–74, 147–69.

using various 'avenues for […] political interaction' such as 'petitioning, publication, pressure groups, and patronage'.[12] While such critics have noted that writing articles on various social, cultural and legal issues constituted an important aspect of Victorian women's political activity, they have not discussed how such writing offered new models of women's professional journalism. Consequently, a number of issues that are specific to the political journalism of Victorian middle-class women remain to be discussed: to what extent did women's access to reform circles enable them to enter this male-dominated line of journalism? How did such female journalists respond to existing models of women's writing? How did the mid-century changes in the profile of the journalistic profession influence the public image of the female political journalist?

This chapter addresses such issues by discussing the careers of two prolific female political journalists: Eliza Meteyard (1816–1879) and Frances Power Cobbe (1822–1904). Although the price, social status and political orientations of the journals for which Meteyard and Cobbe wrote differed widely, there are certain similarities in their professional trajectories which make it useful to study their careers in conjunction. They both wrote regularly in mainstream periodicals with a mixed-gender readership and had to be keenly attentive to the dangers of being dismissed as irrational or disreputable, particularly when they chose to write on a tabooed topic like female prostitution or protested against the practice of vivisection which enjoyed the support of an extremely influential lobby of male scientists and parliamentarians.

I examine Meteyard as a representative of female journalists who wrote on political issues in the radical popular magazines of the 1840s and Cobbe as a pioneer of women's political

[12] Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p.1. Also see Richardson, *The Political Worlds*, pp.1–5.

journalism in high-repute journals. Meteyard wrote under the pseudonym 'Silverpen', but she not only used it to create a persona that contested the assumption that women could not speak about political issues, but also went on to publish under a composite signature that included both her real name and pseudonym.[13] By the 1850s, it was public knowledge that Meteyard herself was Silverpen. Similarly, though Cobbe wrote both anonymously and pseudonymously at various points in her life, she simultaneously published under her name in high-profile journals regularly. By developing signature styles and distinctive voices in the periodical press, Meteyard and Cobbe showed that the female journalist could play a special role in the social and political sphere.

Meteyard's and Cobbe's writing shares some similarities with the work of Harriet Martineau. Martineau's immensely successful *Illustrations of Political Economy,* published in part-issue format in her own name in 1832, foregrounded women's ability to address political issues.[14] Martineau, who was part of the Unitarian circles that Meteyard joined in the 1840s, published not only in early Unitarian journals like the *Monthly Repository* (1802-1837) but also in popular periodicals like *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, in which Meteyard's early short story, 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress', was serialised.[15] Like Cobbe, Martineau published in high-

[13] For example, she signed the above-noted article on 'Cheap Literature' as 'Eliza Meteyard—(Silverpen)'.

[14] Harriet Martineau, *Illustrations of Political Economy*, 9 vols (London: Charles Fox, 1832–34). The *Illustrations* were published in twenty five monthly parts from February 1832.

[15] Harriet Martineau, 'The Hanwell Lunatic Asylum', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 5 (June 1834), 305–10. Meteyard's short story, 'Scenes' was serialized in *Tait'*s in 1843–44. This story is discussed in the chapter on fictional representations of female journalists. The *Monthly Repository* published Martineau's first article, 'Female Writers on Practical Divinity', in which, writing under the masculine pseudonym 'Discipulus', she examined the effect of Hannah More's and Anna Laetitia Barbauld's work on contemporary religious practice. *Monthly Repository*, 17 (October 1822), 593–96.

repute journals like the *Westminster Review*.[16] However, unlike Meteyard and Cobbe, Martineau usually published her articles anonymously and also sustained a prolific book-writing career alongside journalism.[17] As I focus on the writing that foregrounds women's participation in mainstream journals, I do not study Martineau's anonymous work but note her influence on both Meteyard and Cobbe.

By offering the first critical examination of Meteyard's and Cobbe's work as part of a developing model of Victorian women's professional journalism, this chapter also highlights a critical and largely unnoted development in the Victorian periodical press: the emergence of political journalism as an employment avenue for middle-class women. Although Meteyard attempted, in the 1850s and 1860s, to become a successful novelist and biographer, it was as a political journalist that she sustained herself in the formative years of her career. Frances Cobbe is remarkable for being the only Victorian woman known to have derived a substantial portion of her middle-class income from advocating a range of social and legal reforms in various high-profile journals.[18] Meteyard and Cobbe were 'professional' journalists in two mid-nineteenth-century senses of the term. In consistently campaigning for a set of social reforms, they presented themselves, like the editors of the *EWJ,* as middle-class professionals whose

[16] For example, see H.M. [Harriet Martineau], 'The Martyr Age of the United States', *Westminster Review*, 32 (December 1838), 1–59.

[17] Although Meteyard went on to write various book-length works, most of these belong to a later part of her career, when her journalistic output was considerably reduced. For a discussion of Martineau's simultaneous practice of anonymous journalism and signed book-writing, see Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, pp.35–60. For a brief outline of the main differences between Cobbe's and Martineau's journalism, see Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, 182 n. 2.

[18] As pointed out by Hamilton, out of over eleven thousand contributors [both male and female, as identified by the *Wellesley Index*], only two – Frances Power Cobbe and Agnes Mary Clerke– did not write on literary matters on a regular basis, and only Cobbe derived a substantial portion of her income by writing regularly '*as a feminist* on women's issues'. *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.7–8.

vocational ethic of social service distinguished them from hack-writers. However, unlike Bessie Rayner Parkes and Barbara Bodichon, Meteyard and Cobbe also fitted G.H. Lewes' 1847 definition of 'professional' authors as those who lived solely by the pen.[19]

While Cobbe and (to a lesser extent) Meteyard have received some scholarly attention in recent years, most of this work focuses on their contributions to Victorian feminism or specific reform campaigns rather than their pioneering role in claiming a place for women within a competitive, male-dominated avenue of professional journalism.[20] Susan Hamilton's recent work on Cobbe was a step in this direction.[21] It departs from an influential line of scholarship on the specialist feminist press, represented by the work of Barbara Caine and others, and provides critical insights into how the mainstream location of Cobbe's journalism influenced her writing.[22] But even Hamilton remains focused on Cobbe's feminism and though she does discuss Cobbe's anti-vivisection writing elsewhere, she does not examine how Cobbe presented herself as a single woman who successfully charted a career in mainstream political journalism.[23] This chapter contributes to the field of theoretical inquiry opened by Hamilton by focusing on how Meteyard and Cobbe provided a new model of the female political journalist as a self-sustaining

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[19] G.H. Lewes, 'The Condition of Authors', p.285.

[20] For accounts of Meteyard's contributions to Victorian feminist discourse, see Karthyn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists*, pp.42–45; pp.152–56; pp.167–68; Rogers, *Women and the People*, pp.140–49; Kay Boardman and Joanne Shattock have offered brief overviews of Meteyard's career but have not analyzed her journalism in detail. Joanne Shattock, 'Becoming a Professional Writer', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Writing*, ed. by Linda Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp.29–42. Kay Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame: Eliza Meteyard's Principled Career', in *Popular Victorian Women Writers,* ed. by Kay Boardman and Shirley Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp.46–65.

[21] Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.1–23.

[22] Caine, *Victorian Feminists*, pp.103–49.

[23] Susan Hamilton, 'Reading and the Popular Critique of Science in the Victorian Anti-Vivisection Press: Frances Power Cobbe's Writing for the Victoria Street Society', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 36 (Fall 2010), 66–79.

'independent woman'.[24] Since Meteyard's major journalistic work was conducted in the late 1840s and early 1850s, before Cobbe published her first article, I study her work first. Examining them in this order also enables me to foreground how the mid-century changes in the periodical press impacted women's journalism.

Tracking Silverpen: Eliza Meteyard's Popular Politics

Eliza Meteyard (1816–1879) was born in Liverpool, the third child and only daughter of William Meteyard, a surgeon, and his wife Margaret.[25] In 1833, she assisted her eldest brother, an assistant commissioner, in preparing tithe reports. Years later, she would put this first-hand experience in analyzing legal and technical information about land evaluation to use while writing on co-operative land-holding schemes for the working classes.[26] On the death of her father in 1842, she moved to London to make her living as an author. She became part of the radical unitarian circle which maintained close links with the 'socialist, secularist, Unitarian and utilitarian movements of the day'.[27] In 1845, she took on the pseudonym *Silverpen*, on Douglas Jerrold's suggestion, when she wrote an editorial in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*. Meteyard published one novel, entitled *Struggles for Fame,* in 1845, but this moderately successful book did not provide lasting financial security.

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[24] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

[25] Fred Hunter, 'Eliza Meteyard (1816–1879)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18624> [accessed 11 November 2015]. All biographical details on Meteyard have been drawn from his article.

[26] Silverpen, 'The Co-Operative Band', *Howitt's Journal*, 1 (13 March–20 March 1847), 144–58.

[27] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, p.4.

Throughout the late 1840s, Meteyard supported herself and her family through her journalism. In a letter to her sister written in September 1850, Mary Howitt, the co-editor of *Howitt's Journal*, described Meteyard as a 'fragile and delicate' single woman, 'who in ordinary circumstances would require brothers and friends to help her'; however, following the death of her father, Meteyard had provided critical financial assistance to her mother and brothers, becoming 'both father and mother to her family'.[28] For Howitt, Meteyard's authorship offered a commendable model of women's professional work, wherein their financial independence was driven and sustained by their selfless devotion to familial duties. Despite entirely eliding the political focus of Meteyard's writing, Howitt underlines that women like Meteyard showed by example the route to female emancipation: 'it is in this way', through such 'marvelous energy and high principle and self-sacrifice […] that women will emancipate themselves'.[29]

As an editor, Howitt allowed Meteyard to fashion a far more emphatically political authorial persona. In her articles and stories, Meteyard addressed a wide range of social and political issues, from vaccination and prenatal nutrition to women's education and employment, from city slaughterhouses and prostitution to temperance and poor laws.[30] While she certainly professed a desire to serve others, she presented this impulse not as feminine, domestic dutifulness but as the service ethic of a high-minded professional writer.

Meteyard's female predecessors in the line of political journalism include, apart from Martineau, women like Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna (1790–1846) and Mary Leman Grimstone (c.

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[28] Mary Howitt to her sister (unnamed), 2 September 1850, in *Mary Howitt: An Autobiography*, ed. by Margaret Howitt, 2 vols (London: Isbister, 1889), II, pp.61–62.

[29] Ibid., p.62.

[30] Shattock, 'Becoming a Professional Writer', p.32; Sally Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women's Reading, 1835–1880* (Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981), pp.29–32 (p.31).

1800- c.1850), who, though influential in the 1830s and 1840s, have passed into relative obscurity since. A strong supporter of '"*political* Protestantism"', Tonna, a Tory, insisted 'that religion and politics could not be dissevered and demanded therefore that righteous women cultivate a detailed understanding of parliamentary politics'.[31] The *Christian Lady's Magazine*, which Tonna edited from 1834 to her death, supported women's participation in electoral politics and their active involvement in framing educational, imperial and foreign policies.[32] In 1835, Mary Leman Grimstone, who was associated with the same radical unitarian circles as Meteyard, wrote a signed article on 'Quaker Women' for the *Monthly Repository*, defending women's right to participate in politics.[33] Taking strong issue with an article in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, which stated that women lacked the intellectual acumen and physical toughness needed for political statesmanship, she points out that if women were given the same education and social standing as men, they would be able to successfully take on men's work.[34]

Although Grimstone begins by citing examples of relatively conventional female public work, such as the philanthropic services of Quaker women like Elizabeth Fry, she goes on to make a strikingly early case for women's entry into professional politics. She denounces those who think that 'a *woman* speaking in the House of Commons is […] laughable' as 'enemies of change' and proclaims that women's political activity has, in fact, been ordained by nature itself:

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[31] Kathryn Gleadle, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna and the Mobilization of Tory Women in Early Victorian England', *The Historical Journal*, 50 (March 2007), 97–117 (pp.100, 117). Gleadle notes that Tonna identified with a 'particular brand of toryism', which defended the Church of England and the pre-1829 constitution. Tonna was critical of Peel's 'liberal toryism', which she saw as representing '"modern" innovations of "conservative" politics' (p.100).

[32] Ibid., p.105. Tonna also edited the Protestant Association's *Protestant Magazine* between 1841 and 1844.

[33] Mrs. Leman Grimstone, 'Quaker Women', *Monthly Repository*, 9 (January 1835), 30–37. For their contributions to radical journals, see Rogers, *Women and the People*, p.131.

[34] 'Women of Business', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1 (October 1834), 596–97.

> If nature has endowed her with eloquence, and study possessed her with knowledge to serve the cause of her country, should she be declared incompetent, because she were wrapped in a silken shawl instead of a senator's robe? because she spoke with a voice of silver instead of brass?[35]

While the term *politician* was used in the nineteenth century, as Gleadle has pointed out, 'to denote those (men or women) who were distinguished for their detailed understanding of political affairs' and was 'commonly applied to women in private correspondence where it signified intellectual, rather than practical political commitment', Grimstone was certainly ahead of her time in publically projecting women as potential parliamentarians.[36] The younger Meteyard, who took part in specific political campaigns such as the Early Closing Movement, 'appears to have been much more an activist' than Grimstone.[37] She carried forward the mantle of the female political journalist by writing in journals that had direct links with early Unitarian periodicals such as the *Monthly Repository*.[38] As 'Silverpen', a title that is evocative of the silver-voiced female politician that Grimstone envisaged, Meteyard consistently underlined women's ability to effect critical political change.

As the century progressed, periodical writing itself would emerge as an avenue where the lines between intellectual and practical political commitment were particularly blurred. By the mid-nineteenth century, as Mark Hampton has shown, 'there was no hard and fast distinction

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[35] Grimstone, 'Quaker Women', p.34

[36] Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p.7. Although Gleadle notes another instance where the word *politician* is used to describe publically active women, that article employs it to refer to 'ladies' who sign a petition in support of those imprisoned for the sale of unstamped newspapers rather than to speak of women's direct participation in Parliament. See, Eliza Sharples, 'The Editress to her Readers', *Isis*, 4 August 1832, 385–87 (p.385).

[37] Rogers, *Women and the People*, p.126; Gleadle, *The Early Feminists*, pp.33–34.

[38] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, pp.4–5.

between the broad categories of journalist, politician, and scholar'.[39] The British Prime Minister, William Gladstone, himself combined all three roles.[40] Throughout the latter part of the century the periodical press was widely perceived as assisting the growth of parliamentary democracy by representing the opinions of the people.[41] Meteyard, who earned her living by writing on serious political subjects, offers one of the earliest examples of women undertaking political activity professionally. Since a comprehensive review of all of Meteyard's writing is beyond the scope of this chapter, I shall draw on her writing for three of these journals, *Howitt's Journal* (1847-1848), *Eliza Cook's Journal* (1849-1854) and *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* (1845-1848) to elucidate her model of political journalism.

While most Victorian journals had both male and female contributors, journals of popular progress like *Eliza Cook's Journal* and *Howitt's Journal* were unusual in foregrounding this by publishing most contributions with authorial signature. The *Howitt's Journal*, issued under the signatures of its middle-class editor-couple William and Mary Howitt, presented itself as a periodical conducted by, and addressed to, a mixed-gender audience and published signed work by celebrity women writers like Mary Russell Mitford and Frederika Bremer alongside articles by men.[42] The option of pseudonymous publication was also available. Elizabeth Gaskell, for example, published her early journalistic fiction on working-class life in Manchester in the *Howitt*'s *Journal* under the masculine pseudonym, 'Cotton Mather Mills, Esq'.[43] *Eliza Cook's Journal* similarly carried signed work by its male and female contributors alongside anonymous

[39] Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p.7

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., p.9.

[42] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.87.

[43] Ibid., pp.83–90.

and pseudonymous articles. Given that the popular periodicals published such a varied range of signatures, why did Meteyard consistently publish under the ambiguously gendered pseudonym, Silverpen?

The example of Harriet Martineau, whose unmarried status was highlighted by critics like John Wilson Croker in their damaging reviews of her signed *Illustrations Of Political Economy*, might have impressed Meteyard with the necessity of adopting a pseudonym.[44] Many of Meteyard's stories, like Martineau's tales, were thematically concerned with political economy. Meteyard, like other radical unitarians of the 1840s, endorsed the principles of self-help and industriousness and believed that 'the harsh competitiveness of capitalism' could be mitigated by promoting co-operation both within and between the various classes.[45]

Her short story, 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', begins by quoting John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* on the importance of inculcating self-dependence in the working classes, and the following week's instalment of the story carries as its epigraph, a quotation from John Hill Burton's *Political and Social Economy*, in which industry and thrift are prescribed as the surest means of capital accumulation and social upliftment of the working classes.[46] The eponymous hero of this story illustrates this theme by successfully spearheading a co-operative fund for the labouring classes, and using the capital accumulated to establish a joint-stock ironworks company. The action of the tale catapults the reader from the year 1859, which is quoted in the title of the story, into 1879 and concludes at the end of the century, where John's

[44] [John Wilson Croker and George Poulett Scrope], 'Miss Martineau's Monthly Novels', *Quarterly Review*, 49 (April 1833), 136–52.

[45] Gleadle, *Early Feminists,* p.52.

[46] Silverpen, 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', *Eliza Cook's Journal,* 1 (18 August–15 September 1849), 283–317 (pp.283, 265).

company is shown to have become a bustling international enterprise, with more than half a million investors.

Meteyard's editor, Eliza Cook, had proclaimed that all literature in her journal was aimed at 'the perfection of social and political civilization', which made the reform agenda behind stories like 'John Ashmore' difficult to miss.[47]As Gleadle has noted, the radical unitarians believed that literature had the ability to inform the reader of 'the hidden truths which lay beneath the layers of unreliable convention' and used it as 'a means of promoting awareness, and consequently protest against the existing society'.[48] In 'John Ashmore', the boundary between fact and fiction is self-consciously called into question by Meteyard, who presents the account books of the fictional joint-stock iron works company as 'proof' of the practicability of her suggested line of reform.[49]

Elucidating her choice of genre, Meteyard claims that the impetus to write fiction, rather than factual, theoretical prose came to her from the very people whom she worked hard to educate through her writing every week. Returning to the plotline of the story after spending some time in analyzing the statistics contained in these imaginary account-books, she notes that she is reverting to her 'ordinary method' of explaining 'those vital principles which run like an undercurrent through this story', 'a method […] received so well' by her readers that she and they were 'becoming as one' in their 'weekly communion with each other'.[50] In a note appended to the story and affixed with her initials 'E.M.', she underlines that her journalistic illustrations of political economy are not inferior versions of the original texts:

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[47] 'A Word to My Readers', p.1.

[48] *Early Feminists*, p.55.

[49] 'John Ashmore', p.297

[50] Ibid.

> I have quoted the texts of profound and great men; men whose glory it is to be true teachers, men who have prepared themselves for this hallowed service by immense study and laborious thought […] to convince you that the Joint-Stock principle, thus applied to capital and labour, is no mere theory or speculation of my own.[51]

The great works of political economy are here presented merely as sources used by the reform journalist to convince a readership who, for all their love of fiction, still seem to invest greater faith in factual forms of representation. Meteyard herself does not perceive her fiction as subordinate to the work of male theorists. Rather, she underlines that it is her writing that makes the 'principles [which] are amongst the profoundest of social progress' comprehensible to her readers.[52]

Meteyard proposes an unsexed ideal of public writing. By not providing any overt indications of Silverpen's gender in the story, Meteyard suggests that any writer, whether male or female, who can explain such complex subjects as political economy to a wide readership is fit to take on the work of a political journalist. By championing the role of the popularizer, Meteyard not only reinforces the cultural value of her famous female predecessor, Harriet Martineau, but also claims for herself, the very role of public mentor that she had described as the privilege of 'profound and great men':

> I cannot enter into abstract generalities, but one thing, in thus urging the matter of Joint-Stock Funds upon your thoughtful attention, is this, and it will go far with many of you in your consideration of my right as a teacher, that I can have no

[51] 'John Ashmore', p.317

[52] Ibid.

> personal, no selfish gratification in these matters, beyond the one of truth and of interest in your welfare. This is well known to hundreds of you.[53]

Where political economy fails, by its very abstruse style, to win her audience over, Meteyard relies on her own hard-earned reputation as a crusader for the good of her readers to convince them to rest their faith in her prophecies of progress. Her highest aspiration, she asserts, is that her readers speak of her as a high-minded writer, '"one who served us and considered our interests, and this in a spirit of unselfish love"'.[54]

Her editor, Eliza Cook, similarly stressed the vocational impulse of her editorship to make her influential journalistic position palatable to her readers. Explicitly disavowing any pretentions to greatness, she stated that 'while venturing this step in the universal march of periodicals', she had no desire 'to declare myself a mental Joan of Arc, bearing special mission to save the people in their noble war against Ignorance and Wrong'; she only wished to lend her 'feeble aid to the gigantic struggle for intellectual elevation now going on'.[55] However, the note of feminine apology that is evident in Cook's editorial is not to be found in Silverpen's disavowal of personal ambition. Rather, in nudging her readers to think of male and female writers as equally capable of advancing social progress, Meteyard further emphasizes women's fitness for this line of writing.

In other articles, she specifically aggrandizes the role of the female journalist and even speaks of *Eliza Cook's Journal* in the very terms of a women-led crusade that Cook had disclaimed. In an article written to galvanize support for the Early Closing Movement which

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[53] 'John Ashmore', p.317

[54] Ibid.

[55] 'A Word to My Readers', p.1.

advocated early closure of retail shops, she calls upon the women readers of the journal to join 'an agitation' to reduce the amount of labour imposed on dressmakers and milliners. She states:

> Let it be a WILL having birth from these pages; and let it be said in times to come, when a new Macaulay writes the progress of our national history, that, in a JOURNAL edited and conducted by women, a good and great movement was materially assisted.[56]

The above article foregrounds the cause of female shop workers and milliners as a critical part of the Early Closing Movement, which had its roots in the 1844 Parliamentary discussions of the Ten Hours Bill and the Factory Acts.[57] Meteyard points out that the Early Closing Association would gain political traction by petitioning 'the influential ladies of this country to countenance an abridgement of hours in this department' and seeking 'the patronage of her Most Gracious Majesty to the same'.[58]

In keeping with the radical unitarian belief that co-operation and goodwill between the classes was key to social progress, Meteyard appeals to middle and upper-class 'ladies' to come together to demand better work conditions for 'the *fifteen thousand* human creatures who minister to their adornment and luxury'.[59] Meteyard herself sat on the council of the London

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[56] Silverpen, 'The Early Closing Movement. Milliners and Dressmakers', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 1 (7 July 1849), 154–56 (p.155).

[57] The Factory Act of 1844, which limited the working day of female factory workers to twelve hours, was the first employment legislation to include women. The Early Closing Association worked to enforce reduced office hours for clerks and shop workers. Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827–1867* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.68.

[58] 'The Early Closing Movement', p.156.

[59] Ibid., p.155. Meteyard was drawing this figure from the Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission, published in 1843, which had shocked the public with its description of the dismal working conditions

Whittington Club which, as Kathryn Gleadle and Christopher Kent have noted, was remarkable for encouraging women to become more politically aware by giving them access to its library and allowing them to participate in its mock parliamentary sessions.[60]

When Silverpen underlined the importance of women's participation in reform efforts, her readers would have known that she spoke from having personally worked in mixed-gender reform groups. Reports on the Whittington Club that were published in the *Howitt's* journal noted that Silverpen regularly attended its meetings. Moreover, Meteyard herself wrote an article entitled 'The Whittington Club and the Ladies' for *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*.[61] Silverpen speaks here as a male champion of women's rights, joining a chorus of male writers who, in the initial months of the Club's founding, focussed on building support amongst a male audience for its radical position on women.[62] She welcomes the fact that single women now successfully competed with men and earned their bread 'by what were once considered the masculine prerogatives of the pen, the pencil, or the voice', noting that men themselves would benefit from such interaction with women.[63] 'Mental co-operation' between the sexes in such mixed-gender Clubs as the Whittington would help to 'raise the moral characteristics of man and the mental powers of woman'.[64]

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of seamstresses. For literary responses to the report's revelations, see Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, pp.26–33.

[60] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, pp.140–70; Christopher Kent, 'The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle-Class Social Reform', *Victorian Studies*, 18 (September 1974), 31–55.

[61] Silverpen, 'The Whittington Club and the Ladies', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 24 October 1846, p.243.

[62] For these initial articles, see, Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, p.151.

[63] Silverpen, 'The Whittington Club', p.243.

[64] Ibid.

As reader responses to Silverpen's article on the Early Closing Movement, published in *Howitt's Journal* on 10 April 1847 indicate, Meteyard was largely successful in making her sexual identity irrelevant to her right to speak as a reform journalist. While the readers, having themselves suffered from long working hours, praise the 'excellent' article and hope that the Early Closing issue would gain wider public attention than before for having been 'taken up by a writer of such influence' as Silverpen, they do not make any assumptions about Silverpen's gender.[65]

Meteyard thus claimed, and earned, her journalistic credentials as a relentless campaigner. Silverpen signs off her article on the Early Closing Movement by pledging her continued services to this cause: 'I shall return again and again to this subject, as one among those to which I have pledged my life and labour; and to you, public — employers and employed — I am in all sincerity your devoted servant, SILVERPEN'.[66] In statements like these, Silverpen fashioned the role of the political journalist as a public servant, to be judged by the sincerity and devotedness of her writing alone.

Silverpen's didactic stories reinforced the androgeneity of her signature. Each story has a hero who, whether male or female, acts as Silverpen's mouthpiece. Some protagonists, like Innocent the female reformer in 'Angel of the Unfortunate', give Silverpen a woman's voice; others, like John Ironshaft the working-class hero who is also a reform writer, enable Silverpen to speak as an iron-willed, self-educated working-class visionary. The plotline of 'John

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[65] 'Weekly Record of Facts and Opinions Connected with General Interests and Popular Progress', *Howitt's Journal*, 1 (1 May 1847), 35–36.

[66] Silverpen, 'The Early Closing Movement', *Howitt's Journal* 1 (10 April 1847), 208–09 (p.209). Though it was a convention to sign off public letters by referring to oneself as a devoted servant, the above sentence is striking for being appended not to a letter, but to a leader article.

Ironshaft' limits the political participation of women to being wives and mothers. However, the parallels between Ironshaft's improving literature and Silverpen's writing undercut the story's overt association of reform writing with Ironshaft's muscular, masculine hand. After all, he himself is a creation of Silverpen, a name which suggests high-birth, delicacy and gentility, but which Meteyard associates with the resolute force of political writing. In a story entitled 'Flint and Hart Matronship', Silverpen pledges to write of social wrong with 'an iron pen' and maintains that it is 'an error and a weakness to gloss over one social evil'.[67] Yet, she notes that she 'quail[s]' as she 'paint[s] the shadows' of her picture, and would not have painted them at all, had not nature taught her that 'a divine light is breaking over all earth's sorrow, and all social darkness', making any obfuscation unnecessary.[68]

Meteyard's desire to fashion a distinct journalistic voice is indicated by her painstaking construction of a signature style of writing serial fiction.[69] In nearly every story, Meteyard develops the plotline through a series of contrasts between the personal and communitarian progress brought about by compassionate, industrious people, and the self-destruction and social problems created by the idle and uncaring. A 'Glass of Gin' tracks the contrasting destinies of two destitute sisters who were born into the genteel classes.[70] While one sister labours industriously at every opportunity that comes her way and finally regains her social status by marrying the heir of a prosperous family, the other deteriorates into alcoholism, violence and death. In 'The Flint and Hart Matronship', the beneficial effects of Mary Hart's belief that even

[67] Silverpen, 'Flint and Hart Matronship', *Howitt's Journal* 1 (16 January 1847), 36–38 (p.37).

[68] Ibid.

[69] Silverpen's prose articles do not have any distinctive stylistic features that distinguish her work from that of other regular writers for the magazines of popular progress. This is not surprising given that this genre of journalism was usually determined by the house style and editorial line of individual journals.

[70] Silverpen, 'The Glass of Gin', *Eliza Cook's Journal* 1 (26 May–30 June 1849), 53– 137.

destitute children deserve good education is contrasted with the corrupt and severe matronship of Priscilla Flint, who treats all the destitute children entrusted to her with utmost contempt.[71] Even stories that do not overtly deploy this scheme of contrasts, like 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' and '"The Works" Of John Ironshaft' do comment, albeit briefly, on how the hero's progress contrasts with the failure of others who are unable to either adopt his principles, or show similar perseverance.

The above scheme of representation unmistakably references the work of William Hogarth, particularly his prints on *Industry and Idleness*. In the preface to her 1845 novel, *Struggles for Fame*, Meteyard had proclaimed that her fiction followed the model set by the 'grand, moral, episode of Hogarth and Fielding'.[72] Hogarth's techniques of visual representation enjoyed an influential afterlife in the work of Victorian visual artists like George Cruikshank.[73] William Howitt himself had direct links with Cruikshank's collaborator and political publisher William Hone and had contributed to Hone's 1850 *Everyday Book.*[74] The magazines of popular progress, with their emphasis on the very principles of industry and entrepreneurial will that Hogarth propagated, were eminently suited for Meteyard to attempt her own version of the Hogarthian story. The artists and engravers who worked for *Howitt's Journal*, like Franklin and Measom, also deploy the technique of visual juxtaposition of opposite classes that Hogarth had

[71] Silverpen, 'Flint and Hard Matronship', *Howitt's Journal 1* (9 January–16 January 1847), 18–38 (p.37).

[72] Eliza Meteyard, *Struggles for Fame*, 3 vols (London: T.C. Newby, 1845), I, p.iii.

[73] Ronald Paulson, 'The Tradition of Comic Illustration from Hogarth to Cruikshank', in *George Cruikshank: A Revaluation*, ed. by Robert Patten (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp.35–60.

[74] For a letter from Mary Howitt, in which she mentions William Howitt's friendship with Hone, and for details of *Howitt's* contributions to the *Everyday Book*, see Carl Ray Woodring, *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1952).

used so powerfully.[75] Meteyard's story, 'Life's Contrasts; or, New-Year's Eve', printed in the very first issue of *Howitt's Journal*, and illustrated by Franklin and Measom, provides an typical example of this (Fig 4).[76]

Through a series of short sketches, Meteyard juxtaposes the 'misery, and want, and squalor; ignorance, degradation, and crime' of the lower classes with 'the happiness, the plenty, and the revelry that come within their [the poor's] famished gaze, and ring so lustily in their chill and tremulous ear'.[77] The contrast is meant to shame those rich people who ignore the poor as well as to show the poor what they can achieve if they put their mind to it. The accompanying illustration dramatizes these contrasts by depicting scenes of starvation and death of the poor with a central image of a grand party.[78] While writers other than Meteyard also used this scheme of contrasts in their articles for the popular radical journals, she deploys it with striking

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[75] George Measom (c. 1845-1862), a London wood engraver, was particularly active during the 1840s and 50s and often collaborated with his brother Frederick. John Franklin (c. 1828-1868), a draughtsman, illustrator and painter, also provided illustrations for W.H. Ainsworth's *Tableau from Crichton* (1837). See, Rodney K Engen, *Dictionary of Victorian Wood Engravers* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985), pp.179–80, 91–92.

[76] Silverpen, 'Life's Contrasts; or, New-Year's Eve', *Howitt's Journal*, 1 (2 January 1847), pp.4–7; Illustration, p.4.

[77] Ibid., p.4.

[78] Meteyard's story might also have contained an implicit reference to the Biblical story of Dives and Lazarus, in which a rich man, Dives, refuses alms to a leprous beggar named Lazarus, who lies suffering at his gate. Eventually both men die and while Lazarus is carried to heaven and is placed next to Abraham, Dives enters hell. Dives calls out to Abraham to send Lazarus to help him, but is refused. As Barry Milligan has noted, the story 'became something of a trope for Victorian middle-class anxieties about revolution'. *Pleasures and Pains: Opium and the Orient in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995), 136 n 15. Unlike Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), in which the Chartist John Barton directly refers to the story and ultimately murders the mill owner's son in an act of revenge, Meteyard's article does not explicitly mention the parable and does not envisage a revolution. Though Meteyard notes that the poor 'might surely and rightly question' the justice of such inequalities, she does not prescribe a violent overthrow of the class-system ('Life's Contrasts', p.4). Rather, she attributes the misery of the poor to their ignorance of the principles of self-help and cooperation and it is this lack that she hopes to remedy by writing in cheap periodicals.

regularity.[79] In stories like 'Lucy Dean' and 'Angel of the Unfortunate', Meteyard uses it explicitly to foreground women's contributions to social reform, depicting women as successfully stemming the social and moral deterioration of other characters.[80]

Nowhere is Meteyard's ability to address a political issue that was widely considered to be utterly unsuitable for women more evident than in her articles and stories on prostitution. From around the 1830s, when the first official inquiry into the relation between urban conditions and disease was conducted, prostitution came to be widely perceived as a public health issue.[81] For the middle and upper classes, who perceived the labouring classes as filthy and morally degenerate, the poor urban prostitute was, as Judith Walkowitz has noted, 'literally and figuratively […] the conduit of infection to respectable society'.[82] While a number of prominent men wrote about prostitution, it was commonly considered 'discreditable', as W.R. Greg noted, 'to a woman even to be supposed to know' about it.[83] Female philanthropic activity, a mode of political involvement that was usually considered respectable, also became controversial in relation to this issue. Dr. Acton, the author of the famous study of prostitution, opposed women's involvement in the rescue and reclamation of prostitutes, arguing that they inherently lacked the severity needed to deal with hardened prostitutes and Dickens showed a similar attitude when he

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[79] Douglas Jerrold, for example, wrote a series of sketches on the contrasting social spaces of St. James and St. Giles in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine.* Douglas Jerrold, 'The History of St. Giles and St. James. By the Editor', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, 1 (January–June 1845), 1-285.

[80] Silverpen, 'Lucy Dean: The Noble Needlewoman', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 2 (16 March –20 April 1850), 312–95; Silverpen, 'The Angel of the Unfortunate', *Howitt's Journal*, 2 (18 September –25 September 1849), 186–99.

[81] Ingrid Sharp, Introduction, in *Josephine Butler and the Prostitution Campaigns: Diseases of the Body Politic*, ed. by Jane Jordan and Ingrid Sharp, 5 vols (London: Routledge, 2003), I, pp.31–42 (p.31).

[82] Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.4.

[83] [W.R. Greg], 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, 53 (July 1850), 448–506 (p.450)

sought to direct the rescue efforts of Angela Burdett-Coutts and to curb 'her feminine tendency toward leniency'.[84]

The Associate Institute for Improving and Enforcing the Laws for the Protection of Women, founded in 1844 by the radical unitarians to demand stricter laws against brothels, was male-dominated.[85] However, as Gleadle has noted, the radical unitarians notably departed from contemporary opposition to women's participation in prostitution reform by 'urging for concerted female action' in the emancipation and reform of their 'fallen' sisters.[86] The journals of popular progress endorsed the radical unitarian belief that the prostitute, although currently a source of frightful contagion, could be transformed into a member of a reformed, hard-working and benign working-class; they also gave female journalists like Meteyard the rare chance to write explicitly political articles on the issue. In fact, one of Meteyard's earliest articles on the topic was on Richard Spooner's 1847 Bill on seduction, which, when first introduced in Parliament, was barely discussed before one minister, Mr. Berkeley, drew the attention of the house to the 'presence of strangers in the galleries', leading all further debate to be conducted behind closed doors.[87] As Sarah Richardson has recently noted, female spectators had long been part of the 'strangers' [non-members] in the House of Commons, and when the House was rebuilt after the fire of 1834, a section of the 'Strangers' Gallery' was set apart for women.[88] Meteyard's journalism thus enabled her to publically address a political issue to which women were literally denied access.

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[84] Laura Hapke, 'He Stoops to Conquer: Redeeming the Fallen Woman in the Fiction of Dickens, Gaskell and their Contemporaries', *Victorian Newsletter*, 69 (Spring 1986), 16–22 (p.17).

[85] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, p.132.

[86] Ibid., p.137.

[87] Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel*, 43 n. 19. Mitchell adds that the details of the discussion were not published.

[88] *The Political Worlds of Women*, pp.127–37.

Writing in support of Spooner's proposal to make seduction of young women punishable by law, Meteyard not only castigates politicians such as Hume and Colonel Sibthorpe for opposing the Bill, but also claims to be more in tune with the pulse of the people and 'the spirit of my time' than the Parliamentarians who opposed such reforms.[89] 'Out of the thousands of Silverpen's readers, hundreds at this moment respond to me', she proclaims, proudly asserting her own power as a reform journalist who enjoys the ready attention of a large readership.[90] Silverpen not only supports the specific proposition of making seduction punishable by law, but also demands other reforms such as the education of the lower classes, which she deems essential to eradicate prostitution. For Meteyard, literary and political change were part of a single reform process: 'I look but to the exaltation, mental and physical, of my kindred people, and the purity of the literature of my noble country'.[91] In keeping with this view of the political force of fiction, she informs her readers that she is currently preparing a tale to illustrate and 'exemplify the blessings of mercy and knowledge in the individual'.[92]

The first part of this serial short story, 'the Angel of the Unfortunate' is published three months later, in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal.*[93] The second instalment of the story, published on 25 September, carries a footnote that proclaims this story to be the very one that Silverpen had promised in her article on Spooner's Bill.[94] In inserting this footnote, Meteyard explicitly presents the story as part of an ongoing legal debate about prostitution. In her prose

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[89] Silverpen, 'Comments on Mr. Spooner's Bill', *Howitt's Journal*, 1 (19 June 1847), 339–41 (p.341).

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] For mid-century fictional representations of prostitution, including a brief discussion of Meteyard's stories, see Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel,* pp.29–32. Mitchell does not analyse Meteyard's representation of women's journalism.

[94] 'The Angel of the Unfortunate', pp.196–97.

article, Meteyard had noted that a large number of Parisian prostitutes had been illegitimate children, arguing that the care and education of such abandoned children was critical to eradicating prostitution.[95] The story illustrates this point, by showing how an abandoned female infant named Innocent, who is initially sheltered by the porter of a Parisian hospital, grows up to be a skilled anatomical artist and a tireless crusader in the physical and moral reform of Paris' prostitutes. Like others who claimed that women's inherent sympathy made them even more effective than men in reaching out to and reclaiming 'fallen women', Meteyard emphasizes Innocent's ability to treat prostitutes with pity and mercy.[96]

However, it is not simply Innocent's innate moral qualities but her specialized skills as a reformer and medical artist, acquired through strenuous training, that make her interventions in this masculine field of reform seem acceptable. Innocent's education is comprised of two stages. She initially attends a convent run by the sisters of charity, where she shows an outstanding ability in 'assisting to prepare medicine and food for the sick'.[97] Her other great talent is in the masculine art of anatomical sketching. She excels in making 'dry outlines and diagrams, for which women have rarely any taste'.[98] This skill is fortuitously discovered by Professor Retzner, a famous anatomy expert, who subsequently educates and even adopts her.[99]As the daughter of the wealthy Professor, Innocent gains access to the male-dominated domain of professional medical knowledge and is also able to study anatomical art for its own sake, free from any compulsions to make money.

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[95] 'Comments on Mr. Spooner's Bill', p.340.

[96] For the argument in favour of women's efforts in rescuing prostitutes, see Hapke, 'He Stoops to Conquer', p.17.

[97] 'The Angel of the Unfortunate', p.187.

[98] Ibid., p.189.

[99] Ibid.

While Innocent's later education includes the specialized study of medical books and philosophy, it continues the training in social service that she had initially undertaken in the religious convent. In Retzer's company, she visits 'the beds of Magdelens and hospitals, and the recesses of prisons'.[100] Innocent's professional expertise enables her to cut through bureaucratic formalities that would have otherwise obstructed her reform work. In one critical sequence, where Innocent rushes to the aid of a dying prostitute named Marie, we are told that although 'it was past the hour when strangers were admitted within the hospital […] Retzner's name and her own [name] were more than sufficient passport'.[101] Her apprenticeship comes to an end with Retzner's death, by which time she is shown to have become a consummate professional medical artist: one who combines technical expertise with the prized service ethic of the professional, who holds both a 'cool head' and a 'warm heart'.[102]

Through the character of Innocent, an artist and reformer, Meteyard makes a strong case for her own role as a professional political journalist. Innocent's preferred mode of initiating social change strikingly echoes Silverpen's signature style of illustrative fiction: she paints a portrait of the dying prostitute Marie and hangs it next to a portrait of Marie as a young child, made years ago by an impoverished old student of Retzner, Camille Dispareaux, whom she secretly loves and goes on to marry. Like the contrasting trajectories of social progress and deterioration that feature regularly in Meteyard's stories, these portraits show Marie as she was before and after her 'fall'. Innocent says that she juxtaposes them in order to 'make the great

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., p.196.

[102] Susan Colón, drawing on Alfred Marshall's 1885 description of professional men, notes that they were envisioned as combining 'cool heads' with 'warm hearts'. *The Professional Ideal*, pp.1–21.

truths of mercy active […] and show [that] it is not the province of charity and purity to utterly crush the fallen human flower, but to raise it, if possible, with a gentle hand'.[103]

A sudden twist in the episodic plot brings to light a previous will made by Retzner and delays Innocent's inheritance of his property.[104] This, along with her determination to discreetly support Camille's education, puts her under the need to earn her own living.[105]As a young unmarried woman, living under financial stress and devoted to assisting the career of her male friend and future husband, Innocent's situation closely mirrors Meteyard's own status as a single woman who, apart from paying for her own expenses, helped to fund the education of her brothers. Like Meteyard, who underlined her high-minded objection to writing in popular and profitable penny dreadfuls, Innocent refrains from drawing for frivolous magazines, even though they present an easy means of earning much-needed money: 'The pre-eminent talent of her pencil would have soon been employed, and profitably rewarded, would she have used it in illustrating the *feuilletons*, or serials of the hour; but the nobler work to which it has been accustomed was both difficult to procure, and scantily remunerated'.[106]

Despite emphasizing that Innocent only produced sketches of the highest quality, Meteyard never shows her earning an income. Depicting the female artist selling her work for money could make her seem too much like the very prostitute to whom she is meant to serve as a contrast. Meteyard tries hard to emphasize the difference between the two women, but the underlying link erupts into the foreground in the single scene where Innocent is shown going to the market. 'Business with a print and picture-seller' takes Innocent 'to one of the principal

[103] 'The Angel of the Unfortunate', p.197.

[104] Ibid., p.196.

[105] Ibid, pp.195–96.

[106] Ibid., p.196.

streets', and just as she is about to enter the shop, she sees a 'richly-dressed' prostitute named Lucrèce, looking in.[107] The prostitute and the professional painter walk the same streets and approach the same shops. Critically, before Innocent can carry out her business transaction, Lucrèce faints and the ensuing commotion interrupts the sale of Innocent's art.[108] Lucrèce's literal fall reinforces the differences between the 'fallen woman' and Innocent and deflects the reader's attention from Innocent's commercial transaction. While the story repeatedly describes Innocent's valiant efforts at sustaining reform work under poverty, it never alludes again to the sale of her artwork and, very soon, Innocent wins a court-case, inherits Retzner's property, and continues her reform work free of any ungenteel associations with the market.

The story suggests Meteyard's anxiety that even while addressing critical political issues and working for various social reforms, self-sustaining female journalists like herself were at the risk of being perceived as degraded hacks. Moreover, in the Victorian period, authorship, especially serial writing aimed at a mass readership, was associated, as Catherine Gallagher has shown, with prostitution.[109] In venturing into public life, the professional female journalist, like the female artist, ran the risk of being perceived as a prostitute.[110] While Meteyard does not explicitly develop this metaphor of the writer as whore, her stories show considerable anxiety about the professional woman writer's exposure to a public readership and potential loss of social status.

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[107] Ibid., p.198.

[108] Ibid.

[109] 'George Eliot and Daniel Deronda', p.43. This association between female journalism and prostitution is discussed in greater detail in the chapter on fictional presswomen.

[110] As Dorothy Mermin has pointed out, women's entry into public life was commonly perceived as a 'highly sexualized self-exposure' and the old term *public woman* was still used in the nineteenth century for a prostitute. *Godiva's Ride: Women of Letters in England, 1830–1880* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p.xiv.

Despite propagating the virtues of self-help in her articles and stories, Meteyard remained particularly concerned about retaining her social and cultural superiority, as a middle-class woman, over her working-class and artisanal readers. These anxieties also surface in another story, 'The Worm Towards the Sun', that Meteyard wrote a few months before 'Angel of the Unfortunate'.[111] A far shorter and more sketchy story than the above, 'The Worm Towards the Sun' shows how a grub-street hack named Mary Hogg, who earns her living by translating sailors' letters, stops a 'fallen woman' named Magdelene from committing suicide, then helps her find employment and also facilitates her marriage. Hogg is shown as a sincere translator who does her best to ensure that the sensitive contents of the letters are properly translated. Her willingness to shelter Magdelene, despite being poor herself, shows that she is no greedy, market-driven writer. Yet, Meteyard, evidently concerned that Mary Hogg might seem to belong to the same class as Magdelene, peppers the story with reminders of the former's genteel birth. Apart from having rich relatives and being able to translate foreign languages, she eventually marries an educated medical man, an 'M.R.C.S'.[112]

More importantly, once Magdelene discovers what Mary does for a living, she takes it upon herself to carry the letters to the sailors' inn, a space that is said to be 'like an eastern caravansary', where 'men of all nations' congregated'.[113] While Mary literally lifts Magdalene from off the streets, the very fact that Mary herself had hitherto walked these paths suggests that such professional writing is not suitable for women, even if it was undertaken in the spirit of self-help. Such fears, suggested in stories like the above, come to the fore in a short story, entitled 'Lucy Dean: The Noble Needlewoman', which features a fictional character named Mary Austen

[111] Silverpen, 'The Worm Towards the Sun', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Ma*gazine, 5 (February 1847), 172–85.

[112] Ibid, pp.177, 176. The acronym stands for Member of the Royal College of Surgeons.

[113] Ibid., p.181.

who, like Meteyard, is a political journalist. This story, and Meteyard's own application to the Royal Literary Fund, provide valuable insights into the uncertain social status of the self-sustaining female political journalist.

'I Can Beg for Others […] But Not For Myself': The Professional Predicament of the Female Political Journalist

In 'Lucy Dean: Noble Needlewoman', Meteyard explicitly celebrates the wide-ranging impact of women's political journalism through the figure of Mary Austen.[114] Through her articles and practical efforts in female emigration, Mary suggests a model for solving the problem of distressed single women, and offers it as a template for large-scale Government-assisted emigration.[115] The story charts the resounding success of Mary's plan. Her articles on female emigration initiate the transformation of Lucy from a destitute needlewoman to a successful female emigrant. Once established in Australia, Lucy works tirelessly to convince emigrant men and the colonial government to support the emigration of impoverished Englishwomen and helps Mary establish a systematic emigration scheme (p.393).

Joseph Kestner has noted that the character of Mary Austen was roughly modelled on Mrs. Caroline Chisholm, who in 1849 founded the Family Colonisation Society for would-be emigrants.[116] Chisholm wrote pamphlets about female emigration and her scheme was publicized

[114] For a discussion of 'Lucy Dean' as an example of didactic domestic fiction that treats family problems as social problems and presents solutions as models that can be adopted by working women, see Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form 1832–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp.136–42.

[115] 'Lucy Dean', p.343. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically.

[116] *Protest and Reform*, p.144. Also see Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen*, p.99.

by Charles Dickens in *Household Words*.[117] Like Chisholm, Mary directly facilitates emigration by helping Lucy gather funds for emigration. The first shipment of female needlewomen to Australia left England's shores just two and a half weeks before Meteyard's story appeared in *Eliza Cook's Journal*.[118] Meteyard's story thus not only reflected on the activities of organizations like Chisholm's but also cheerfully anticipated their success.

Meteyard makes a radical contribution to the contemporary discussions of emigration by presenting it as a means of reclaiming 'fallen women'. Mary Austen rescues Lucy's 'fallen' sister Nelly. She stops Nelly from committing suicide, sends her illegitimate child to Australia with Lucy, and closely supervises Nelly's own reform by facilitating a 'few months' probation' at an asylum, thereafter sheltering her in her own home as her servant (p.361). Later in the story, Nelly herself sails to Australia and marries. Meteyard's stories are very likely to have influenced Elizabeth Gaskell's deeply sympathetic portrayal of 'fallen women in *Mary Barton* (1848) and *Ruth* (1853). Gaskell published her early stories, as noted earlier, in *Howitt's Journal* and one of them featured in the same issue as Meteyard's article on Spooner's Bill.[119]

Through the character of Mary Austen, Meteyard asserts that political journalism was no less effective than direct activism in bringing about social change. Mary observes to Lucy that she felt the 'strongest inclination to lay down [her] pen, and show by action from another land, and across the widest ocean of the world, what *one* woman, resolute of heart, can do to help her sisters here'(p.329). She observes that although she would have been happy to personally launch

[117] Dickens foregrounded the practicability of Chisholm's emigration schemes by publishing letters from successful working-class immigrants. The faulty spellings and punctuation of these letters reinforced their status as authentic and spontaneous working-class correspondence. 'A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters', *Household Words*, 1 (30 March 1850), 19–24.

[118] Kestner, p.145.

[119] Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel*, p.32.

the scheme that she had proposed in her articles, she had been persuaded by friends that such activism would have circumscribed her usefulness to 'the principle of emigration alone', whereas by writing, she could serve 'a hundred things beside' with the 'same degree of usefulness'(p.329). Here, Meteyard suggests that the female reform journalist was even more effective for being able to facilitate a wider range of reform efforts than activists like Chisholm whose activities are limited to a single issue.

In the magazines of popular progress, it is Silverpen who, like Mary Austen, works for various reforms, from improving the work conditions of female dressmakers to female emigration, and from promoting co-operative land schemes for the working classes to reforming the 'ragged' schools for destitute children. The topicality of the issue of female emigration only strengthens the association between Mary Austen, periodical writer for a cheap and popular 'small magazine' and Silverpen, author of the above story for the cheap and popular *Eliza Cook's Journal* (p.315).

While most of Meteyard's stories show 'a preoccupation with class', which is, as Rogers has noted, 'itself indicative of anxiety and uncertainty over the constitution of social groups and their relationship to each other', 'Lucy Dean' is distinctive in focusing on the figure of the female political journalist.[120] Mary Austen strikingly prefigures Meteyard's later representation of the self-sustaining female journalist, Mary Cresset, in 'A Woman's Pen'. Austen, like Cresset, is a single woman who embodies the principles of self-help and industry, sustains herself mainly through her journalism, and is revered by her readers. In both the stories, working for money reinforces the woman writer's authority as a radical journalist by showing that she only preaches what she herself practices, but it also threatens to undermine her middle-class status. In 'Lucy

[120] *Women and the People*, p.125.

Dean', the female journalist's relation to lower-class and artisanal readers (who are also the target audience of the story), is described in greater detail and Meteyard's anxieties about the social status of the middle-class female journalist surface more acutely.

Throughout, Meteyard takes great pains to stress that Mary is socially and culturally superior to the working classes. She is not only located at considerable physical distance from the artisanal classes, in a village, but is also depicted as possessing the aura and authority of literary genius. On hearing that Lucy has seen and met Austen, Twinddlesing, a bird keeper and regular reader of Austen's articles, is said to have 'not only overwhelmed her with questions' but also quickly fetched his friends who then join him in posing a 'ceaseless fire of questions': '"What sort of eyes had she, what sort of hair, what sort of a nose, how was she dressed, was she tall or short, what did she say?"'(p.341). The male readers' lack of knowledge about the woman writer whose work they so devotedly follow emphasizes that the female journalist, despite addressing men and women across classes, remains respectably shielded from personal exposure. In fact, Lucy herself only manages to procure Mary's address from Noseby, the newsman, because she is a woman. Although Noseby 'goes himself once a month, in his weneration [*sic*] to look outside the door, he'd die before he'd give up' her address 'to any one as wore a hat' (p.315).

However, the distinction between the woman writer and seamstress, both hard-working and self-sustaining, remains highly tenuous. This finds its most graphic representation in a scene where Mary passes on some of her own old clothes to Lucy to help the latter prepare for her voyage to Australia. While Mary's donation of clothes highlights the class difference between her and the seamstress, this difference is strikingly undermined when she accidentally reveals 'to the seamstress's quick eye the real secret': that Mary's own closet is nearly empty, 'that papers, old gowns, and odds and ends, made up the show meant so kindly to deceive!' (p.342).

The scene raises several questions about the very definition of gentility. While it suggests that Mary's nobility, in giving what she herself could ill spare, is a far more valid marker of her innate and indelible gentility than mere material riches, it also paradoxically reveals the shaky grounds on which Mary's own claims to being above charity stand. In fact, it is only because Lucy has 'tact enough […] to conceal her knowledge' that she can play the part of the well-to-do donor (p.342). It is by refusing to seek charity that Mary distinguishes herself from the lower-class people she helps. As she states, before petitioning a rich councillor to aid Lucy: 'Though I am the last person to ask a favour for myself […] I am the best of supplicators for another' (p.343).

The story goes on strikingly to foreground Mary's troubled class status. She spends much of her money in starting an emigration school, and this, along with being duped by a bookseller, brings her to the brink of bankruptcy. It is Lucy who, returning from Australia armed with the funds for a large-scale emigration scheme, speedily solves Mary's financial problems. When Lucy asks Mary why she didn't reach out to her earlier, Mary repeats her proud claim that 'I can beg for others […] but not for myself' (p.394). This profession of being above charity, unlike her earlier refusal to seek aid, appears hollow since Lucy does aid her financially, even if it is suggested that Mary, as the original initiator of this plan of emigration, has in a sense earned this money. Very soon, Mary herself emigrates to Australia, which only reinforces the similarities between the two self-sustaining female protagonists in the story.

Meteyard wrote this story at a time when she herself was battling with severe financial stress and in June 1851 she made her first application to the Royal Literary fund. [121] The above-noted concerns about the inappropriateness of seeking charity, and the anxieties about whether

[121] File No. 1269. The file is not paginated.

radical journalism was a fit occupation for a middle-class woman, find a particularly marked articulation in her own applications to the RLF. The RLF, founded in 1790, tided over authors in periods of acute monetary distress by granting donations. The terms and conditions for relief, printed on official RLF letterhead and included in the application form instituted by the Fund's Secretary, Octavian Blewitt, in 1841, stated that the fund would only cater to authors of some 'published work of approved literary merit'.

Though 'literary merit' was left undefined and though the Fund interpreted 'literature' broadly, admitting applications from novelists, poets, biographers, and a range of other writers, the layout of the form favoured book publications. The space provided to an author to list his or her work was divided into five subsections for 'titles of published works, *in full*', number of volumes, size, date and place of publication. Only a book-writer could have filled all five sections and 'completed' the form. In fact, those who worked exclusively as journalists were not relieved by the Fund. This state of affairs propelled some London pressmen to form a separate fund for journalists, called the Newspaper Press Fund in 1864, following the failure of a similar attempt in the 1840s.[122]

In listing two novels, *Struggles for Fame* (1845) and *The Doctor's Little Daughter* (1850), and a book edited by Mr. Worsley (which contained her prize-winning essay on juvenile depravity) above her journalism, Meteyard was foregrounding the part of her work that was essential for her to qualify for aid from the RLF. Moreover, she mentions her periodical pseudonym Silverpen alongside her own name in the form and her application is seconded and recommended by her past editors Mary and William Howitt. Earlier, Meteyard had used her connections with Jerrold and the Howitts to establish professional contacts with influential male

[122] For an account of the founding of the Newspaper Press Fund, see Cross, *The Common Writer,* pp.60–64.

critics like Leigh Hunt.[123] Given how enabling her periodical work had been for Meteyard, it is interesting to note that she goes to great lengths to distinguish her book-writing, which she describes as respectable authorship, from her journalism, which she represents as hack-work. She maintains that 'nothing but the need to live and to fight a single handed fight' made a genteel writer like her 'so long the servant' of the periodical press.[124] In an application primarily supported by her journalistic career, this professed distaste for periodical work is particularly odd. On reapplying to the RLF in 1854, Meteyard continued to claim that she strove 'to be less a hack of the periodical press' so as to 'spare' herself for 'good work — for a book on the Lives of the Women of the Commonwealth!'.[125]

Meteyard's self-image as a book-writer perforce taking up journalism for money is reminiscent of Thackeray's famous depiction of the professional author in his 1850 novel *Pendennis*, as a 'literary hack' who often has to 'work for his bread against time, or against his will, or in spite of his health, or of his indolence, or of his repugnance to the subject on which he is called to exert himself, just like any other daily toiler'.[126] It was this alignment of authorship with menial wage-labour in Thackeray's novel that drew sharp criticism from Foster and others who saw it as demeaning the image of the professional writer.[127]

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[123] For a discussion of Meteyard's 1848 letter to Leigh Hunt, see Susan Brown, 'Networking Feminist Literary History: Recovering Eliza Meteyard's Web', in *Virtual Victorians: Networks, Connections, Technologies*, ed. by Veronica Alfano and Andrew Stauffer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp.57–82 (pp.65–66).

[124] Eliza Meteyard to the General Committee of the RLF, 9 June 1851, File No.1269.

[125] Eliza Meteyard to the General Committee of the RLF, 7 June 1854, File No.1269.

[126] William Makepeace Thackeray, *The History of Pendennis*, ed. by Peter L. Shillingsburg (1850. New York: Garland, 1991), p.353.

[127] An anonymous article in the *Morning Chronicle*, occasioned by the death of a literary pensioner, condemned Thackeray's novel for 'fostering a baneful prejudice' against the literary profession by making authorship seem utterly banal. 'The death of Mr. P.F. Tytler', *Morning Chronicle*, 3 January 1850, p.4. Forster also wrote against

As Daniel Hack has demonstrated, in the wake of the 'dignity of literature' debates which broke out in newspapers in 1850, Dickens and others argued that the RLF, in being run like a charity, adversely affected the reputation of the literary profession by treating destitute authors like beggars.[128] In 1851, the very year that Meteyard applied for aid to the RLF, the Guild of Literature and Art was founded by Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton and others as an alternative to the charity-model of the RLF. Through the Guild, money would be given to destitute writers 'as a tribute to merit' and not as 'alms to destitution'.[129] Though there was no functional alternative to the RLF in 1851 (the Guild did not make its first grant till 1868), the criticism levelled against the RLF by the Guild's high-profile promoters, would have certainly made poverty-stricken, yet respectable, writers like Meteyard concerned about potentially compromising their professional dignity by 'begging' the RLF for money.[130]

Meteyard's awkward, unconvincing disavowal of her journalism can be read as a sign of an anxiety to present herself as a respectable middle-class professional driven to poverty by ill-luck, rather than a destitute hack. By specifying that it was only her journalistic work, undertaken to make ends meet and written to fit the requirements of particular periodicals, that resembled the work of a menial 'servant' or 'hack', and contrasting it with the vocational impulse of her book writing, Meteyard underlines that her literary efforts, aspirations and status, were far higher than

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Thackeray's portrayal of professional writers in 'Encouragement of Literature by the State', *Examiner*, 5 January 1850, qtd. in Thackeray, *The History of Pendennis*, pp.485-88. These attacks on Thackeray's novel, and his defense of it in the *Morning Chronicle*, are commonly referred to as the 'Dignity of Literature' debate. See, Hack, *Material Interests*, pp.84–88; Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, pp.102–06, 109–10.

[128] Hack, 'Literary Paupers', pp.699–70. Also see, Hack, *Material Interests*, pp.89–100.

[129] 'Prospectus for the Guild of Literature and Art', qtd. in Appendix D, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. by Madeline House, Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965–2002), VI, p.855.

[130] For the first few grants awarded by the Guild, see Cross, *The Common Writer*, pp.74–75.

those of hack-writers. By speaking of her journalism as a harness that restrains her from devoting her full energies to more substantial 'good' writing, Meteyard presents herself as an applicant who will use the aid, if granted, not only to overcome her present financial difficulty, but also to give up work that did not grant the author the dignity and autonomy she deserved. At the same time, by listing her articles and serial fiction, Meteyard underlines that she is not an idle beggar who tried to live on charity, but a hardworking author who had attempted all possible ways of sustaining herself before applying to the RLF for help. Alaric Watts, who recommends her for a subsequent application in 1854, also presents Meteyard in this light. Meteyard, he notes, was 'not one of those ordinary literary mendicants who will never work so long as charity will enable them to be idle, but an upright, clever, and industrious little body; always indisposed to eat the bread of indolence'.[131]

Thus, while Meteyard's RLF application does not adequately represent the range or value of her reform journalism, it sharply indicates her predicament as a self-sustaining middle-class radical journalist: although she championed the dignity of labour, social mobility and self-help in her articles, she herself remained deeply uncomfortable about potentially losing her own class status by associating herself too closely with such working-class ideals. It is particularly striking, therefore, that sometime after 1850, Meteyard started signing her articles. It is difficult to state a definite reason for this break with her earlier pseudonymity. It might have been the case that by this time, Silverpen's signature was widely recognized as being Meteyard's and she felt it unnecessary to retain an incognito. She had occasionally appended her initials, 'E.M' to footnotes in some of her earlier stories.[132] At times, she included her pseudonym, 'Silverpen', in

[131] Alaric Watts to Octavian Blewitt, June 17 1854, File No. 1269.

[132] 'John Ashmore', p.317

parenthesis.[133] This suggests that she did not wish to disavow her reform journalism for the popular journals.

Her increasing financial problems may have also made her realize the importance of claiming her past work in her own name. In fact, a closer look at the pattern of Meteyard's RLF applications suggests that her emergence from pseudonymity was precipitated by the rapid failure of the journals that sustained Silverpen throughout the late 1840s. Having never applied for aid prior to 1851, Meteyard made five applications in the 1850s and 1860s, and in some cases she explicitly cites the failure of these journals as one of the reasons for her financial distress. Each subsequent application describes financial troubles caused by book publications. Though she claimed in her 1859 application, that the demise of these periodicals did not affect her much because she was 'passing on to better things' and had 'long anticipated' her 'freedom from much distasteful [work …] as well as precarious and indifferent pay', this claim to have successfully transitioned to book-writing is more aspirational than an accurate description of her career in 1859.[134] Though Mary and William Howitt negotiated with Meteyard's publishers, Hurst and Blackett, to ensure that she got a handsome payment of a thousand pounds for her most famous work, *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* (1865-66), this book took several years to write and Meyetard found herself paying an additional two hundred and fifteen pounds for high-quality illustrations and soon after, ended up knocking on the door of the RLF once again.[135]

Meteyard's repeated failure to keep herself above charity and her dependence on former

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[133] 'Cheap Literature', p.219.

[134] Eliza Meteyard to the General Committee of the Royal Literary Fund, 2 May 1859, File No. 1269.

[135] Meteyard mentions that she had been gathering material for this biography for about two years in her 1859 application to the RLF. Ill-health is also cited by Meteyard as preventing her from working enough to make ends meet.

editors like the Howitts in negotiating deals with publishers suggests that having cut her professional teeth on the 'journals of popular progress', she found it particularly difficult to adapt to mid-century changes in the periodical press. Though she continued to write articles alongside novels, and books on the Wedgwoods in the 1860s and 70s, these articles appeared largely in magazines that, like the journal of popular progress, were cheap and presented themselves as progressive, entertaining and useful. Fred Hunter in his biographical account of Meteyard for the *ODNB*, mentions that she wrote for 'quality quarterly journals'.[136] However, apart from a few articles and stories that Meteyard published in an antiquarian quarterly, the *Reliquary*, in the early 1860s, no articles by her have been identified in quarterly journals.[137] Moreover, she was not paid for her *Reliquary* pieces.[138] As noted earlier, Meteyard's applications to the RLF in 1862 and 1868 indicate her failure to make a living out of her journalism in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Despite her financial difficulties, Meteyard continued to press for social reform and, as noted in the previous chapter, contributed the only short story to be printed in the entire run of the *EWJ*. Meteyard's periodical work contrasts sharply with the next subject of this chapter, Frances Power Cobbe, who started her career by breaking into the very high-profile journalism that Meteyard failed to enter.

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[136] Hunter, 'Eliza Meteyard'.

[137] No contributions by Meteyard to any other quarterly are mentioned by Kay Boardman in his sketch of Meteyard's career. The *Wellesley Index* and the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* also do not mention any such contributions. Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame', pp. 46–60; 'Eliza Meteyard', Contributor Record, *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900* < http://wellesley.chadwyck.co.uk/fullrec/fullrec.do?id=CONT-7233&area=contributors&DurUrl=Yes> [accessed 4 June 2016]; 'Eliza Meteyard', *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, p.410.

[138] Her 1862 application file to the RLF notes that these contributions were 'all gratis'. In fact, she does not even list the *Reliquary* contributions in her 1868 application. File No. 1269. She did publish occasionally in monthly review magazines like the *Critic* and the *Eclectic Review*, but as indicated by her financial distress, she did not earn enough from such work to sustain herself.

Professing Womanpower: Frances Power Cobbe's High-Profile Political Journalism

Born into the wealthy landed Irish gentry, Cobbe inherited an annual allowance of two hundred pounds from her father and received occasional financial assistance from her eldest brother Charles.[139] The provision of two hundred pounds, insufficient for a middle-class lifestyle, was evidently made in expectation that Cobbe would be supported by a husband. Thus, while Cobbe was not, like Meteyard, entirely dependent on her authorial income, the need to earn enough to sustain a middle-class lifestyle made her appreciative of the financial benefits of a prosperous journalistic career.

The rapid expansion of high-repute journals between 1850 and 1875, as Kent has demonstrated, coincided with the reform and expansion of the universities leading to a productive interaction between the two fields: while distinguished journals turned to the university men for contributions of a high intellectual quality, they, in turn, functioned as 'an organ of the mid-Victorian clerisy […] an ideal medium of cultural authority ready to serve the newly awakened ambitions of the universities'.[140] While higher journalism enabled elite men to make much-needed additions to their income, its 'vocational aspects' made it an appropriately dignified working avenue for the university elite, some of whom were beginning to turn to journalism, not simply as a part-time occupation pursued alongside a liberal profession, but as their sole, full-time profession.[141] As Kent's discussion of John Morley, a university man who rose from being the editor of the *Fortnightly Review* from 1867 to 1882 to a cabinet minister,

[139] Sally Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe: Victorian Feminist, Journalist, and Reformer* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), p.83.

[140] Christopher Kent, 'Higher Journalism', p.181.

[141] Ibid.

makes clear, higher journalism, like other middle-class professions, enabled social mobility.[142] The stakes of regular contribution to journals like *Macmillan's* and *Fraser's* were thus particularly high, and it was into this competitive professional field that Cobbe successfully entered.

On 3 November 1888, Frances Power Cobbe published a brief, prescriptive article in the *Women's Penny Paper* on 'Journalism as a Profession for Women'.[143] With twenty-six years of journalistic experience to her credit, Cobbe was writing this article as 'an old woman journalist' to advise her 'younger sisters' on how to prepare themselves for the job.[144] Cobbe makes a qualified case for women's journalism, noting both the 'peculiar aptitudes' as well as the 'countervailing deficiencies' that women 'commonly bring' to the 'task of a regular contributor to a public journal'.[145] She notes that women's 'readiness and quickness in using whatever mental powers' they possessed were qualities particularly well-suited to the rapid pace of newspaper journalism. Women's ability to treat critical issues with deep sympathy and to write humorously without slipping into 'coarseness, or […] malignity', she says, would enable them to enlist readerly interest and empathy.[146]

'Against these feminine aptitudes for journalism', Cobbe lists the following 'disabilities': women's lack of 'the steady health and equable brain-power' required to perform 'the serious mental labour of original composition on a fresh subject every day […], week in and week out, through the greater part of the year' and the deficiency, especially common in young women, of

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[142] Ibid., p.188.

[143] Frances Power Cobbe, 'Journalism as a Profession for Women', *Women's Penny Paper*, 3 November 1888, p.5.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

the general knowledge required to 'write to good purpose on the majority of topics discussed in newspapers'.[147] Cobbe mentions these 'deficiencies' only to better prepare women for journalism, and encouragingly states that women could substantially increase their chances of professional success by carefully regulating their leisure activities and reading extensively.

In thus emphasizing women's fitness for male-dominated lines of presswork, Cobbe's essay prefigures Emily Crawford's exceptional advocacy of women's parliamentary and war reportage in an 1893 *Contemporary Review* article, also entitled 'Journalism as a Profession for Women'.[148] Cobbe stresses, like Crawford, that women must work according to the existing conditions of the press without seeking gender-based concessions. But Cobbe makes a less familiar argument when she emphasizes, in the last part of the essay, that female journalists must not become passive and unthinking mouthpieces for the established press: 'Never […] to oblige your editor, argue even on a small matter of political or ethical discussion against your own conviction, but tell him frankly he must choose another contributor if he desire the subject to be so treated'.[149] Such concern about the intellectual autonomy of the female journalist is missing from articles by Crawford and other advocates of women's journalism in the 1890s, like W.B. Stead, partly because they focus largely on news reportage, rather than on analysis and commentary.[150] Cobbe, on the other hand, seems to be describing her own line of social and political journalism, wherein a writer's ability to sustain an argument with conviction was of prime significance.

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[147] Ibid.

[148] Emily Crawford, 'Journalism as a Profession for Women', *The Contemporary Review*, 64 (September 1893), 362–71.

[149] 'Journalism as a Profession', p.5.

[150] W.T. Stead, 'Young Women and Journalism', *The Young Woman*, 1 (1892), 12–14; W.T. Stead, 'Young Women in Journalism', *Review of Reviews*, 4 (October 1892), 373 (p.373).

By urging budding female journalists to be fiercely independent in their writing, Cobbe was encouraging them to emulate the professional ethos of the highest levels of periodical writing. Elite contributors to high-profile journals perceived overt editorial direction as an intolerable affront to their status as middle-class professionals, feeling that it reduced them to the level of hack-writers.[151] As N.N. Feltes has observed in relation to George Eliot's attempt to control the publication format of her novels, 'the professional's freedom to control conditions, terms, and content is never so manifest as when "he does something else than what was expected of him"'.[152] For Cobbe, the journalist's 'office-chair' was a 'little pulpit' from which women could speak to 'ten thousand, fifty thousand, perhaps to a hundred thousand people', and it was only if female writers wielded this power with great responsibility that they could fully command the status of professional journalists.[153] As one of the earliest women to write for the leading periodicals that served as the principal sites of 'sage writing', Cobbe embodied this ideal of the female professional journalist as prophet and challenged Carlyle's famous definition of the authoritative writer as 'exclusively male'.[154]

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[151] Frederick Harrison for example, broke with the *Fortnightly Review* after he took offence at John Morley's editorial supervision. See, Kent, 'Higher Journalism', p.194.

[152] N.N. Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p.48. The embedded phrase is from George Eliot's letter to John Blackwood, dated 28 August 1860, regarding her novel *Romola*. *The George Eliot Letters*, III (1954), p.339.

[153] 'Journalism as a Profession', p.5.

[154] Carol T. Christ, '"The Hero As Man of Letters"', pp.20, 22. Thaïs Morgan, 'Victorian Sage Discourse and the Feminine: An Introduction', in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse*, ed. by Thaïs E. Morgan, pp.1–18 (p.8). The term 'sage writing' was first used by John Holloway to refer to a genre of Victorian prose in which a writer studies 'what the world is like, where man stands in it, and how he should live'. John Holloway, *The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument* (London: Macmillan, 1953), p.1. Morgan, and others have shown that the Woman Question enabled female writers to enter sage writing and have identified some of the key features of this genre of prose writing. Linda Peterson, 'Harriet Martineau: Masculine Discourse, Female Sage', in *Victorian Sages and Cultural*

I shall now examine Cobbe's writing as a model of high-profile reform journalism by women. Since I wish to study the challenges Cobbe faced in breaking into this line of work and the strategies she adopted to overcome them, I focus on her early career in higher journalism, especially her articles in the first two high-repute journals that published her, *Macmillan's* and *Fraser's.* For this reason, Cobbe's articles on vivisection, which, though a critical part of her political writings, were mostly written during a later phase of her career, are not discussed in detail.

Cobbe published her first individual article, 'Workhouse Sketches', in the April 1861 issue of *Macmillan's Magazine*.[155] Launched in 1859, *Macmillan's*, was the first mid-century shilling monthly to attain a wide readership amongst the educated classes by combining serious, high-quality political writing (that was hitherto to be found only in the expensive quarterlies) with popular material like serialised fiction.[156] Although a new journal, *Macmillan's* drew contributions from distinguished men of letters, partly because its owner, Alexander Macmillan, had run a successful publishing business in Cambridge and enjoyed close links with the university men. As is evident from the appointment of David Masson, a Professor of English Literature at University College London, as its first editor, the magazine also reached out to the

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Discourse, ed. by Thaïs E. Morgan, pp.171–86; Linda Peterson, 'Sage Writing', in *A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Cultur*e, ed. by Herbert Tucker (Chichester: John Wiley, 2014), pp.399–413 .

[155] Frances Power Cobbe, 'Workhouse Sketches', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 3 (April 1861), 448–61. Prior to this, Cobbe had published an anonymous two-part book on theology, *An Essay on Intuitive Morals*, and a signed paper on 'Destitute Incurables' in the January 1861 issue of the *Journal of the Workhouse Visiting Society* that she had written jointly with Margaret Elliot, and had read out at the Glasgow meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in September 1860. France Cobbe and Margaret Elliot, *Destitute Incurables in Workhouses* (London: James Nisbet, 1860). The article was also published in *Journal of the Workhouse Visiting Society*, 2 (January 1861), 329–38.

[156] Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.115; George J. Worth, *Macmillan's Magazine, 1859-1907: 'No Flippancy or Abuse Allowed'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp.1–9

male elite of the newer universities. Its contributors included men from an expanding class of influential government servants and public administrators.[157] Although *Macmillan's* published fiction by a few women, its political articles were mostly written by men.[158]

Cobbe's article appeared a month after the Select Parliamentary Committee on Poor Law Relief invited Louisa Twining, the honorary secretary of the Workhouse Visiting Society, to give evidence on the current state of workhouse administration.[159] In her statement, which was later published, Twining asserted her status as an expert in the field and made a strong case for women's direct participation in workhouse administration, stating that the nurture and care of sick and afflicted paupers involved 'things about which women know far more than Boards of Guardians are likely to know, and they are things which might not even occur to a medical man'.[160] Although gendered notions of middle-class femininity did enable women to take up civic and philanthropic activity, as Gleadle has shown, 'there was no consensus that wider mobilization along these lines was necessarily appropriate' and Twining herself corresponded

[157] Ann Parry, 'The Intellectuals and the Middle-Class Periodical Press', *Journal of Newspaper and Publishing History*, 4 (Autumn, 1988), 18-32.

[158] Caroline Norton, Julia Wedgwood, Augusta Webster, Caroline Norton and Harriet Martineau wrote for *Macmillan*s in the 1860s. However, apart from two signed political articles by Harriet Martineau, most of the writing by women was fiction and/or anonymous. Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.115; 'Harriet Martineau', Contributor Record, *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:wellesley&rft_dat=xri:wellesley:contributor:CONT-7233> [accessed 14 March 2016].

[159] On how Twining's activism, writing and political networking enabled her to assume 'the role of a national expert' on workhouse reform, see Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, pp.53–56.

[160] 'Extracts from the Select Committee on Poor Relief (England)—1861. Miss L. Twining's Evidence', in Louisa Twining, *A Letter to the President of the Poor Law Board on Workhouse Infirmarie*s (London: William Hunt and Company, 1866), pp.19–36 (p.26).

with a number of female reformers who expressed considerable anxiety about transgressing the bounds of feminine propriety.[161]

Cobbe's article, which is timed to add momentum to women's increasing incursions into Parliamentary politics, also underlines her own ability to write a prompt, thorough article on a topical political issue. Presenting her journalism as an extension of her reform work, Cobbe substantiates her views on 'three of the leading branches of workhouse arrangement' (the alleviation of pauperism, education of destitute children, and care of the incurable poor) with information from her own workhouse visits, as well as accounts gathered from female workhouse reformers such as Twining.[162]

While Twining had addressed a 'select' committee of distinguished men, Cobbe speaks to the wider readership of a mainstream magazine and presents a strikingly strident image of the female social reformer.[163] She asserts that 'the care of infants, the training of young girls, […] the reclaiming of fallen women, the tender care of the suffering and dying', were all 'the "Rights of Woman," given her by God Himself—and woe be to man when he denies them!'.[164] She seems to be invoking the familiar image of the female reformer as an 'Angel out of the House' who, in accepting her fundamental difference from men, does not contest male supremacy despite working in the public realm.[165] However, she explicitly presents women's reform work as a political activity that is different from but as important as men's political ventures.

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[161] *Borderline Citizens*, pp.6, 54–55.

[162] Cobbe, 'Workhouse Sketches', p.448.

[163] Twining herself wrote books and pamphlets on workhouse reform and even published in newspapers such as the *Times* and *Manchester Guardian*. Janet E. Grenier, 'Louisa Twining (1820–1912)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38083> [accessed 3 December 2015].

[164] Cobbe, 'Workhouse Sketches', p.460.

[165] Helsinger, Sheets, Veeder, *The Woman Question*, I, p.xv.

The principles of British political democracy were best represented, she says, by the New Poor Law, which cast the responsibility of civic governance on 'the whole population, male and even female' and laid on everyone 'the DUTY […] to investigate the action of regulations which we have an immediate (or mediate) influence in making'.[166] While the female journalist, like the female reformer, was legally unenfranchised, she wielded 'mediate influence' over the government through her journalism and Cobbe presents her own writing as part of her public rights and duties.[167] Anticipating potential grounds of readerly dissatisfaction with some aspects of her writing, she notes, 'the assertions made in this paper may or may not be just, or founded on sufficient data; but every one who has read them must henceforth know that such abuses *may* be passing in his own immediate neighbourhood, supported by his own elected representative and maintained by his own money'.[168] The statement underlines the undeniable social force of her journalism: even if it fails to have all the qualities that a reader may expect in an article published in a serious mainstream journal, it serves the critical political purpose of alerting the electorate to possible lapses in governance.

Cobbe next published in *Macmillan's Magazine* eight months later. In this article, 'Social Science Congresses and Women's Part in Them', she directly advocates the right of female social reformers to talk on the same issues as their male counterparts.[169] Founded in 1857 to discuss social policy, the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (NAPSS), also called the Social Science Association, was one of the earliest reform organizations to grant

[166] 'Workhouse Sketches', pp.448, 461.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid, p.461.

[169] Frances Power Cobbe, 'Social Science Congresses, and Women's Part in Them', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 5 (December 1861), 81–94. These were the annual conferences of the NAPSS.

full membership to women.[170] Excluded from parliament, women found in the NAPSS a critical avenue of political participation. At its annual conferences, they discussed various political issues, especially those directly concerning women, with peers, parliamentarians and leading men-of-letters.[171] The NAPSS's conferences were entitled 'congresses', a term which suggested a Parliament-like gathering of the official representatives of social reform institutions like the Workhouse Visiting Society and the Victoria Printing Press. Like Parliamentary speeches, the papers read at the NAPSS were discussed in the press and sometimes reprinted in full.[172] These similarities were not lost on either the champions or the critics of women's participation in the NAPSS. In a letter to Bodichon, Parkes referred to the NAPSS's annual congress as 'Parliament' and noted that the association, in inviting 'women to consider the affairs of the country […] actually concedes *en petit* the whole principle of the suffrage'.[173] Critics of female speakers, on

[170] Kathleen McCrone, 'The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science and the Advancement of Victorian Women', *Atlantis*, 8 (Fall 1982), 44–66 (p.44). For a discussion of how Anna Jameson' s formulation of a sexual 'communion of labour' influenced women's participation in the NAPSS, see, Eileen Janes Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996), p.127. Also see Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform, and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Social Science Association, 1857–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[171] Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.108.

[172] *The Times*, for example, reprinted in full Bessie Parkes's paper on 'The Market for Educated Female Labour', which she presented at the 1859 NAPSS conference at Bradford. In its initial years, the *Transactions* of the congresses, which reproduced some of its speeches in full, were published annually and printed by Emily Faithfull's Victoria Press. Janice Schroeder, 'Speaking Volumes: Victorian Feminism and the Appeal of Public Discussion', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 25 (2003), 97–117 (pp.102, 105).

[173] Bessie Rayner Parkes to Barbara Bodichon,13 September 1859, GCPP Parkes 5/ 91.

the other hand, argued that the NAPSS should follow Parliamentary practise and exclude women speakers.[174]

Women's papers were initially delivered by men but within two years the NAPSS challenged prevailing social injunctions against women's public speaking by allowing female members to present their own papers.[175] This development attracted increasing press attention and conservative journals tried to silence female speakers by reinforcing the social stigma against women addressing a mixed-gender audience in public.[176] Opposition to female speakers was not only posed by conservative male-dominated journals like the *Saturday Review*, but also journals like *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* that were supportive of women writers.[177]

In October 1861, Joseph Bevington Atkinson, who usually wrote art criticism, published an anonymous article on that year's NAPSS conference in *Blackwood's*.[178] For him, female speakers only worsened the quality of debate because the men, driven by the 'noble feeling of chivalry towards a fair and sensitive sex', were forced to be appreciative and uncritical.[179] While such considerate reception of women kept the occasion respectable and pleasant, it was 'in no way accordant with deliberate scientific inquiry, or compatible with the freedom of open and

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[174] J.B. Atkinson, for example, stated that 'the practice of our Houses of Parliament […] plainly indicates what, upon this matter, was the wisdom of the ancients, and the theory of the English constitution'. [J.B. Atkinson], 'Social Science', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* 40 (1861), 463–78 (p.472).

[175] McCrone, 'The National Association', p.47.

[176] Schroeder, 'Speaking Volumes', p.108.

[177] *Blackwood's* published some of the best-known Victorian professional women writers, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Margaret Oliphant and George Eliot. But anonymous or pseudonymous fiction writing by women, however political thematically, was not the same as female reformers addressing men in person, and *Blackwood's* joined others in viewing women's speeches at the NAPSS as inappropriate.

[178] [J.B. Atkinson], 'Social Science'.

[179] Ibid., p.472.

impartial discussion'.[180] Moreover, as Janice Schroeder has noted, Atkinson was 'concerned that male chivalry would be too severely tested by "those women who should venture into noisy controversy" with men in a public forum' and that 'no woman speaker could emerge "unscathed" from a public verbal sparring match such as men were used to'.[181] Atkinson praises some papers by women, including Cobbe's own presentation on the 'The Preventive Mission at Bristol', for being 'written with praiseworthy care', and bringing 'zeal, tempered by knowledge, to the elucidation of subjects of pressing practical import' but notes that these are exceptions to the norm.[182] For him, the 'appearance of women as orators addressing a public and mixed audience' remains 'an innovation, which calls for suppression'.[183]

In 'Social Science Congresses', Cobbe takes on board Atkinson's reservations about female speakers impeding open debate, and argues that since the men in the NAPSS were restrained, by the codes of polite conduct, from debating 'on equal terms with women', the female speakers had 'no right to challenge such contention'; in such a context, women must use an '*appealing and exhortative*', rather an '*argumentative*' address.[184] It is critical to note that Cobbe underlines that even male speakers should adopt an appealing mode of address when their audience is not at liberty to refute and challenge them; a male speaker who uses the argumentative address in a situation where 'no reply can be made' to him […] 'loses the immense advantages of the exhortative address, and […] it is a million to one if he can satisfy

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[180] Ibid.

[181] 'Speaking Volumes', p.108. Schroeder briefly considers Atkinson's and Cobbe's articles in order to study the challenges faced by mid-Victorian female public speakers. pp.108–110.

[182] [Atkinson], 'Social Science', p.471.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Cobbe, 'Social Science Congresses', p.93.

anybody'.[185] For Cobbe, the speaking situation, rather than the gender of the speaker, determines whether an exhortative or an argumentative address is to be adopted.

The form of public speaking that attracts the greatest ridicule from Cobbe is the religious sermon. It exemplifies, for Cobbe, a public address wherein a speaker declaims authoritatively to an audience that is not at liberty to question him. Mocking the clergy as commonly subjecting a captive audience to boring and inaccurate speeches, she notes, 'do not the clergy of all denominations read to us, or speak to us, from their pulpits, in the enjoyment of the most sublime immunity from the chance of a groan or an ironical cheer, a reply that "that fact is not true," or "that argument is good for nothing?"'.[186] She adds, with evident sarcasm, that granting women 'the same immunity enjoyed by the parsons may […] be productive of, at least, as much benefit'.[187]

Schroeder has remarked that Cobbe 'elevated women speakers, at least in theory, to the status of clergy' by drawing attention to the similarities in their respective modes of speech.[188] However, such a reading fails to take into account the sardonic tone of Cobbe's commentary on clergymen. As is evident from the above, Cobbe was, in fact, suggesting that the cautious and humble public addresses of the female speakers of the NAPSS were different from, and more socially beneficial, than sermons. Cobbe was attempting to elevate the status of the supplicatory form of address that was adopted by most female speakers of the NAPSS. Four months previously, Cobbe herself had started her paper on the 'Prevention Branch of the Bristol Female

[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid.

[188] 'Speaking Volumes', p.109.

Mission' at the NAPSS's 1861 congress by humbly requesting 'permission to bring before this Association a plan for the protection of young girls of the poorest class, in our great cities'.[189]

As a journalist, Cobbe assumes a far more assertive stance, claiming her readers' attention as a part of her rights and duties as a mainstream journalist. Noting that the success of the recent conference had established 'the right of such congresses to be ranked among the more prominent institutions of our times', she states that she felt 'fully justified in inviting our readers to a careful consideration of the various aspects of such meetings, and their probable bearings on our present condition and future prospects'.[190] It was the periodical press, rather than the seemingly benign and welcoming NAPSS, which enabled Cobbe to assume the role of the female sage.[191] Like other 'sages', she imposes her own worldview as the only acceptable interpretation of the current social situation. After outlining a history of opposition to women's work, she puts her foot down and claims, 'in all seriousness, to be rather tired of this kind of thing. [… T]he world does grievously need the aid of one-half the human race to mitigate the evils which oppress it'.[192] Even more remarkable is Cobbe's satirical comparison of men who oppose women's public, political work to dogs:

> 'Bow, wow, wow!' cry the little dogs. 'Bow, wow, wow!' Don't go here—don't go there—don't separate yourself—don't run together. Bow, wow, wow, wow! At last the idiotic sheep (any of whom might have knocked over the little terrier quite easily if it

[189] 'The Preventive Branch', p.145.

[190] Cobbe, 'Social Science Congresses', p.81

[191] Thaïs Morgan, 'Victorian Sage Discourse', pp.3–6.

[192] Cobbe, 'Social Science Congresses', p.89.

> only had the pluck) go rushing, like the demoniacal swine, down into the very worst hole they can possibly find.[193]

Humoursly playing on Samuel Johnson's infamous comparison of female public speaking to 'a dog's walking on its hind legs', Cobbe depicts male critics of female orators as barking dogs who must be ignored.[194] Though women are referred to as 'idiotic sheep', it is only when they get flustered by the opposition that they falter. Cobbe emphasizes that women are actually far stronger than their critics, that they could have 'quite easily' vanquished them if they only gathered enough courage to do so. By taking the fight to male journalists opposed to female political activity, Cobbe herself exemplifies this affirmative model of female public conduct. This kind of humour, unmistakably provocative, would have been impossible to adopt in the NAPSS congress, which had a strict code of polite conduct and was contemporaneously (in)famous for being boring.[195]

Shortly before presenting the above sketch of male opposition to women's public work, Cobbe remarks that such writers probably lack a 'naturally […] lively disposition' and when compelled by the 'requirements of a despotic editor […] to become jovial', they use the first anti-woman jibe that comes to hand to enliven their articles.[196] The conservative journalist is ridiculed as professionally inept. Lacking the ability to meet the editor's demand for insightful, witty writing, he, like a hack, irresponsibly recycles 'superannuated' jokes in the 'jest market', reinforcing rather than correcting prevailing prejudices against women.[197] By representing

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[193] Ibid., p.88.

[194] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 4 vols (London: Richardson and Co, 1823), I, p.395.

[195] Schroeder, 'Speaking Volumes', p.104.

[196] Cobbe, 'Social Science Congresses', p.88.

[197] Ibid., pp.87, 88.

misogynistic humour as clichéd, Cobbe suggests that a feminist journalist like herself brings original humour to the pages of mainstream journals. Indeed, commending Cobbe for her 'substantially fair' and 'skilful' treatment of the topic, her editor, Masson, said that the essay, with its 'most witty retort on the masculine jest[es?]', was likely to 'make a "sensation"'.[198]

Although Cobbe regrets that writers could not, like orators, deploy the force of 'face, figure, voice, motion — [which] are immense levers of our feelings of sympathy' to win over their audience and states that 'no *written* or printed words have half the power of the same words spoken by their author', she herself forges a persuasive print 'personality' by effectively managing her tone and address.[199] In the nineteenth century, as Matthew Bevis has demonstrated, the press began to both cover and imitate Parliamentary speeches in its own pages, making it difficult to neatly segregate 'speaking places' from 'written pages'.[200] For male writers like Thomas Carlyle, 'parliamentary debate' seemed to 'go on now, everywhere and at all times, in a far more comprehensive way, *out* of Parliament altogether' so much so that 'the Reporters' Gallery' had become 'a *Fourth Estate* more important far than they [the three estates in Parliament noted by Burke]'.[201] Cobbe claimed, in an 1868 article demanding Married Women's Property Rights, that the 'real' discussion on political issues took place not in Parliament but in the periodical press. 'Legislators talk in Parliament', she says, 'with a certain conviction that the

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[198] David Masson to Frances Power Cobbe, 6 November 1861, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Letters and Autographs Mainly Addressed to Henry Cobbe or Frances Power Cobbe, MS. Autogr. d. 36, fols. 163–64; Sally Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.119. I am deeply indebted to Mitchell's scholarship, especially her biography on Cobbe, for drawing my attention to Cobbe's lesser-known writings.

[199] Ibid., p.92

[200] Matthew Bevis, *The Art of Eloquence: Byron, Dickens Tennyson, Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.15.

[201] 'The Hero as Man of Letters', p.194; Bevis, *The Art of Eloquence*, p.15.

principles of fairness and policy are the only ones to be referred to *there*'.[202] Only when 'the subject is freely discussed, in private or in a newspaper' did 'the real feeling at bottom' — their sentimental idealization of the domesticated woman that kept them from granting women property rights — come to the fore.[203] Though Cobbe does not explicitly note women's participation in the periodical discussions, her valorization of the press heightens the effectiveness of women's political journalism.

Moreover, the recent advent of signature in the periodical press inaugurated new debates about the proper conduct of the professional journalist and Cobbe, who chose to sign her article although her editor gave her the option of publishing anonymously, paved the way for the greater prominence of female journalists.[204] Like those signature advocates who subscribed to what Kent has described as 'the Coleridgean-Arnoldian ideal of the Christian gentleman ready to stand up and be counted for his beliefs', Cobbe emphasizes her readiness to stand up for her ideals by signing her article as 'Frances Power Cobbe, Author of "An Essay on Intuitive Morals," "Workhouse Sketches"'.[205] By claiming ownership for both her past anonymous work on ethics as well as her previous articles in *Macmillan's*, Cobbe relinquishes the protective cover of anonymity and claims the right to speak more assertively. For her, 'nothing can be more ungenerous than the act of a woman by which she provokes opposition and disapproval as a man might do, and then appeals for defence and consideration as a woman'.[206] In presenting herself as

[202] Frances Power Cobbe, 'Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors', *Fraser's Magazine*, 78 (December 1868), 777–94 (p.787).

[203] Ibid.

[204] Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.115.

[205] 'Higher Journalism', p.190; Cobbe, 'Social Science Congresses', p.81.

[206] Ibid., p.92.

a journalist who seeks no concessions for her gender, she asserts her political views unapologetically.

In 'Women in Italy', which was published the following year in *Macmillan's*, Cobbe reiterates the need to encourage greater female participation in public political discussions.[207] She maintains that 'the progress of a nation' depended 'in a considerable measure […] on the condition of its women' and notes that the men and women of Southern Italy were 'inconceivably depressed in mental rank by the embargo which has lain for ages on all social discussions of either religion or politics'.[208] She observes that political exclusion had made Italian women frivolous and socially irresponsible and presents this as a cautionary example for England. Although 'many a frivolous Englishwoman' might 'hail it as almost a boon if she were never to hear any more of elections, and Bills, […], or of the Essays and Reviews […,] the truth is' that 'without the freedom to rise into serious discussion', conversation is 'mere wretched tittle-tattle' that only debases those who participate in it.[209]

Cobbe's commitment to developing an individual voice and an assertive journalistic style, evident even in her first few articles, is far more striking in her writing for *Fraser's Magazine*, the other high-repute journal in which she published with remarkable consistency. Except for 'Women in Italy', all of Cobbe's mainstream journalism for 1862 appeared in *Fraser's*. Hamilton has argued that by writing a '"continuous series"' on women's issues, Cobbe 'enters press history and engages a large reading public — forging a name for herself in *Fraser's Magazine*'.[210] In focusing on how Cobbe built a 'feminist signature' in the mainstream press,

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[207] Frances Power Cobbe, 'Women in Italy', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 6 (May 1862), 363–75.

[208] Ibid., pp.363, 366.

[209] Ibid., p.368.

[210] Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.26.

Hamilton largely ignores how Cobbe's articles impacted on existing models of women's journalism.[211] It is this aspect that I will draw out in the next section of this chapter. I shall examine Cobbe's 1862 writing for *Fraser's Magazine,* which includes oft-cited feminist articles such as 'What Shall We Do With Our Old Maids?', as part of her model of the female political journalist.

The Female Fraserian: The Single Woman as a Distinguished Professional Journalist

Fraser's Magazine was founded in 1832 as a monthly miscellany, and 'though it espoused Toryism early on', it went on to become 'known particularly for its progressive stance in politics and social issues'.[212] As discussed in the introduction, the early *Fraser's* presented a 'masculine model of authorship'.[213] Harriet Martineau had been targeted with particular vehemence in its pages for having 'presumed to instruct her readers on […] sexual self-restraint' despite being unmarried.[214] The tone and content of *Fraser's* were significantly transformed under the editorship of William Parker (who took over in 1847), and of James Anthony Froude (who assumed editorship in 1860).[215] Although, under Froude, more women writers contributed to the journal than before, most of the serious, non-fictional essays continued to be written by middle-class, university-educated men.[216] The highly-publicized mid-century women's campaigns made women's political presence more common, but as a single woman, Cobbe still had to struggle, as

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[211] Ibid.

[212] 'Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country', *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, pp.229–30 (p.229).

[213] Peterson, *Becoming a Woman*, p.15

[214] Valerie Sanders, '"Meteor Wreaths": Harriet Martineau, "L.E.L", Fame and *Fraser's Magazine*', *Critical Survey*, 13 (May 2001), 42–60 (pp.48–49).

[215] Ciaran Brady, *James Anthony Froude: An Intellectual Biography of a Victorian Prophet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.238–39.

[216] Ibid., pp.239–40.

Martineau had in the 1830s, to ensure that her criticism of the institution of marriage, and other social issues, was taken seriously. Through her articles, Cobbe showed that the educated single woman was, in fact, ideally suited for the distinguished profession of higher journalism.

Cobbe's entry into *Fraser*'s seems to have been facilitated by her familial link to the networks of university men. Froude had been a friend of Cobbe's brother Henry at Oxford, twenty-five years previously.[217] Her first *Fraser's* article, 'The City of the Sun', an account of her travel to the city of Baalbek in Lebanon, was published in her own name.[218] Even in this early work, one can see signs of the print persona that Cobbe would go on to develop: that of a well-read, single female journalist who was intrepid in her search of a story.

Throughout the article Cobbe underlines that she was travelling alone, which, along with the absence of a marital title in her signature, must have suggested to her readers that she was single. Cobbe presents herself as fearless: she sleeps alone in a tent, and unhesitatingly decides to continue her journey, accompanied only by a male Turkish interpreter, to the temple of Baalbek.[219] Although travel accounts by women were common at the time and Cobbe herself mentions Martineau's book on her travels in Egypt and the Near East, *Eastern Life: Present and Past* (1848), she would have known how different her persona was to that of Martineau who, though also single, travelled in company.[220] Cobbe emphasized this aspect of her article by

[217] Ibid., p.116.

[218] Frances P. Cobbe, 'The City of the Sun', *Fraser's Magazine*, 63 (June 1861), 670–84. I use the modern spelling of Baalbek, but retain Cobbe's while quoting her.

[219] Ibid., pp.671–73.

[220] Ibid., p.670.

remarking that 'it was a boon to be alone in Baalbec' and presenting her various solitary impressions of the place.[221]

In order to impress her well-educated middle-class *Fraser's* readers, Cobbe foregrounds her erudition. She refers to the work of various writers throughout the article, and at one point, presents her Western knowledge as having enabled her to resist the fears created by native superstitions about the temple at Baalbek. When her guide Hassan tells her that the vaults in the temple of Baalbek had been built by Djinns, she calmly disagrees and tells him that she had 'read a book written at a time when men still made such temples […] in which the whole method of raising those huge stones is described'.[222] In an aside meant to establish solidarity with the reader, she adds that 'it was needless to name Vitruvius'.[223] By referring to Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a famous ancient Roman author and architect, Cobbe exhibits her ability to participate in a journal written and read by university men well-versed in Greek and Roman languages. Elsewhere, in a moment of contemplation about her purpose in life, she mentions that Theodore Parker, the famous abolitionist who had died the previous year, had told her on his deathbed, that he only feared not having fulfilled his God-given purpose in life.[224] By personally aligning herself with Parker, Cobbe not only evinces her own sympathy with his cause, but also shows that she, a new writer, was connected to some of the best known and most respected people in the abolitionist movement.[225]

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[221] Ibid., p.683.

[222] Ibid., p.676.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid., p.675.

[225] Cobbe would go on to edit a multi-volume collection of Parker's works (published serially from 1863–71), and to write consistently in support of the abolitionist movement.

Cobbe's next *Fraser's* article 'Celibacy vs. Marriage', her first markedly feminist piece for the magazine, appeared in February 1862.[226] The article is partly a response to a recent anonymous *Cornhill* article (written by the eminent journalist James Fitzjames Stephen) entitled 'Keeping up Appearances'.[227] In the article, Stephen had alleged that most journals did not rigorously analyze the rising trend of late marriages amongst the middle classes and merely blamed young people for marrying late out of a 'vulgar […] desire' for a well-to-do lifestyle.[228] Showing that even maintaining the essential conditions of a middle-class household severely constrained a man's ability to devote himself selflessly to his profession, he asserted that middle-class men married late because of their commendable commitment to professional excellence.[229] A middle-class woman, however, was said to have 'nothing corresponding to a man's profession and position in life' and since 'marriage is almost the only profession open to her', she must marry at the earliest opportunity.[230]

Cobbe begins 'Celibacy vs. Marriage' by agreeing with Stephen's contention that a married middle-class professional man would indeed be driven 'not [by] the pure aim of his profession, but the pecuniary interests involved therein'.[231] It was Cobbe's 'characteristic strategy', as Hamilton has observed, to open her argument by embracing 'all points of agreement

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[226] F.P.C. [Frances Power Cobbe], 'Celibacy vs. Marriage', *Fraser's Magazine*, 65 (February 1862), 228–35. Though she only put her initials to the article when it first came out, she soon announced her authorship of it, by noting, in her November article, 'What Shall We Do With Our Old Maids', that the 'Celibacy vs. Marriage' article had been an earlier reflection on the issue of women's employment.

[227] [James Fitzjames Stephen], 'Keeping Up Appearances', *Cornhill Magazine*, 4 (September 1861), 305–18. The author has been identified by the *Wellesley Index*.

[228] Ibid. p.307.

[229] Ibid., p.310.

[230] 'Keeping Up Appearances', p.316.

[231] 'Celibacy vs. Marriage', p.228.

between herself and her interlocutor, all the more wholeheartedly for what will be an impressive demonstration of the very different conclusions she can draw from these shared concerns'.[232] In this article, for example, she quickly moves on to pointing out a glaring oversight in Stephen's article: its blindness to women's public work. Its male-centered '"muscular sociology"' fails to recognize that middle-class marriages could become conducive to, rather than a drain on, men's professions if women too were allowed to cultivate the spirit of public service.[233]

Cobbe argues that if women were better educated and financially independent, they would inspire 'feelings of devotion to noble causes' in their husbands, rather than impel them towards 'toadyism and expenditure'.[234] She underlines women's ability for public work by referring to various philanthropic activities currently undertaken by single women such as the care of sick children and destitute women.[235] Noting the high incidence of unhappy marriages revealed by the Divorce courts, she asserts that till men learnt to treat their wives with love and respect, and women learnt not to 'sully' their husbands' 'noblest […] aspirations', it was best for most men and women to remain celibate.[236] Although unmarried women had been, 'till lately […] so shackled by social prejudices' as to lead 'dreary and monotonous' lives, 'the "old maid" of 1861', Cobbe asserts, 'is an exceedingly cheery personage, running about untrammelled by husband or children; now visiting at her relatives' country houses, now taking her month in town […] now scaling Vesuvius or the Pyramids'.[237] This vision of the cheerful, well-travelled single woman, unmistakably modelled on Cobbe's own recent experiences, helps to foreground her

[232] *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.36.

[233] 'Celibacy vs. Marriage', p.230.

[234] Ibid., pp.231, 230.

[235] Ibid., p.233.

[236] Ibid., p.235.

[237] Ibid., pp.232–33.

journalistic acumen. She suggests that she is more attentive to the changed condition of genteel single women than the *Cornhill* writer and hence offers a more accurately comparative account of contemporary middle-class marriages. A feminist perspective is thus presented as an essential feature of thorough professional journalism.

In her description of the educated single woman, Cobbe highlights those very qualities of self-less public service that Stephen and others had claimed to be exclusive to men. Cobbe's 'old maid' is ideally suited for high-minded professional work. She can disinterestedly devote 'her *whole* time and energies to some benevolent task'.[238] While men think of friendship merely as a means of socialising, as the 'acquaintance at a club or the intimacy of a barrack', single women can sustain 'true and tender friendships' that provide 'the purest of pleasures and the most unselfish of all affections'.[239] Cobbe herself was involved in one such close friendship with the sculptor Mary Lloyd, who provided her with vital emotional and intellectual support. Cobbe's championing of celibacy has been read by scholars as a critical instance of a same-sex relationship between women being fore-grounded as an alternative to heterosexual marriages within a mainstream journal.[240] While Cobbe often spoke of her friendship with Lloyd in conjugal terms and even referred to her, as Sharon Marcus has noted, as both 'husband' and 'wife' in letters to friends, she does not describe female friendship in sexual terms in her article.[241] Instead of risking alienating her audience by championing a sexual relation that was largely considered taboo, Cobbe presents female intimacy in the more acceptable guise of a

[238] Ibid., p.233.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Hamilton sees Cobbe's representation of celibacy as a 'homage to the lesbian community she seems to have first encountered in Rome, and was now part of in London'. *Frances Power Cobbe,* pp.34–35.

[241] *Between Women,* p.2.

friendship that is untarnished by the selfish impulse of male networks.[242] She emphasises that female friendships are more supportive of middle-class professionalism than most heterosexual marriages.

This strengthens her argument about women's innate ability for public service. The celibate single woman of Cobbe's essay 'thinks to *die*' rather than 'tempt [men] to sin and shame', and female intimacy, unlike male-female liaisons, provides her with guiltless pleasure.[243] This makes more persuasive Cobbe's claim that single women, despite venturing into the public world, will not 'fall'.[244] Anticipating the title of her next article, Cobbe notes, 'my life, and what shall I do with it?' is a problem to which she finds the happiest solution ready to her hand in schools and hospitals without number'.[245]

Cobbe wrote 'What Shall We Do with Our Old Maids?' in response to W.R. Greg's 1862 anonymous *National Review* article, 'Why are Women Redundant?'.[246] Greg exemplified the successful male writer of the high-repute journals. Born into a prominent Unitarian family, he had sustained himself through journalism when his family business ran into trouble, and had

[242] For how the English bourgeoisie became increasingly 'more cautious about the open expression of same-sex love' in the nineteenth century and how same-sex friendships were idealized as being more self-sacrificing than heterosexual love, see Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women,1778–1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p.xviii.

[243] 'Celibacy vs. Marriage', p.233.

[244] Ibid.

[245] Ibid.

[246] [William Rathbone Greg], 'Why Are Women Redundant?', *The National Review*, 28 (April 1862), 434–60. For a discussion of the critical place of Greg's article within mid-century debates about destitute single women and female emigration, see Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen*, pp.129–32; Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, pp.1–6.

become, by 1862, a successful industrialist and a member of the Board of Customs.[247] Even though the *National Review*'s contributors included several distinguished men, including Matthew Arnold, Herbert Spencer and *Fraser's* editor Anthony Froude, Greg enjoyed special status, as he had been involved in the initial negotiations for starting a new Unitarian periodical that eventually led to the founding of the *National Review* in 1855.[248]

Taking on an adversary like Greg, particularly over an anonymous article that carried the collective imprint of the *National Review*, involved high professional risk for a new entrant into the field like Cobbe. As Hamilton has noted, in order to assert 'her right and ability […] to participate in political discussion — to grant recognition of her fellow discussants and to wrest logical victory from them whenever she can', Cobbe begins her article by drawing attention to her previous *Fraser'*s articles and acknowledging the validity of the concerns raised by Greg, but goes on to pick flaws in his argument.[249] In his article, Greg had maintained that middle-class women should be encouraged to pursue nothing but wifehood. Eliding the differences between Emily Faithfull's and Maria Rye's efforts to enable destitute middle-class women to find employment in the colonies and Caroline Chisholm's marital emigration schemes, Greg sees both as helping to solve 'the problem in the natural way' by enabling the '250,000 unmatched men in the colonies' to marry.[250] Cobbe points out that marriages could be 'the happiest and best condition for mankind' only if women were enabled, by financial self-sufficiency, to marry for

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[247] Mary B. Rose, 'William Rathbone Greg (1809–1881)', *ODNB*, online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11446> [accessed 15 March 2016]; Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.27.

[248] The *National Review* was born after Greg and his colleagues had attempted, and failed, to purchase the *Westminster Review*. Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.27–29; 176 n 7.

[249] *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.31

[250] 'Why Are Women Redundant', p.445.

love, and that 'governesses and other ladies […] will not much profit' by Greg's suggested panacea of emigration since they couldn't marry 'the blacksmiths and ploughmen' who formed a large section of colonial bachelors.[251]

Cobbe's own essay focuses on these 'higher class […] ladies', who must be enabled by 'the removal of existing restrictions' to 'make their lives as useful and happy as Providence has intended'.[252] Although she states that these women must take their fair share in 'all the pursuits of mankind' that are not 'mere money-getting' activities, she does not emphasize non-remunerative, philanthropic work.[253] Rather, the fields that Cobbe would have opened to educated women are well-paying, male-dominated middle-class professions: science, medicine, politics, literature.[254] The sublimation of economic interest within Victorian professional discourse, as Harold Perkin and others have shown, lent dignity and social stature to such pursuits and enabled middle-class professionals to command a high pay.[255] Cobbe was not suggesting that women should work for free, only that they should be free to follow all the ethical and practical codes of professional occupations. As part of her proposed project of female professionalization, Cobbe demands women's access to the same University education and examinations as men.[256] Only with such rigorous training would 'the pursuit of knowledge',

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[251] 'What Shall We Do', pp.595, 600.

[252] Ibid., p.600.

[253] Ibid.

[254] Ibid., pp.600–601.

[255] Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society*, pp.3–6.

[256] She had advanced this demand previously in her speech at the 1862 NAPSS conference and a pamphlet on female education. Frances Power Cobbe, *Female Education and How It Would be Affected by University Examinations* (London: Victoria Press, 1862).

which had hitherto been 'hardly more than an amusement' for women, 'become a real vocation' for them.[257]

To assess the 'prospects of the employment of women in the departments of Truth and Beauty', Cobbe highlights the emergence of new models of female art and literature.[258] In the past, most female artists merely reproduced 'what the genius of man had created' and even 'such works as women did accomplish were all stamped with the same impress of feebleness and prettiness'; but a number of contemporary women were producing art that was strikingly original and 'pre-eminently distinguished for one quality above all others — namely, strength'.[259] Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, with the 'hardiness of its rhythm, its sturdy wrestlings and grapplings […] with all the sternest problems of our social life', challenged 'the received notion of a woman's poetry' while Rosa Bonheur's canvas replaced the 'washed-out saints' of the earlier school of female art with robust 'droves of wild Highland black cattle'.[260]

For Cobbe, the intellectual powers of women like Browning and Bonheur signalled the coming of age of female art: women were no longer 'second-rate' amateurs who merely imitated male artists but professionals in their own right.[261] Interestingly, as various scholars have noted, Cobbe uses the notion of sexual difference in order to present this 'new' and seemingly unfeminine 'element of *strength* in female art' in a positive light.[262] 'As God means a woman to

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[257] 'What Shall We Do', p.609.

[258] Ibid., p.602. Cobbe broadly classifies all high-minded pursuits into 'three great orders': the pursuit of the True (in which she includes science, literature and philosophy), the Beautiful (in which she classifies 'art in all its branches, including poetic literature'), and the Good (in which she includes politics and philanthropy). pp.600–01.

[259] Ibid., p.602.

[260] Ibid., pp.602–603.

[261] Ibid., p.602

[262] Ibid. p.605. Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850–1900* (Routledge: London, 2000), p.114; Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.45.

be a woman', she notes, 'every faculty he has given her is a woman's faculty, and the more each of them can be drawn out, trained, and perfected, the more *womanly* she will become'.[263] Cobbe's remarkable championing of female intellectual ambition has gone largely unnoted. Overturning the wide-spread notion that mental exertion was unsuitable and harmful for women, Cobbe states that although she does not 'wish to force all women into courses of severe study', she aims to support those who, possessing 'the noble love of knowledge', will, in fact, languish without proper intellectual stimulation and training.[264]

Cobbe's attempt to inspire female intellectual progress is particularly marked in her commentary on Harriet Hosmer's sculpture *Zenobia*. Cobbe's appreciation of Hosmer's work was partly, as Deborah Cherry has demonstrated, a polemical defence of female artists. Exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition in London, *Zenobia* 'provoked dispute over ethics and aesthetics' with many people arguing that Hosmer had not worked on the stone herself and thus couldn't claim creative credit.[265] Cobbe refuted such accusations by underlining that, although artists themselves used to cut the stone in the past, it was now standard professional practice for sculptors to create clay models and supervise later stages of production. *Zenobia*, like the best of contemporary sculpture, had an 'intellectual foundation', was 'the product of deep knowledge', and showed admirable skill and technique.[266] Queen Zenobia, a third-century female ruler of Palmyra, whose story was recounted by various historians and who was represented as an exceptionally learned woman by Anna Jameson, was evidently chosen by Hosmer for her

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[263] 'What Shall We Do', p.605.

[264] 'What Shall We Do', p.606. For such social fears, see Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.88

[265] *Beyond the Frame*, p.102.

[266] Ibid., p.114; Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.42–48.

symbolic association with female power.[267] In Cobbe's article however, *Zenobia* stands as proof of Hosmer's artistry and presages the rise of female professionals in such male-dominated artistic fields such as sculpture.[268]

Underlining that professional authorship was to be undertaken with the same devotion to rigorous training and practice as professional art, Cobbe notes: 'Writing is an Art, and as an art it should be seriously pursued. The true artist spirit which grudges no amount of preparatory study, no labour of final completion […] belongs as much to the pen as to the pencil or the chisel'.[269] However, unlike artistic or scholarly fields such as sculpture and medicine, which women had entered only recently, women's authorship was 'already a guild, which, instead of opposition, has met kindliest welcome'.[270] Cobbe is particularly anxious to ensure that women preserve and enhance their existing authorial credibility and hence stresses that writing 'is a morally serious thing, a power of addressing many persons at once' that 'ought never to be thought of slightly'.[271] Though Cobbe speaks largely of book-writing, her overview of women's authorship implicitly includes 'higher journalism' since it was the expansion of this periodical field that

[267] For Jameson's representation of Zenobia, see Susan Waller, 'The Artist, The Writer, and the Queen: Hosmer, Jameson, and *Zenobia*', *Woman's Art Journal*, 4 (1983), 21–28.

[268] As Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Patricia Zakreski have shown, those advocating the expansion of paid work for women stressed women's artistic training and skill in order to claim better payment and status for women within a range of artistic professions. Hadjiafxendi and Zakreski do not discuss Hosmer's work, but comment on the importance of artistry within the developing discourse of female professionalization in the nineteenth century. Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Patricia Zakreski, 'Introduction: Artistry and Industry — The Process of Female Professionalisation', in *Crafting the Woman Professional in the Long Nineteenth Century: Artistry and Industry in Britain*, ed. by Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Patricia Zakreski (Ashgate: Surrey, 2013), pp.1–22 (pp.7–8).

[269] 'What Shall We Do', p.609.

[270] Ibid.

[271] Ibid.

made authorship ‘a real profession to women as to men’.[272] Her own articles attest to women’s ability to marshal formidable knowledge of history, art, and current events. Her consistent and serious approach to her work is reinforced by her last 1862 article for *Fraser’s*, ‘Female Charity — Lay and Monastic’, in which, by talking of women's pursuit of 'the Good', and their role within philanthropic and religious work, she completed her series on women's public work.[273]

With the increasing prominence of debates about gender in the mid-century press and Parliament, the editors of mainstream journals found it particularly useful to have a noted feminist like Cobbe address women’s issues and she used this opportunity to demand unpopular reforms like women’s suffrage while writing articles on topical legal or social matters.[274] Writing in *Fraser’s* in the wake of renewed agitation for married women’s property rights, Cobbe, not only demands that women be granted ‘civil rights—the right to hold property, to make contracts, to sue and be sued’ but also the political rights of franchise.[275] Echoing the argument made by Harriet Taylor Mill in her anonymous 1851 article, ‘The Enfranchisement of Woman’, Cobbe asserts that ‘real unanimity’ in marriage cannot be produced by denying one of the partners ‘any voice at all’ and underlines that granting women the right to study, work, hold property and vote was essential to making them intellectually compatible with their husbands.[276] As Alexis Easley has shown, within contemporary debates the argument that the vote would make women more socially responsible was closely paralleled by the argument that signing articles would make

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[272] Ibid.

[273] Frances Power Cobbe, ‘Female Charity—Lay and Monastic’, *Fraser's Magazine*, 66 (December 1862), 774–88.

[274] Brake, ‘The *Westminster* and Gender at Mid-Century’.

[275] ‘Criminals, Idiots’, p.793.

[276] Ibid., pp.790, 793. [Harriet Taylor Mill], ‘The Enfranchisement of Women’, *Westminster Review*, 55 (July 1851), 289–311. Though the article was initially attributed to her husband, John Stuart Mill, it is now known to have been written by Harriet Taylor Mill.

journalists more conscientious.[277] In the periodical press, where this overlap would have been particularly evident, Cobbe's signed articles arguably made a stronger case for the enfranchisement of women (by foregrounding women's ability to participate in responsible political discussion) than Taylor's famous anonymous article on the issue.

Feminists like Lydia Becker, who was the secretary of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage and founded the *Woman's Suffrage Journal* in 1870, were opposed to combining discussions of women's suffrage and women's property rights since a large number of women who supported one did not necessarily favour the other.[278] Cobbe's decision to nevertheless intertwine the two in the above article shows that mainstream journalism offered her a platform to assert her political opinions in an individual capacity, which was especially valuable when these did not coincide with the views held by her colleagues. As Cobbe became increasingly involved in the anti-vivisection campaign, she similarly interlaced her arguments for animal rights with women's rights. For example, in her article on 'Wife-Torture', which garnered support for the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1878 that enabled wives who had been violently abused by their husbands to seek legal separation and maintenance from their spouses, she notes that wife-torture was not an instance of a 'new passion for cruelty' like animal vivisection, but an 'old one, having its origin in the remotest epochs of barbarian wife-capture and polygamy'.[279]

Cobbe's journalism was certainly not limited to women's issues. It was in *Fraser's* that Cobbe wrote one of her earliest articles on vivisection, which she described as being 'so far as I

[277] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.134.

[278] Hamilton, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.65; Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.167–79.

[279] Frances Power Cobbe, 'Wife Torture in England', *The Contemporary Review*, 32 (April 1878), 55–87 (p.64).

know the first effort made to deal with the moral questions involved in the torture of animals'.[280] As well as launching a polemical attack on the practice of vivisection in institutions in Alfort near Paris, she also made a wider argument against the practice as a violation of 'a *real* characteristic of humanity' by citing an impressive range of examples of animal love, from Homer to the Indian epic *Mahabharata*.[281] *Fraser's* editor James Anthony Froude's letters to Cobbe attest to his immense regard for her as a professional journalist who could be trusted to produce high-calibre essays on a range of political issues.

In the early 1860s, when Froude faced considerable pressure from *Fraser's* proprietor John Parker to cut down the number of heavy political articles in favour of travel pieces, light essays and fiction, it was to Cobbe that he confided his determination to still devote a major part of the journal to rigorous and scholarly articles on serious topics.[282] Froude felt that paying learned writers well so as to ensure a regular supply of scholarly prose was in the journal's own interest and perceived Cobbe as one such prized contributor. Responding to an expository article on moral issues that Cobbe has sent him, he remarks, 'your Ethical Study is admirable'.[283] He feels that it 'belongs to the class of writings which neither are, not ought to be "light reading"'.[284]

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[280] Frances Power Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe, As Told By Herself With Additions by the Author and Introduction by Blanche Atkinson* (1894. London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1904), p.621; Frances Power Cobbe, 'The Rights of Man and the Claims of Brutes', *Fraser's Magazine*, 68 (November 1863), 586–602. Although Cobbe became the most famous advocate of anti-vivisection, this claim of hers is certainly inflated. The English humane movement, which presented kindness to animals as critical to human morality, dated back to the 1820s. Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (London: Penguin, 1987), pp.125–66.

[281] Ibid., pp.600, 597.

[282] James Anthony Froude to Frances Power Cobbe, 16 February [1863?], San Marino, Huntington Library, Correspondence with Frances Power Cobbe, 1855–1904.

[283] James Anthony Froude to Frances Power Cobbe, 9 October [1864?].

[284] Ibid.

Calling it ‘a Model Sermon for “the Church of the Future”’, he promises to find a place for it in *Fraser's* ‘as soon as I can’.[285] Froude accepts Cobbe's article on the social and political condition of Ireland with similar enthusiasm.[286] His letters also reveal that Cobbe had attempted to write a review of J.R. Seeley’s *Ecco Homo*, a critical theological study published anonymously in 1866.[287] Froude gently urges her to move on to another subject, stating that he had already asked Fitzjames Stephen to write on it, but the exchange demonstrates that, as a *Fraser’s* writer, Cobbe was competing with male intellectual heavy-weights of Victorian journalism.

In 1865, Francis Newman, classical scholar, younger brother of John Henry Newman and a friend of Cobbe, presented her as a serious writer whose work gave the lie to the ‘unjust and […] superficial’ remarks of critics who ‘write down a woman, or the cause which she is maintaining’.[288] Punning on Cobbe's name, he noted that in ‘variety and rapidity’ as well as in ‘directness and simplicity’, her work ‘leaves upon one a sense of *power*’.[289] Although Newman noted some errors in her writing, such as her faulty Greek, he maintained that her work evinced formidable learning, 'high, noble sentiment' and the desire ‘not […] to enrich herself most, but […] to make her talents bear the fruit for which they were designed’.[290] By 1865, Cobbe was being publically promoted in the very image of the high-minded female professional that she had envisioned in her own 1862 article.

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[285] Ibid.

[286] James Anthony Froude to Frances Power Cobbe, 16 February [1870?]; Frances Power Cobbe, ‘Ireland and her Exhibition’, *Fraser’s Magazine*, 72 (October 1865), 403–22.

[287] James Anthony Froude to Frances Power Cobbe, 9 March [1866?].

[288] Francis Newman, ‘Capacities of Women’, *Westminster Review*, 28 (October 1865), 352–80 (p.352).

[289] Ibid., p.368.

[290] Ibid., pp.368–69.

Although Cobbe did write on social and political issues for less weighty journals like *Tinsley Magazine*, *Temple Bar*, and the *Shilling Magazine*, it was in the distinguished journals that most of her signed articles appeared.[291] By the 1870s, Cobbe's reputation as a reform journalist seems to have been widely known, and a curious case of what Mitchell has termed 'slightly borrowed identity' strikingly illustrates this.[292] Another Frances Power Cobbe (1836-1880), whom Mitchell has identified as an illegitimate and unacknowledged cousin of the better-known writer, published some articles in *Tinsley's Magazine*, *Temple Bar* and *St. James's Magazine*. The latter two journals published some of her articles under the signature, 'Fanny Power Cobbe', probably to let their readers believe that the famous reform journalist of *Fraser's* was writing for them. Interestingly, Fanny, in her signed article, 'Peg Woffington', tells the story of a well-known eighteenth-century professional theatre actress named Margaret Woffington.[293] It is not clear whether Fanny was deliberately trying to pass herself off as her better-known cousin, but she was evidently influenced by Cobbe and other writers who popularized this line of articles celebrating women's paid labour.

Apart from her anonymous work as a foreign correspondent for *Daily News*, Cobbe also started to work in 1867, as a leader writer for the *Day*, a conservative newspaper for which she wrote on political issues such as the Fenian affair.[294] Her longest stint as a popular journalist was as an anonymous leader writer for the half-penny evening paper, *Echo*. Cobbe wrote for the

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[291] See, for example, Frances Power Cobbe, 'Ireland for the Irish', *Tinsley's Magazine*, 2 (February 1868), 39–49; Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.181.

[292] Sally Mitchell, '"Fanny Power Cobbe": A Case of Slightly Borrowed Identity and Two Misattributions in the *Wellesley Index*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 34 (Winter 2001), 383–86.

[293] Fanny Power Cobbe, 'Peg Woffington', *St James's Magazine*, 43 (September 1878), 807–19.

[294] The paper did not carry Cobbe's feminist articles as leaders, but published some anonymous pro-suffrage letters by her. Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, p.168.

paper between December 1868 and March 1875, and she used the data that she gathered to strengthen her articles on related issues in higher journals.[295] Cobbe also published an extremely witty pamphlet, entitled 'The Age of Science: A Newspaper of the Twentieth Century' in which she wrote of a dystopic future wherein all forms of cruelty, including vivisection are allowed, and as in her earlier articles, she sees cruelty against animals and women as being interlinked.[296] In this future age, women are heavily oppressed and forbidden to either read or write. The focus on women's issues, and Cobbe's networks within feminist circles, ensured that this work was reviewed approvingly in the *Englishwoman's Review*.[297]

The income from mainstream journalism enabled both Meteyard and Cobbe to undertake campaigning journalism. In fact, as Meteyard's diminishing contributions to reform journals in the later part of the century shows, a failure to break into mainstream journalism could directly hinder the ability of self-sustaining women to participate in reform journalism and benefit from its association with high-mindedness. Moreover, many of the mid-century feminists, including Cobbe, came to believe that all women needed to demand pay for their work, so as to not make it appear like worthless labour. In an 1867 *Fraser's* article, entitled the 'American Sanitary Commission and Its Lesson', Cobbe warned that upper-class women who took up public work for free were committing 'a serious social mistake': while such 'gratuitous philanthropy' was necessary and commendable during an emergency like the American Civil War, its continuation in peacetime would take away remunerative work from single women who had 'to earn their

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[295] As Hamilton has noted, she used her knowledge of the proceedings of the divorce courts to make a strong case against wife-abuse in her 'Wife Torture' article. *Frances Power Cobbe*, pp.117–18.

[296] Merlin Nostradamus (pseud.) [Frances Power Cobbe], *The Age of Science: A Newspaper of the Twentieth Century* (London: Ward, Locke & Tyler, 1877).

[297] 'Art. IX', *The Englishwoman's Review*, 46 (1877), 95–96. The work does not seem to have been widely reviewed.

own bread, and often the bread of their families' and would reduce women's wages.[298] By claiming a competitive rate of payment for her articles, Cobbe helped to sustain and support women's professional journalism. Although she playfully referred to her paying articles, in her autobiography, as *'Pot-Boilers'*, she took great pride in their professional worth and provided a meticulous record of the various reputed journals and editors for which she worked.[299] Cobbe never gave up contributing to reform journals entirely, but it was her social and political articles in periodicals like *Fraser's* and the *Contemporary Review* that foregrounded reform journalism as a paying profession for women.

In 1879, the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage brought out a tract to refute the idea that the franchise was desired only by women 'who have failed to find another field for their energies'.[300] The booklet contained short statements of support for the suffrage from women who 'engaged in such non-political work as makes them more or less known to the public'.[301] These statements were presented as proof of the fact that the Suffrage was not the agenda of a few political agitators hungry for attention, but a cause supported by many women 'whose pursuits are other than political'.[302] The editors evidently wanted the term 'political' to be understood in a narrow way, as public agitation, as this allowed them to present the views of women involved in advancing female education, 'occupying official positions on School Boards' and 'pursuing literary and artistic careers' as non-political supporters of

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[298] Frances Power Cobbe, 'The American Sanitary Commission and Its Lesson', *Fraser's Magazine*, 75 (March 1867), 401–14 (pp.412–13).

[299] Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, p.399.

[300] *Opinions of Women on Women's Suffrage*, Issued by the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage (London: 1879), Preface.

[301] Ibid.

[302] Ibid.

Suffrage. Featured prominently in the section entitled 'women engaged in literature and the arts' are statements from Meteyard and Cobbe.[303] Having written for a large number of journals on a range of issues, Meteyard and Cobbe's professional careers had enough breadth to enable the Suffrage Association to speak of them as 'non-political'.[304] Yet, as I have shown in this chapter, it was as political journalists deeply committed to social reform that Meteyard and Cobbe shaped their careers in the mid-century press. Their journalism had, in fact, helped to strengthen the demand for female suffrage by demonstrating women's ability to contribute to the political discourse. In the next chapter, I shall examine a model of journalism wherein women literally became bearers of political news: foreign correspondence.

[303] Ibid.

[304] Ibid.

Writing from the Field: The Female Foreign Correspondent

> The woman who writes this paper had to serve her apprenticeship in one of the most furious war storms of modern times. Battles, barricades, bombardments were so familiar as to cease to frighten. The noise of cannonading lulled to sleep at night, and the cessation of it kept awake. […] These dangers and hardships were the best possible training for subsequent duties […] Having gone through such a school, she had no difficulty in taking her life in her hand and walking alone from one end of Paris to the other during the throes of the Commune, to meet her husband coming from Versailles, and be with him should he be arrested as a spy.[1]

Emily Crawford, French correspondent for London's *Daily News*, recounts with obvious excitement, her experiences during 'one of the most furious war storms of modern times', the 1871 Communist Revolution in Paris.[2] In this article, written to advocate women's professional journalism, Crawford narrates her own experiences as a foreign correspondent to show that women could successfully take up field-based reportage. And yet, while describing how she was toughened by the routine disruption of everyday life in 1871, Crawford recalls her wifely concern for her husband, who was also a *Daily News* journalist, rather than her professional work as a reporter. We hear nothing about how she served her 'apprenticeship', how she wrote and posted her articles even as the bullets fell thick all around her.

This reticence is particularly intriguing given that tales of Crawford's heroism spread far and wide in the 1890s. The Australian newspaper *The Mercury*, quoting from London's *Echo,*

[1] Emily Crawford, 'Journalism as a Profession for Women', pp.369–70.

[2] Ibid.

claimed that on the night of 23 March 1871, Crawford had 'made her way at nightfall through the barricaded city […] and interviewed the Communist leaders as they sat in council'.[3] *The Women's Penny Paper* noted that Crawford, having been 'admitted by special favour' to the front row of the *loge grillée* at the 1871 Versailles conference, 'sat from seven in the morning until midnight', without permission to either move or take notes, and sent in the 'first full account of the debate and defeat of the French Government' to the English press.[4]

Crawford's hesitation in speaking of these spectacular scoops is curious since it would have strengthened her argument about the ability of female journalists to work in gruelling conditions. Yet, it is only by downplaying her professional achievements that Crawford could present herself as a devoted wife rather than a professional competitor to her husband, and garner support for other women's entry into this line of work. After all, the usual strategies used by middle-class women to make authorship seem respectable, such as foregrounding their location at home, their commitment to domestic duties, disavowing their interest in the financial profit of the literary marketplace, were not available to the female foreign correspondent. The female correspondent's work was premised on her distance from home, was undertaken in stiff competition with male journalists, and often involved addressing subjects that were considered unsuitable for women either to experience personally or even know through reading: political affairs, social conflict, war.

As noted by the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, most women who did undertake foreign correspondence were enabled to do so by the widespread practice of

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[3] 'A "Queen Among Journalists"', *The Mercury*, 28 August 1890, p.2. *The Mercury*, an Australian newspaper, quotes this from an article published in London's *Echo* newspaper, probably in July 1890. I have not referenced the *Echo* article due to difficulty in accessing it.

[4] 'A Queen Among Journalists', *Women's Penny Paper*, 12 July 1890, p.451.

anonymity.[5] The difficulty of identifying the authors of anonymous publications partly explains the paucity of scholarship on Victorian women's foreign correspondence, with most critical work focusing on twentieth-century female correspondents. Victorian writers are either barely mentioned, or read only as precursors of the fully professionalized woman reporter of the twentieth century.[6] Although female foreign correspondents who reported from Italy in the early 1860s, such as Frances Power Cobbe, find mention in Sarah Richardson's recent work, their journalism is discussed only briefly and to illustrate English women's contributions to the Italian struggle for unification.[7] Important predecessors like Harriet Ward and Harriet Martineau, and ongoing debates about female professional journalism, go largely unnoted.

This chapter will illuminate the emergence of specific models of female foreign correspondence in mid-century England. It offers a revised history of women's foreign correspondence by showing that long before Cobbe and Crawford entered the field, women had not only reported on political conflicts but also presented themselves as models for aspiring women journalists. I shall focus on three instances of mid-century foreign correspondence by women: Harriet Ward's war correspondence for the monthly *United Services Magazine* (1844-47), Harriet Martineau's foreign correspondence for London's *Daily News* (1852) and the New York-based weekly magazine, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* (1859-62). These examples have been chosen for their pioneering status and for their generic variety. Ward is the earliest known female war reporter. As Irish correspondent, Martineau was one of the first women to break into newspaper foreign correspondence. Her work as European correspondent of the

[5] 'Foreign Correspondent', pp.224–25

[6] Anne Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994), p.20.

[7] *The Political Worlds of Women*, pp.179–80, 184, 186–90.

National Anti-Slavery Standard offers an unusual model of foreign correspondence, wherein the female writer surveyed political events from a distance. By discussing women's reportage for daily, weekly and monthly magazines, I will show that the genres and styles adopted by women were heavily influenced by the nature of specific periodicals and assignments. Dallas Liddle and others have shown that Bakhtin's theory of genres can help us understand forms of writing in the periodical press.[8] This chapter looks at how particular configurations of time and space, which Bakhtin evaluates in relation to the novel, are created by female foreign correspondents.[9] In keeping with the thesis' focus on women's political journalism, I focus on women's reportage on wars and other forms of political conflicts, rather than their coverage of fashionable parties abroad.[10]

Studying Ward's and Martineau's foreign correspondence also shows that women's negotiations with the convention of anonymous reportage were far more complicated than has been recognized so far. Except for Martineau's European correspondence, the assignments were initially undertaken anonymously. However, Ward and Martineau asserted their status as female journalists, either by assuming female authorial personae, or by subsequently publishing their essays in a signed volume, or both. The acknowledgement of femininity, in fact, had surprising professional benefits for them. The value of Ward's reports was linked to the fact that a *woman* had risked all to report on war. Martineau augmented her iconic status as a female political

[8] *Dynamics of Genre.*

[9] Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (1981. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), pp.84–258.

[10] Some writers, like Emily Crawford covered the social scene as well as critical political affairs, while others like Eliza Lynn Linton, seem to have done no more than describe Parisian social life. Sebba, *Battling for News*, pp.14, 20.

journalist by claiming her foreign correspondence in her own name. In order to understand Ward's and Martineau's professional personae, I shall examine the extent to which they admitted to their female status, how they projected their reports as more credible, more original and worthy of financial payment and readerly interest than those of rival reporters. Foreign correspondence, far from being an all-male function that women only surreptitiously entered, was in fact, a role out of which women made celebrated careers, commanding a regular and committed readership and international repute.[11]

There is barely any published writing on Ward's war correspondence. While there has been much recent work on Martineau, her negotiations with the specific requirements of mid-century foreign correspondence have not been fully explored. By looking in detail at these models of Victorian women's professional authorship, which have hitherto received little critical attention, this chapter will show that this pathway was not only highly significant within the individual authorial careers of these women writers but also enabled an increasing number of women to enter the field of foreign reportage as the century progressed.

Crossing the Final Frontier: Harriet Ward as Mid-Victorian Female War Correspondent

In April 1848, Harriet Ward, wife of Captain John Ward of the 91st regiment of the British Army in South Africa, published the following report on the Seventh Frontier War (1846-47) in the *United Service Magazine*:

[11] In her own days Crawford was a celebrated woman of letters. She was elected as a life fellow of the Institute of Journalists in 1890, and in 1901, she served as president of the Society of Women Journalists. Leading periodicals ran her interviews, She is also noted in *Men and Women of the Time: A Dictionary of Contemporaries*, ed. by Washington Moon (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1891).

> The Cape Mounted Rifles, led by Capt. O'Reilly, advanced up the face of the hill, the enemy as usual screening himself, while the troops moved slowly but steadily onwards, under the incessant fire of the Kafirs, until within eighty yards of them, when the bugle sounding the gallop, the Totties [Khoikhoi] cheered, and entered the bush in gallant style. In twenty minutes the savages were dislodged, and driven over a hill into a ravine below […] Seventeen of them were counted dead after the engagement […] In this affair our troops sustained but two casualties.[12]

Writing as an anonymous army wife, Ward offers a blow-by-blow account of an encounter between the British army and opposing Xhosa forces as though she herself had served in the line of fire. By noting the presence of Khoikhoi soldiers in the British army, Ward shows her knowledge of the racial diversity in military units such as the Cape Mounted Rifles.[13] She not only speaks in solidarity with the British army but also takes on a soldierly persona. In true military style, she identifies army men as 'our troops', refers to regiments and commanding officers by their official titles, unflinchingly notes the gory details of war, and tallies casualties

[12] 'The Present War in Kafirland.—1847. Written on the Spot. Part the Second', *United Services Magazine*, Part 1(April 1848), 537–47 (p.543). The *United Service Magazine* (henceforth, the *USM*) does not bear regular volume numbers. It was divided into three parts per year, with each part covering several months. For this reason, I have cited part numbers, and for consultation purposes, these may be treated as volume numbers. To avoid confusion between article titles that are similar and occasionally identical, I have included dates of publication alongside titles in the notes. Ward uses the pejorative and racial terms *Kafir* and *hottentot* to refer to the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi. Like other Victorian Englishmen, Ward erroneously spells the names of Xhosa chiefs Sandile and Mhala as *Sandeli* and *Umhala*, and refers to the Mfengu people as *Fingo*. In the interests of accuracy, I retain Ward's own terms and spellings within quotations.

[13] For the mixed-race constitution of the Cape Mounted Riflemen regiment, see Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.11–12.

on both sides of the war.[14] She emphasizes her own location in the field of conflict by entitling her report 'The Present War in Kafirland.—1847. Written on the Spot'.[15] Unlike William Howard Russell, the *Times* correspondent who distinguished himself at Crimea and is widely regarded as the first war correspondent, Ward did not present her reports as alternatives to military narratives.[16] Rather, as an army wife, she wrote from the threshold of army and civilian life. This perspective made her reports noteworthy in the *USM*, a military monthly which largely published articles and stories written by army and naval officers.

Ward's successful two-year stint as war correspondent under a militaristic yet female authorial persona, makes it imperative for us to revise radically our image of the Victorian war correspondent as a male reporter on a newspaper's staff. Most scholarship on war reportage has treated Russell's model of journalism, wherein a full-time civilian journalist sends eye-witness accounts of war to a daily newspaper, as the original and only acceptable form of professional war correspondence. This partly explains why even Phillip Knightley, who notes that Russell had a professional predecessor in Charles Gruneisen, the *Morning Post* reporter sent to Spain to cover the First Carlist War in 1837, starts his history of war correspondence with Russell.[17] Even Mary Favret's recent groundbreaking work on the role of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century newspaper press in enabling the English to comprehend distantly-fought

[14] 'The Present War', April 1848, p.543.

[15] Ibid, p.537.

[16] Rupert Furneaux, *The First War Correspondent: William Howard Russell of The Times* (London: Cassell and Company, 1944); Greg McLaughlin, *The War Correspondent* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

[17] Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Napoleonic wars, leaves out all but the daily press in its discussion of war journalism.[18] Given that nineteenth-century war correspondence was of an 'itinerant and irregular nature', there is a need to broaden the current critical definition of Victorian war correspondence to include other models of war journalism, such as reports published by unstaffed writers in the non-daily press.[19] Moreover, as professional journalism continued to be loosely defined well into the late nineteenth century, Ward cannot be judged as any less professional than Russell for not being sent to the battlefield for the express purpose of covering war.[20] Considering such alternative forms of war correspondence shows that Russell had many predecessors including, startlingly, various women whose work has attracted very little attention.

Examining Ward's reports deepens our understanding of the generic diversity of Victorian war correspondence. Her articles are neither signed in person nor attributed to 'our correspondent', and they bear no dateline. Moreover, they are often remarkably outdated. She recounts, for example, the events of 1847 in an April 1848 article. Far from trying to conceal this lapse of time, Ward foregrounds it by including the tell-tale year, 1847, in the title of her article.[21]

As James Mussell has persuasively argued, the co-presence of dailies, weeklies, monthlies and annuals in the Victorian press meant that readers simultaneously sustained diverse

[18] Mary Favret, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[19] 'Foreign Correspondent', p.225.

[20] For a discussion of late nineteenth century debates about professional journalism, see Mark Hampton, 'Defining Journalists'.

[21] 'The Present War in Kafirland.—1847', April 1848, p.537.

notions of the present, each determined by the pace of the particular periodical being read.[22] For a Victorian reader, a war report in a weekly or monthly magazine was no less significant for arriving later than an account published in a daily paper, or repeating some previously-known information. Rather, monthly war reports like Ward's offered more details than the accounts published in the fast-paced daily press. Although Ward's monthly war reports could not, like Russell's correspondence in the daily press, speedily call out military mismanagement on the field, they enabled readers to contemplate war at a relatively relaxed pace; they could influence public opinion, and the outcome of an ongoing war, by carefully reviewing its recent events for the many officers who read the *USM*. As I will show, Victorian women writers who wrote in monthly magazines presented delay itself as a sign of the accuracy, rigour, and depth of their war reportage.

Ward had important predecessors in women writers like Georgina Munro, who published stories about Cape life in the *USM* in the 1840s, and Lady Florentia Sale, whose letters from Kabul during the First Afghan War (1839-42), were passed on by her military husband to official government channels and the press.[23] However, unlike Ward, Munro did not report an ongoing war, and Sale did not post her own letters to the press, though she did capitalize on the 'media frenzy' surrounding her letters to publish a subsequent account of her trials in Afghanistan.[24] As

[22] James Mussell, *Science, Time and Space in the Late Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Movable Types* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.95.

[23] Shane Malhotra, '"If She Escapes She Will Publish Everything": Lady Sale and the Media Frenzy of the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842)', *Book History*, 17 (2014), 272–97 (p.276).

[24] Ibid., p.272.

the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* notes, Ward's reportage on the Seventh Frontier War was possibly the first instance of women's war correspondence.[25]

Valerie Letcher's pioneering work on Harriet Ward, which predates the *Dictionary*, does not analyze her journalism as war reportage despite noting her publications in the *USM*.[26] Though some historians of the Seventh Frontier War like John Milton, Noël Mostert, and Timothy Stapleton quote Ward, and rightly point out that her opinions were prejudicial and racist, they do not discuss her role as a journalist. Malvern Smith notes her correspondence, but discusses her as a novelist on the Eastern Cape.[27] Female war reporters have also been largely overlooked by scholars such as Sara Mills, Nupur Chaudhuri, Margaret Strobel, Mary Procida and Alison Blunt, who have argued eloquently for the importance of women's work in the construction of British colonial discourse.[28] As I will show, female war correspondents like Ward participated in the public project of imperialism not simply as women who sustained English cultural practices in the colonies, but as professionals in their own right. By offering the first analysis of Ward's reports on the Seventh Frontier War, this section adds to our

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[25] 'Foreign Correspondent', p.225.

[26] Valerie Helen Letcher, 'Trespassing Beyond the Borders: Harriet Ward as Writer and Commentator on the Eastern Cape Frontier' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rhodes University, December 1996).

[27] John Milton, *The Edges of War: A History of Frontier Wars 1702–1878* (Cape Town: Juta and Co, 1983); Noël Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992); Timothy Stapleton, *Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994); Malvern van Wyk Smith, 'Romancing the East Cape Frontier: Prelude to the South African High Romance of Empire', *English in Africa*, 24 (October 1997), 1–14.

[28] Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991); Mary A Procida, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883–1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. by Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Alison Blunt, 'Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India, 1886–1925', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 24 (1999), 421–40.

understanding of Victorian womanhood, imperial wifehood and women's professional authorship in nineteenth-century England.

Sensing War from a Distance: Examining Harriet Ward's Journalistic Prescience

Born in Norfolk, Harriet Ward (1808–73) was the daughter of a Napoleonic War veteran Colonel Francis Skelly Tidy and his wife. In 1831, she married Captain John Ward and accompanied him, along with their daughter Isabel, on his postings at St. Helena from 1836 to 1839 and the Eastern Cape from 1842 to about 1848.[29] On her return to England, she brought out a collected edition of these articles, entitled *Five Years in Kaffirland*, and also wrote other essays, books and novels, some of which reflected on her South African experience**.**

The beginnings of Ward's authorial career may be traced to a series of articles entitled "Recollections of an Old Soldier" published in 1840 in the *USM.*[30] Issued monthly at a price of three shillings and six pence, the *USM* included biographical memoirs of military and naval officers, articles and news related to the services, correspondence, and details of appointments

[29] Letcher, 'Trespassing Beyond the Borders', pp.4–6. Biographical information about Ward is sparse; Letcher mentions the above details in a brief biographical note composed from some of Ward's articles and letters held at the Brenthurst Library in South Africa.

[30] Although these articles initially appeared anonymously, they were published in a collected edition under her own name in 1849. Mrs. Harriet Ward, *Recollections of An Old Soldier: A Biographical Sketch of the Late Colonel Tidy, C.B., 24th Regt.* (London: Bentley, 1849). The *USM* had been launched in 1827 as the *Naval and Military Magazine*. In 1829, it was purchased by Henry Colburn, who initially entitled it the *United Service Journal* and changed its name again in the early 1840s to *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal* (generally referred to as the *United Service Magazine*). Albert Tucker, 'Military', in *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, ed. by J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp.62–80 (pp.66–67).

and promotions. Its readership consisted not only of those associated with the navy and military but also civilians whose interest in military affairs had been whetted by the Napoleonic Wars.[31] Ward's "Recollections of an Old Soldier" were stories of the military life of Fred Franklin, a thinly disguised version of her father, Napoleonic War veteran Colonel Francis Tidy. Although she stated that both her father and husband were military men, she did not sign her articles. As Letcher has noted, Ward may have decided to publish anonymously because she had doubts about the propriety of an officer's wife publishing in a journal that was kept in army mess-rooms and was probably read by most of his professional peers.[32] Ward stressed her professional ambition by claiming that she was 'determined to fight […] through the difficulties and perils of authorship' and make her 'own and independent way' in the world, as though her writing was a feminine counterpart to the military careers of the men in her family.[33]

Indeed, Ward's wifehood did not insulate her writing from monetary considerations. Her authorship seems to have been driven by a need to supplement Captain Ward's income, which might have felt insufficient to one who had married a man below the military rank of her father. While stationed at the Cape, the Ward family was under particular financial stress, since they lost a large part of their savings in the wreck of the *Abercrombie Robinson*, the ship on which they had travelled to the Cape Colony. Though her husband did not belong to the ill-paid rank and

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[31] Hew Strachan, who has demonstrated that the *USM* influenced contemporary army reforms, notes that it was read in military mess-rooms. The journal's general readership is suggested not only by Tucker's commentary on the expanding market for military periodicals in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, but also by reviews of the *USM* published in general journals like *The Mirror*. Hew Strachan, *The Reform of the British Army, 1830–54* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p.23; 'United Service Magazine', *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, 2 (October 1, 1846), 247–48.

[32] 'Trespassing Beyond the Borders', p.10.

[33] 'Recollections', October 1840, p.223.

file, she described herself in a letter to her editor Sir John Philippart as a 'poor soldiers [*sic*] wife', suggesting that her own middle-class authorship was analogous to the paid work by which ordinary soldiers' wives supplemented their husbands' incomes.[34]

In 1843, Ward attempted the persona of the female eye-witness of a disaster in her article on the wreck of the *Abercrombie Robinson.*[35] Describing her experiences on board a troop-ship which did not afford 'convenient accommodation for a lady', and foregrounding her resolve to show 'a fortitude worthy of a soldier's wife' in the face of a life-threatening storm at sea, Ward shows early signs of the persona that she would develop as an anonymous female war correspondent in 1846: a reporter who is soldier-like in her courage, and one who is keenly sensitive to the suffering of British troops. Ward's war journalism must be understood in the context of this pressing financial need as well as her developing awareness of the unique authorial opportunities available to army wives.

An army wife is a classic example of what Hilary Callan calls 'incorporated' wifehood, 'where the social character ascribed to a woman is an intimate function of her husband's occupational identity and culture'.[36] Such wifehood is an '*available,* rather than an *empirical*' category since it is 'intimately moulded by context: by shifting perceptions, permeable

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[34] Harried Ward to Sir John Philippart, 16 to18 December 1845, H.Ward. Papers. MS. 326f, quoted in Letcher, 'Trespassing Beyond the Borders', p.49. Non-commissioned soldiers were poorly paid and only a small minority were granted permission to marry. Such wives, considered as 'on the strength' of the regiment, received support to accompany their husbands. Most of them came from the working classes and undertook paid work in washing, sewing, and mending to supplement their husbands' meagre incomes. Myna Trustram, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge: University Press, 1984), pp.31, 105.

[35] Mrs. Ward, 'Wreck of the Abercrombie Robinson and Waterloo', *USM*, Part 1 (February 1843), 194–202.

[36] Hilary Callan, Introduction, in *The Incorporated Wife*, ed. by Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp.1–26 (p.1).

boundaries, the creative manipulation of ambiguities'.[37] The conditions of imperial domesticity enabled army wives to participate in public activities in ways that were impossible for many middle-class wives in England.[38] As Mary Procida has noted in relation to colonial India, the home of an English officer was 'imbued with practical and /or symbolic import' for the imperial project: it 'was an arena for political discussion and administrative action, and civil society itself was identified with that limited cadre of people who could appropriately be invited' into it.[39] By managing indigenous domestic servants and sustaining English cultural practices in the colonies, army wives reproduced 'imperial power relations on a household scale'.[40] They also participated more directly in the public 'practices and discourses of imperialism' by advising and assisting their husbands.[41]

This seamless merging of the private and the public within imperial domesticity was particularly marked in times of colonial conflict. When war broke out in the colonies, the homes of army officers became potential targets of violence, giving army wives a reason to present domestic life as beset with mortal danger and to take on masculine, soldierly personae. A sterling example of this kind of self-presentation was set in 1843 by Lady Florentia Sale, the wife of Sir Robert Henry Sale, who became famous by publishing a journal that recounted her first-hand experience of the Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42).

While speaking of her experiences during the siege of Kabul, Sale described her home

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[37] Ibid., p.2.

[38] For an extended discussion of this issue, see Mona Macmillan, 'Camp Followers: A Note on Wives of the Armed Services', in *The Incorporated Wife*, ed. by Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener, pp.89–105; Mary Procida, *Married to the Empire.*

[39] *Married to the Empire*, p.58.

[40] Blunt, 'Imperial Geographies', p.437.

[41] Procida, *Married to the Empire*, p.30.

as an embattled space. Cannon balls are said to have fallen at the door of the veranda.[42] She claimed that her son-in-law, Captain John Sturt, met his peers in her house to chalk out military plans, and that she overheard them while hemming a handkerchief.[43] The heightened uncertainty of life in wartime, where even homes must turn into emergency military planning units, gives Sale the chance to depict her mundane domestic life as a threshold experience: she can be both, a silent, hanky-hemming housewife as well as a brave, soldierly writer, who comprehends and records critical military information with the ease and calm of a seasoned army man. Sale presented her authorship itself as an act of valor, and professed to have written even after being hit by a bullet in her wrist and when held in captivity.[44] Sale underlined that she had represented war in real time, having 'not only daily noted down events as they occurred, but often […] hourly' and also claimed to have provided information to the Commander-in-Chief, the Governor General and the Board of Directors of the East India Company back in England.[45]

Sale's adoption of a militaristic persona shows an oft-ignored aspect of imperial femininity: that women did not merely take on public roles under the wing of a stable, officially male English empire but turned the very crises in imperial rule into opportunities for heroic self-fashioning. The English press celebrated Sale's tenacity as the mark of an exemplary army wife, and 'found in her a dramatic and popular contrast to the "miserable incompetency" of "the old dotard" [Major-General William] Elphinstone', who was widely criticized as an indecisive and

[42] Ibid., p.157.

[43] Ibid., p.67.

[44] Ibid., p.237.

[45] Ibid., p.1. These claims about her having smuggled reports to her husband that were subsequently read in India and England are peppered through the journal and occur on pp.109, 218, 349, 400.

deficient leader.[46] In 1844, she was applauded in the *USM* as the 'heroic partner' of Robert Sale, and elected as an Honorary member of the United Service Institution, by 'special resolution of the Council'.[47] The notice reproduced the letter sent to Lady Sale by the Vice-President of the United Service Institution and first editor of the *USM*, Peninsular War veteran Major Shadwell Clerke.

For Harriet Ward, reading about Lady Sale in the *USM* would have suggested a model of authorship that could bring wealth, fame, and honour. It was the closest she could come to emulating her heroic military father, or paralleling the professional trajectories of her husband and brothers. In an 1847 war report, Ward referenced Sale's journal as an example of previous writing that had, like her own articles, noted the difficulties of dealing with 'savage nations'.[48] Sale's militaristic authorial persona would have also seemed compelling to Ward since she herself was living on a serially embattled frontier. By the time Ward arrived in the Eastern Cape, six interconnected "frontier wars" had already broken out between European colonists and indigenous African people.[49] Although the initial conflicts had been caused by Boer encroachment upon the land of the frontier Xhosa, the British army became directly involved in these conflicts after taking over the Cape in 1806.[50] The army tried to keep the Xhosa out of the margins of the colony, especially after significant numbers of British settlers arrived at the Cape

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[46] Malhotra, '"If She Escapes"', p.277.

[47] 'Editor's Portfolio, or Naval and Military Register', *USM*, Part 3 (December 1844), 621–30 (p.623).

[48] 'The Present War in Kafirland. Written on the Spot', *USM*, Part 3 (October 1847), 268–77 (p.269).

[49] Harold E. Raugh, *The Victorians at War, 1815–1914: An Encyclopedia of British Military History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), pp.79–80.

[50] Ibid.; Alan Lester, 'The Margins of Order: Strategies of Segregation on the Eastern Cape Frontier, 1806–c. 1850', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 23 (1997), 635–53 (p.636).

in 1820, but each outbreak of war proved that it had failed to stamp out indigenous resistance to English authority.[51] In 1837, the British government withdrew from Queen Adelaide Province, a large territory of Xhosa land that it had annexed during the Sixth Frontier War (1835-36), and in an attempt to keep peace in the colony, it also established a treaty system between the Cape colony and the Xhosa.[52] These measures were resented by the Cape colonists, partly because they curtailed their ability to raid the Xhosa and acquire more land.[53] Throughout the 1840s, the margins of the colony 'remained insecure, and the whole colonial project […] plagued by the problem of its delimitation'.[54] Ward began writing on the Cape in 1844, when the arrival of Sir Peregrine Maitland, a new and more aggressive Governor who cancelled existing treaties with the Xhosa, set the scene for renewed conflict.[55]

Though the Seventh Frontier War was two long years away, Ward writes as though the colony was on the brink of immediate war. 'If some decisive means' were not taken 'to stop the present system of plunder and murder' by the Xhosa people, she warns, the Dutch and the English settlers would take 'the law in their own hands' and 'probably bring on a Caffer war'.[56] As noted by Favret, alarmism was 'itself a recognized form of prophecy' that was regularly used by government supporters during the Napoleonic Wars to warn British citizens of attacks from

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[51] Lester, 'The Margins of Order', p.643.

[52]Alan Lester, 'Settlers, The State and Colonial Power: The Colonization of Queen Adelaide Province, 1834–37', *The Journal of African History*, 39 (1998), 221–45 (p.243); Timothy Stapleton, '"Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants": The Fingo (Or Mfengu) as Colonial Military Allies During the Cape-Xhosa Wars, 1835–1881', in *Soldiers and Settlers in Africa, 1850–1918*, ed. by Stephen M. Miller (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp.15–47 (p.19).

[53] Stapleton, '"Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants"', p.19.

[54] Lester, 'The Margins of Order', p.647.

[55] Stapleton, '"Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants"', p.19.

[56] 'A Voice from Cafferland: Being an Abstract of the Political History of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, from 1805 to the Present Time, Written on the Spot', *USM*, Part 1(January 1844), 1–9 (p.9).

abroad.[57] Like late-eighteenth century alarmist reports, Ward's articles 'conjure threats in the future' by recalling horrors of past wars.[58] She constantly refers back to previous Frontier wars and notes the legacy of unresolved conflict with indigenous populations that has passed on to current English residents of the Cape. However, unlike eighteenth-century alarmists who warned of threats approaching from afar, Ward spoke of threats that plagued the very place from which she reported. She asserts that the safety of settlers and officers was endangered not only by the Xhosa across the colonial border, but also by the indigenous people whom the Cape administration has failed to keep from harassing English residents:

> At present the Hottentot, the Fingo, and naturalized Bechuana, and the freed negro, may seat themselves by your dwelling place […] and rob your premises; while the armed Caffer prowls about your neighbourhood, using his musket or assegai for the purpose of murder or plunder, as he may see fit.[59]

The racial fears that Ward articulates were widespread in the settler press, especially in the notoriously prejudiced settler newspaper the *Graham's Town Journal,* which she repeatedly cites as an authentic source of information about the Cape.[60] Even her suggested list of solutions to the current situation, such as converting the 'indolent coloured population in the Colony' into a docile labour force by establishing a vagrant act, expelling the Xhosa east of the Keiskama river

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[57] *War at a Distance* p.85.

[58] Ibid., p.86.

[59] 'A Voice from Cafferland', p.7.

[60] For how the *Graham's Town Journal* raised racial fears about the Xhosa, Mfengu and the Khoikhoi, see Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.58, 63–4, 92.

and brutally punishing trespassers with hard labour and imprisonment, echoes settler demands for stricter measures against indigenous people.[61]

By expressing settler claims from the perspective of an army wife, Ward foregrounds the shared interests of soldiers and settlers and acts as an intermediary between civilian settlers and the military. She points out that it is not the army but the distant and ill-informed English government that is responsible for the concessionary policies that had exasperated the settlers, and that both military and civilian populations in the Cape were adversely affected by such 'fallacious' and 'ill executed' laws.[62] As Alan Lester has noted, settler women played a similarly 'unifying role' in the Cape: 'when the social cohesion of polite Graham's Town society was threatened by a rift between the civil and military authorities, […] the town's genteel women […] acted to restore a community of interest by organising a round of soirées in the warring parties' houses'.[63] Like settler wives, Ward presents herself as a '*perfectly disinterested*' third party, but as their military counterpart, she conducts her mediating role not in the 'tranquillity of the domestic' but in the public, journalistic sphere of a military magazine.[64]

Writing on behalf of the army enables Ward to address public issues with a polemical vehemence that is unusual for Victorian women writers. She takes the colonial Government to task for its pacifist policies and also demands a range of military reforms, such as greater authority for local colonial administrators and better living conditions for soldiers, as the need of

[61] 'A Voice from Cafferland', p.7.

[62] 'Notices from Kafirland. Written on the Spot No.III', *USM*, Part 3 (October 1844), 180–94 (p.186).

[63] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p.75.

[64] 'Notices from Kafirland. Written on the Spot No.I', *USM*, Part 2 (May 1844), 17–28 (p.18); Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p.75.

the hour.[65] She fulminates against 'cambric-handkerchief philanthropist[s]' who preach peace to the army and says she 'should like to put such philanthropists on what *we* call a "Commando" here'.[66]As an army wife, Ward deploys the collective 'we' of a military magazine and uses local combat slang to represent simultaneously the extended military community of the magazine, the army stationed in the Cape, and all Britain itself, without rejecting or concealing her femininity.[67] She writes with great concern about Xhosa chiefs purportedly ill-treating their own wives, suggesting that subjugating such 'savage' men would not only save helpless Xhosa women but also banish the frightening prospect of similar treatment being meted out to white women like herself.[68]

In her four anonymous 'Notices from Kafirland', Ward makes a special case for the journalistic abilities of army wives. Travel writers visit the colony, she says, with the 'express

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[65]'Notices from Kafirland. Written on the Spot No.II', *USM*, Part 2 (July 1844), 335–48 (pp.340, 343). It is striking that unlike the Indian army wives studied by Blunt, Ward does not disclose the labour conditions within her own home. At one point, she complains that the rations currently given to army officers for hiring indigenous male servants were going unused because of the scarcity of such labourers, and states that it would be better to raise officers' pay so that they can 'provide themselves with such servants (male or female, black or white,) as can be obtained' (Ibid., p.343). Jacklyn Cock and Shireen Ally have noted that indigenous black women and female European immigrants constituted a major section of the domestic labourers in the mid-century Eastern Cape. Ward seems to have aspired to hire from this multi-racial female labour force. However, since she does not elaborate on this issue, I have not analyzed it in detail. Jacklyn Cock, 'Domestic Service and Education for Domesticity: The Incorporation of Xhosa Women into Colonial Society', in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945,* ed. by Cherryl Walker (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), pp.76–96 (p.76); Shireen Ally, *From Servants to Workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp.25–26.

[66] 'Notices from Kafirland', October 1844, p.183, emphasis added. Commandos were expeditions undertaken to forcibly acquire labour, and also reclaim cattle. Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.41–52.

[67] 'Notices from Kafirland', October 1844, p.183.

[68] 'Notices from Kafirland', December 1844, p.507.

purpose of "making a book"' and write volumes about the 'literary, scientific, and general' features of the Cape, but they provide few '*details*' about its inhabitants.[69] By contrast, Ward, as a resident of the Cape, can tell all that is 'true of the domestic manners, habits, and customs of the Kafirs' and 'the life led by the military sent hither'.[70] Unlike a traveller with no prior exposure to the Cape, Ward draws on personal experiences to show that the seemingly tranquil ambience of the Cape was subtended by hostility towards the British. Ward's account of how the 'peaceful valley behind the site of the council [with a Xhosa chief]' had contained 'a thousand armed Kafirs', makes it difficult for the reader to not wonder whether the other mountains and rivers that Ward notes, purely for their physical beauty, do not also contain similarly concealed threats.[71]

Her alarmism is itself presented as informed scepticism about the Xhosa's professions of peace. She notes, for example, that the continuing practice of cattle-stealing by the Xhosa demonstrates that their oaths of co-operating with the British are only '*outwardly*' shows of deference lacking any 'real conviction'.[72] She claims 'on the spot' candidness, not on the familiar basis of making detached or balanced arguments, but for transcribing ambient public panic about an approaching war. She states that people suffering from 'the absurd manner in which we coax the Kafirs and injure our own cause by the ill-formation and execution of our laws' can talk of nothing else but the inevitable failure of peace treaties adopted at the end of the Sixth Frontier War.[73] So much so that a ten year old child is said to have 'produced a rough

[69] Ibid., p.18, original emphasis.

[70] Ibid.

[71] 'Notices from Kafirland', October 1844, p.192.

[72] Ibid., pp.193–94.

[73] Ibid., p.184.

caricature of John Bull, hat in hand, reading a treaty to a Kafir', with the Queen looking on 'smiling, and exhorting the Kafir gently to listen, which he does with his finger on his nose'.[74] Ward's frequent digressions from recording the present state of the colony to relating her own fears, often by reproducing entries from a personal journal, not only add imaginative depth to her reports but also enable her to suggest that the menace from the Xhosa was growing by the day.

The framework of an impending war helped Ward speak of her domestic life in the army barracks as an exciting, edgy war-time experience. She presents what must have been a regular, appointed meeting between her husband and a native chief as though it was an enemy reconnoitre of the camp:

> I was standing, with my husband, on the green, […] at Fort Peddie, when Sandeli, mounted himself, but with two followers on foot, came up to us at full tilt. When in front of us […] he took a quiet survey of us […] we repaid him glance for glance.[75]

By describing 1844 Cape Colony as in a war-*like* situation rather than a full-blown war-zone, Ward could claim to have been present in important military meetings with Xhosa chiefs and report them with the excitement of a real combat situation, without seeming unfeminine for rushing into danger. For example, after having given an eye-witness account of a council between the Xhosa chief Mhala and representatives of the British army, she notes 'in defence' of her 'womanly attributes', which she 'would not abjure for the world', that she 'had the greatest faith in Mr. Shepstone[a settler and government agent]'s assurance that the Kafirs would be

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., p.187.

peaceably disposed as long as we remained so'.[76] In her next article, she talks of having accompanied a battalion of the 91st regiment on its way to meet a regiment of Cape Corps, before moving to warn a chief named Tola. Although she 'by no means' thinks 'the head of a brigade in array for the field an eligible place for ladies in general', she agrees to march with the troops when pressed by others to 'proceed a little further with the expedition, which had no chance of becoming a warlike one in reality'.[77]

In both the above instances, Ward states that she had 'yielded to the various solicitations' that she accompany the men, without actually stating who these solicitors were.[78] It seems that Ward wanted to write a first-person account of war without taking responsibility for wilfully entering a site of potential violence. Representing the Cape as being on the threshold of war enabled Ward to have it both ways: to offer a soldier's view of war, and even to adopt a markedly military persona, without compromising feminine decorum. She professes to have 'great […] dislike, as a woman' to 'speak of public matters connected with this colony', suggesting that she was driven to do so by the gathering war-clouds.[79]

But Ward goes beyond simply citing conflict as an excuse for her militaristic prose. In these articles, it is the gender of the writer that makes the situation *seem* war-like. The military men and colonial administrators in her company — the Sheptones whose judgement she trusts — know the difference between war and peace too well to be fazed by these events. She notes that her womanly heart 'fluttered' when the guards called out that the 'Kafirs' were in sight.[80] Apart

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[76] Ibid., p.191.

[77] 'Notices from Kafirland.Written on the Spot No.IV', *USM*, Part 3(December 1844), 504–14 (p.505).

[78] Ibid.

[79] 'Notices from Kafirland', July 1844, p.339.

[80] 'Notices from Kafirland', October 1844, p.187.

from foregrounding that she was not manly, this sense of danger highlights the unique observational powers of the woman journalist. No one around her seems to have noticed that the Xhosa attending this apparently safe conference had assumed a warlike stance: 'the Kafir chief and his people formed themselves into a plalanx [*sic*], certainly of most warlike appearance'.[81] The woman's view is here presented, not simply as a different perspective, but as the more astute one.

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Barbara Korte has observed that the 'rules and images that guide a war correspondent's behaviour' derived from the past representations and actual performance of individual reporters.[82] However, this reading of Bourdieu does not sufficiently register the critical role of gender in shaping the correspondent's perspective. In his discussion of habitus, Bourdieu stresses that members of a particular class are predisposed, because of their shared past experience, to perceive and appreciate a particular object in similar ways. Habitus, he says, is 'embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history'.[83] This past conditioning becomes particularly apparent when such individuals encounter an environment that is 'too different from the one to which they are objectively adjusted'.[84] In Ward's reports, it is the woman writer's very unfamiliarity with war which makes her a particularly valuable commentator on conflict, a zone that is 'too different

[81] 'Notices from Kafirland', October 1844, p.191 .

[82] Barbara Korte, *Represented Reporters: Images of War Correspondents in Memoirs and Fiction* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009), p.20.

[83] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p.56.

[84] Ibid., p.62.

from the one to which [she is] objectively adjusted'.[85] The training that equips a soldier to deal with war appears to have paradoxically numbed him to its early, indeterminate signs.

Ward also tries to attract greater support for civilian and military expansion in the Cape, particularly from the English government, which, as John Galbraith has pointed out, perceived the early nineteenth-century Cape as a colony with little potential for trade or industry and was thus highly reluctant to extend its presence in the Cape beyond the principal ports.[86] Ward repeatedly proposes that establishing British rule over the Cape would transform the wild 'Kafirland' into a bustling colony, a popular trading centre and an attractive emigration destination for thousands starving in Ireland and England for lack of work.[87]

As Dipesh Chakrabarty has noted, for nineteenth-century British writers like John Stuart Mill, British/European models of governance alone qualified as modern and political, and colonies like India and Africa needed to wait, to become more like Britain before they could become capable of self-governance.[88] Unlike these writers, Ward does not view indigenous Africans as subjects to be transformed over time into quasi-Englishmen. She perceives the Xhosa as irredeemable savages fit only to be annihilated, and recommends that even indigenous people who co-operated with the English should be ruled with a firm hand. This construction of the Xhosa had first been systematically advanced by Cape settlers during the Sixth Frontier War but

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[85] Ibid.

[86] John Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire: British Policy on the South African Frontier 1834–1854* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), pp.1–7.

[87] See, for example, H.W. [Harriet Ward] 'The Alarm! A Frontier Story from South Africa', *USM*, Part 2 (July 1846), 383–88 (p.386); 'The Present War in Kafirland. Written on the Spot', *USM*, 3 (September 1847), 112–21 (p.115); 'The Present War', October 1847, pp.270–71.

[88] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.8.

it had subsequently been questioned and resisted by humanitarians in the Cape and in England.[89] By drawing on this discourse, Ward emphasizes that stopping short of entirely subjugating the Xhosa would only make the Cape Englishmen vulnerable to future attacks.

By the end of 1844, the demand for these 'notices' seems to have run out. No article that can be conclusively identified as hers appeared in the *USM* in 1845.[90] In a letter to the journal's editor John Philippart, written in December 1845, she underlines her desperate need for money: 'at all events pray put it in print [… e]very guinea now is of the utmost consequence'.[91] Her complaint about there being a 'sad dearth of matter in this monotonous country' suggests that she attributed the lull in her career to being stuck in a site whose potential for artistic material she had exhausted.[92] In 1846, in a context of aggravated drought, competition over land, and increased colonial provocation, a dispute over the custody of a Xhosa man, who had been imprisoned for stealing an axe from a store in Fort Beaufort and rescued from captivity by his friends, led to the outbreak of the Seventh Frontier War.[93]

This gave Ward's flagging career a much-needed boost. She could now report an officially declared war as though she were witnessing it unfold before her. Even daily newspapers like *The Times* did not have regular correspondents stationed at the Cape before 1855, and usually republished reports from colonial newspapers, and accounts of local citizens

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[89] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, pp.63–65.

[90] Valerie Letcher attributes one subsequent article, 'The Social Wrongs of the Soldier', published in the January 1845 issue of the *USM* to Ward. However, as there is no proof beyond internal evidence that it was Ward's, I have not treated it as hers.

[91] H.Ward. Papers. MS. 326f, quoted in Letcher, 'Trespassing Beyond the Borders', p.13.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Lester, 'Margins of Order', p.647; Stapleton, '"Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants"', p.19; Crais, *White Supremacy*, p.143. The colonial authorities had demanded that Xhosa chiefs surrender the man to them and, on their refusal, started a military offensive against them.

and British military men.[94] Thus, the very incorporation of secondary sources and colonial press reports would not have made Ward's reports seem less authentic than newspaper correspondence. Writing directly from the field distinguished her from Georgina Munro, who also wrote about South Africa for the *USM* but had moved to England by 1840. Munro must have seemed like formidable competition to Ward. Living in London, Munro could learn about the conflict in the Cape from the daily newspapers, and rush an article to the offices of the *USM* well before Ward could ship her own reports across the Atlantic. Indeed, *The Times* newspaper announced the onset of a 'Caffre War' in the Cape on 29 June 1846 and Munro had a full month to write up her article on the 'New War in Kafirland', which was published in the August issue of the *USM*, three months before Ward published her first article on 'Present War in Kafirland'.[95] Ward had to ensure that her 'on the spot' reports from the Cape were sufficiently different from what Munro could conjure from memory and filled with details that her London readers would not already know from the snippets sent by Cape officers and settlers to the daily press in London.

Ward's tried and tested alarmist technique served her well in this regard. One month before Munro's article spoke of the 'New War in Kafirland', Ward's 'The Alarm! A Frontier Story from South Africa', announced the advent of war.[96] The 'story' is not a fictional frontier

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[94] J.S. Arndt, 'On Heroes and Villains: *The Times'* Reporting on the Cape Colony's Frontier Wars, 1818–1853', *Military History Journal*, 15 (December 2012) <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol156ja.html> [accessed 24 May 2012].

[95] 'The Caffre War', *The Times*, 29 June 1846, p.8; Georgina Munro, 'The New War in Kafirland', *USM*, Part 2 (August 1846), 563–67; 'The Present War in Kafirland, 1846. Written on the Spot. Chap.I', *USM*, Part 3 (November 1846), 321–30.

[96] 'The Alarm!'. Though this article is not signed, and is not included in the signed volume publication of Ward's reports in the *USM*, there is sufficient internal evidence, including the use of the initials 'H.W.' and the description of the poem as an 'on the spot' composition, to trace it to Ward. Letcher also treats it as Ward's.

tale, but a multi-genre account about a conflict between the Xhosa, led by chief Sandeli, and the British forces, led by Colonel Hare. It consists largely of a war poem 'written during the moment of excitement, *and on the spot*'.[97] 'Oh, for the pen of Homer to describe / the meeting of these warriors, face to face!' she states, suggesting that her own subject was no less important than Homer's.[98] The poem is heavily footnoted with references to recent incidents, military management in other colonies, as well as a full surrender letter sent by the Xhosa chiefs to the Lieutenant Governor.

Such extensive use of prose material alongside the poem, suggests that the value of the article derived as much from its imaginative potential as from its reportage of the approaching Cape war. Ward ends with a post-script that anticipates the Seventh Frontier War by underlining the tenuous nature of the proclaimed peace: 'P.S. (Whether the ground is ours is not quite clear; One thing is certain— it will cost us dear.)'.[99] At a time when the features of war reportage were yet to be stabilized, this stylistically heterogeneous article fittingly launches Ward's career as female war correspondent for the *USM*. As I will show in the next section, Ward helps to fashion a distinct form of war correspondence which differs radically from the rapid scoop-driven war reportage of the daily press.

Working in the Meantime: Harriet Ward's Tactfully Delayed Reportage

Narratorial omniscience, through which she had spoken in 1844 as the representative voice of all South Africa, is stated to be 'impossible' in war correspondence, 'in consequence of the operations against the enemy being carried on at different points and by different divisions at the

[97] 'The Alarm!', p.383.

[98] Ibid., p.385.

[99] Ibid., p.388.

same period; so that a person should be gifted with ubiquity to be an eye-witness of all that has taken place'.[100] Elsewhere, Ward underlines that 'volumes might be filled were I to detail half the miseries to which the colonists had been subjected during the operations of the troops in Kafirland'.[101] As Kate McLoughlin has observed, war writers often spoke of the forbidding practical and discursive problems they faced in representing war.[102] Ward foregrounds these difficulties in order to make women's war correspondence seem unexceptionable. If war is inherently impossible to experience or capture fully, then the woman journalist cannot be faulted for either gathering information from secondary sources, or for being selective in her focus. By stating that 'the miseries' of war were endured by all who resided in the Cape 'during the operations of the troops', she makes her own experiences and reflections on war legitimate subjects of war reports.[103]

Ward seems peculiarly unconcerned about catching up with the latest events of the war. There is a gap of several months in her articles on the 'present war'. The delay in Ward's war reports is all the more conspicuous for being a part of a monthly periodical that regularly updated its information on military postings and appointments. In her January 1847 article, for example, she provides a detailed account of an encounter between the British army and the Xhosa people that took place on 28 May 1846. This is too long a delay, even with the relatively slow communication channels between South Africa and England in the 1840s. In 1815, a mail packet service had been established between England and the Cape Colony, and the very first boat took

[100] 'The Present War in Kafirland. Written on the Spot', *USM*, Part 2 (August 1847), 510–19 (p.512).

[101] 'The Present War in Kafirland, 1846. Written on the Spot Chap.II', *USM*, Part 3 (December 1846), 531–44 (p.536).

[102] Kate McLoughlin, *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.4–5.

[103] 'The Present War', December 1846, p.536.

one hundred and fourteen days to reach England.[104] Even if mail took just as long to travel to London in 1844 and even if Ward had taken a whole month to compose her report on May 1846 (which would be very unusual for reporters), her article would have reached the *USM*'s London office by October 1846. In fact, she had published articles in the November and December 1846 issues of the *USM*. Why does she wait till January 1847 to report on May 1846? Far from trying to erase signs of this lapse, Ward repeatedly mentions specific dates and times. What does one make of the above time-gap?

Instead of trying to win an impossible battle with the war despatches in daily newspapers and London-based competitors like Munro, Ward turns the tables on them by making delay itself a critical sign of an authentic war report. She had prepared her readers for this by encouraging them, in her 1844 notices, to distrust any accounts of the Cape that appeared in London too soon, and too frequently. In July 1844, for example, she noted that 'a Port Elizabeth newspaper [had] appeared at certain intervals in London some years ago purporting to have been published at Port Elizabeth, and containing many advertisements inserted as if by respectable tradespeople' but was later discovered to be a fake newspaper printed in London by 'some unprincipled people' to dupe 'the credulous' into investing in their false emigration schemes.[105] In contrast to such suspiciously speedy reports, Ward's accounts are authenticated by their delay. Time-lags, after all, are material signs of war's interruptions of everyday life, of the regular communication flow of peacetime.

During wartime, Ward notes, 'the mails could not pass in safety, the enemy sometimes waylaying them, murdering the post riders, and destroying the letter bags, or stealing the relay

[104] George McCall Theal, *History of South Africa Since September 1795*, 5 vols (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1908), I, p.222.

[105] 'Notices from Kafirland', July 1844, p.341.

horses from the mail contractors'.[106] She states that under such conditions 'the inhabitants of the different districts received the most garbled statements of affairs', suggesting that the delay of her own report was caused by the time spent in carefully processing such confusing, partial information.[107] Throughout her war reports, Ward unapologetically quotes from official despatches, local newspapers, and male officers' eye-witness accounts, claiming that they stated either what she herself had felt, or had later known to be true. Mediation itself is thus offered as a sign of authenticity.

Ward further validates delayed reportage by pointing out the Cape was simply unsuited for expedited forms of communication. The Cape telegraph, that symbol and instrument of 'utmost use' for quick information exchange that 'would save time, labour, life, and horses, by making swift communications of the stealthy movements of the Kafirs' is said to have been rendered unusable by the bad weather and a British force 'so small that no men can be spared to work the signals'.[108] Given that the first electric telegraph lines were not laid in South Africa till 1860, Ward seems to be referring to the use of an optical telegraph which was highly dependent on clear weather, and the availability of trained personnel to man the towers.[109] A delayed report thus also conveyed the particular challenges of reporting on a war fought in a distant colony that was yet to be updated with the technological advancements like the electric telegraph that were already operational in England.

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[106] 'The Present War in Kafirland. Written on the Spot', *USM*, Part 1 (January 1847), 115–25 (p.120).

[107] Ibid.

[108] 'The Present War in Kafirland. Written on the Spot', *USM*, Part 1 (February 1847), 218–30 (p.224).

[109] Theal, *History of South Africa*, V, p.11. Between 1837 and 1842, a series of signal towers, mounted with semaphores (like the optical telegraph system), was constructed in the Eastern Cape. For details, see Linda Robson and Mark Oranje, 'Strategic Military Colonisation: The Cape Eastern Frontier 1806–1872', *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, 40 (2012), 46–71 (p.61).

Ward's civilian readers would have had vivid memories of what Favret, talking about Britain's conflict with France in the Napoleonic Era, calls the 'meantime' experience of war at a distance.[110] Favret notes that given the time taken for war reports to reach London in the early nineteenth century 'even British readers who received the newspaper in a timely fashion absorbed an awareness of its belatedness', with 'a sense of their ignorance of what might have happened in the meantime and off the page'.[111] As an army wife, Ward herself was never on the battlefield despite being 'on the spot'. Even though Ward states that those 'who never experienced the horrors and anxiety of war, especially a war with savages' cannot 'comprehend the feelings of those who wait for tidings of the absent,' her mediated experience of war would have enabled her to connect with her readers by recalling their own meantime experience of war.[112]

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's formulation of the literary chronotope, one might say that the monthly article's marked ability to display delay made it particularly effective in 'assimilating real historical time and space' of war into literature.[113] In fact, Ward used the slow pace of communication between England and South Africa, and the *USM's* stress on military memoirs and fiction to help create a specific kind of war report: one where the war is reproduced as a closely-woven adventure tale, with its own chronotope, a narrative space-time of war reportage. Ward's reports offer her readers a unique opportunity to relive the war vicariously and variously, through the diverse perspectives that Ward incorporates into her articles. Free from having to offer a linear war report like a reporter for the daily press, Ward designs her reports as

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[110] *War at a Distance*, p.73.

[111] Ibid.

[112] 'The Present War in Kafirland', November 1846, p.328.

[113] Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', p.84.

a series of chapters, some of which relate the experiences of particular groups during the same period of time. In her November 1846 report, for example, she notes: 'In my next chapter I shall endeavour to describe our own position in Graham's Town, and the various alarms to which we were subjected during the absence of the troops'.[114]

Ward's reports thus resemble a serial version of that other device for 'the presentation of simultaneity in "homogeneous, empty time"' that Benedict Anderson notes: the novel.[115] Like the novel in Anderson's account, Ward's war reports offer 'a complex gloss upon the word "meanwhile"', not carrying the reader along a linear axis like a daily newspaper, but enabling him to imagine the war as simultaneously experienced by different people.[116] It is by constituting the experiences of various participants in the war, such as the British army, women, children, settlers, and even the opposing Xhosa forces, that Ward assumes a quasi-omniscience in her reports, despite disclaiming the possibility of providing a comprehensive account of war. This novel-like quality makes it possible for Ward to report at a snail's pace, even to keep reverting back in time and adding chapters on how various people felt during the war, so as to sustain her war reports till she herself finally left the Cape in 1848.

She begins her very first report on the 'Present War in Kafirland' by reproducing the conclusion of her inaugural essay on South Africa as an epigraph. In 1844, she had ended that article on an ominous note, hoping perhaps to keep the reader engaged in her upcoming notices. 'Unless some stern and determined eye be turned towards this colony' with the willingness to act as directed by '"the voice of truth"', she warned, the 'the brand of the savage' would follow soon

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[114] 'The Present War', November 1846, p.329.

[115] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* rev. edition (London: Verso, 2006), p.25.

[116] Ibid.

and turn 'this beautiful dependency of the British Crown' into a mass grave of English emigrants.[117] With the war having finally broken out, Ward now points out that had her 'prophecy two and a half years ago' been heeded, the current war could have been averted.[118] In writing as a prophet whose predictions had come true, Ward could not only claim greater credibility for her current reportage of the war, but could represent wartime South Africa through the same rhetoric that she had used in her anxious reports on the Cape in 1844. This allows Ward to continue using the racial discourse that she had deployed in her 1844 reports, and enables her to construct a classic binary of colonial writers wherein well-regulated British time is opposed to an unchartered stream of indigenous time.

In her earlier reports, Ward had described indigenous peoples like the Mfengu and the Xhosa as not taking 'much note of time', of letting 'days, weeks, months, and years pass by unnoticed, and uncounted'.[119] The English, by contrast, are shown to be supremely conscious of every passing second. In addition to recording carefully-timed military action, Ward, as an army wife, configures this view of English culture in a domestic context: there are regular work and leisure hours and occasions like birthdays, which have a marked relation to a calendrical date, are cheerfully celebrated.[120] The periodical press itself, with its regular rhythm of publication is a particularly charged symbol of well-timed Englishness. In referencing English language newspapers printed in the Cape, as well as talking about awaiting the arrival of newspapers from London, Ward underlines that the literary and cultural practices associated with the print culture of Victorian England were being robustly sustained in this outpost of Empire. This binary of the

[117] 'A Voice from Cafferland', p.9.

[118] 'The Present War', November 1846, p.321.

[119] 'Notices from Kafirland', July 1844, p.337.

[120] 'The Present War', February 1847, pp.223, 226.

English and the natives, particularly the resisting Xhosa, is also maintained through a dual representation of space: the forts and farms of the English, though under constant attack, are described as spaces of order and industry, in sharp contrast to the wilderness outside the pale of the colony, which is spoken of as 'infested' with the Xhosa.[121]

Ward's first report on the war offers a striking instance of how she used this binary of the native vs. the English to insinuate herself into stories of combat, and to offer advice on military strategies. She inlays her report of a Xhosa attack with her memory of having witnessed a Mfengu 'war dance', which she recalls as having been a 'savage sight'.[122] In her view, a Mfengu dance is barely distinguishable from war and the natives lack the cultural refinement to separate the two. At any moment, a Mfengu may turn from war-dancer to warrior, his leisure-time can unpredictably turn into war-time and transform his crude dance-floor into a battle-ground: 'the Fingoes became so much excited with even the semblance of a fight, that they threw their assegais from them, as though in earnest, […] if we moved, we were fain to stand still amid a shower of spears, and as one passed near me, there was a shout on seeing I stood my ground'.[123] If this is how frightening and belligerent the native was while simply acting out war, 'imagine', says Ward, what 'the approach of nine thousand savage enemies, all *in earnest*, towards the little garrison of Fort Peddie' must have been like.[124]

By casting even the Mfengu, whom she herself repeatedly notes as invaluable allies of the British, into the binary of British vs. native, Ward introduces a sense of menace and adventure into her own relatively safe and distanced experience of war, and foregrounds her own

[121] 'The Present War in Kafirland', April 1848, p.546.

[122] 'The Present War', January 1847, p.116.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

ability to gauge the difficulties of facing such frightful foes in combat.[125] Such reports also emphasize the dangers of relying too heavily on the aid of indigenous people. For Ward, allies like the Mfengu were of critical importance in fighting the Xhosa precisely because they were 'creatures of their [the Xhosa's] own mould'.[126] Although the Mfengu are said to be 'sufficiently civilized and instructed to co-operate with our troops', they are seen as being too distinct from the English, racially and culturally, to be fully trusted.[127] Underlining how perilous such alliances with racial others could be, she notes, in her October 1847 report, that a soldier had been murdered and that 'those on the spot, and most capable of judging, are of opinion [*sic*] that this horrible deed has been committed by Fingoes'.[128] By advising the English army to exercise greater caution in recruiting the 'coloured inhabitants of South Africa', Ward argues that a strengthening of racial distinctions within the military is critical to consolidate English rule in the Eastern Cape.[129]

Ward suggests that as an Englishwoman writing from the seat of a colonial war, she faced not only the prospect of being killed but also that of being taken captive 'to swell the

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[125] The Mfengu had allied with the British against the Xhosa even in the Sixth Frontier War. Following British victory in that war, the colonial government allocated farm land to some Mfengu in the colonial margins, hoping that they would act as a buffer against future Xhosa incursions. Ward, like other English writers, claims that the Mfengu had originally been driven from their homes by Zulu chiefs and subsequently enslaved by the Xhosa. She states that the Mfengu had been 'delivered […] from their bondage' by the English during the Sixth Frontier War. 'Notices', July 1844, p.336. This theory of Mfengu as a refugee community, which was even subscribed to by some earlier historians, has been contested by later scholars. For details of land allocation to the Mfengu, see Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p.92. For current debates about Mfengu origins, see Stapleton, '"Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants"', p.16.

[126] 'The Present War', December 1846, p.537.

[127] Ibid.

[128] 'The Present War', October 1847, p.273.

[129] Ibid.

number of some savage chieftain's wives'.[130] This enables her to intensify her belligerence towards the Xhosa. She asserts, with martial ardour, that the only way of securing the Cape colony was to surround it with 'a living wall bristling with arms'.[131] As the war progresses, Ward's reports grow increasingly violent and insensitive, leading to a shockingly casual description of the mutilation of a Xhosa man: 'In the early part of this war some person procured the entire skin of a Kafir, and had it braded in the same way that leather is first prepared for tanning'.[132] Such statements not only attempt to foreclose readerly identification with the Xhosa by suggesting that they were too much like hide-bound animals to feel pain like the English, but also show the army wife as being capable of reporting gory details of war unflinchingly.

However, recording such acts of unbridled barbarity by the English undermines Ward's own construction of the English as the civilized antithesis to the beastly Xhosa. Anxious to retain this distinction, Ward notes, a couple of months later, that the Xhosa had mutilated the bodies of two burghers 'with the usual ferocity', and adds a footnote to explain that she had now 'ascertained from indisputable authority' that it was not an Englishman but 'an American employed in one of the levies' who had procured the skin of the Xhosa alluded to in her earlier report.[133] Moreover, in the course of her reports, Ward relates several stories about the Xhosa murdering and mutilating settlers and soldiers, often in lurid detail, reinforcing the idea of Xhosa savagery and implying that the English, even when violent, were only acting in self-defence. Describing the death of one Captain Bambrick 'by the hand of a concealed savage', she notes, 'shocking to relate, his body was cut in pieces by the enemy, and either burnt or *hung about* the

[130] 'The Present War', January 1847, p.117.

[131] 'The Present War', September 1847, p.115.

[132] 'The Present War in Kafirland. Written on the Spot', *USM*, Part 2 (July 1847), 382–91 (p.383).

[133] 'The Present War', September 1847, p.118.

bush'.[134] Ward cites no evidence for presuming that Bambrick's body had been subjected to such 'shocking' treatment.[135] While newspaper reports in the daily press also included sensational descriptions of Xhosa brutality, these were usually written by someone who claimed to have witnessed the dead bodies of the victims.[136] Ward's overarching framework of the Xhosa vs. the British, and the novel-like quality of her reports, give her the freedom to conjecture and speculate more freely than regular newspaper reporters.

In order to present her utterly unconventional war correspondence as fitting work for women, Ward defined it in relation to the even more masculine work of actual combat. Ward's status as an army wife helps her suggest that her writing, however aggressive, is only a feminine counterpart to military action. The very fact that she continues to live with her husband in the Cape, despite the outbreak of war, emphasizes her wifely devotion. However, the appropriateness of Ward's war correspondence is most powerfully outlined not in relation to the English army, but in opposition to the wartime activities of the Xhosa women. In Ward's reports, Xhosa women are shown to be directly involved in fighting the British: they supply 'powder [gunpowder] and provision' to their men, notify them about the whereabouts of English soldiers, and on one occasion, are said to have taken their place in the ranks, ready to charge at the English army upon a single sign from their chief.[137] Ward suggests that in comparison, her journalistic involvement in the war is appropriately feminine. Describing Xhosa women as dangerous enemies even enables Ward to justify English violence against unarmed indigenous

[134] 'The Present War', November 1846, p.324.

[135] Ibid.

[136] For a daily report that speaks of the Xhosa murdering and mutilating civilians, see 'The Caffre War', *The Times*, 30 September, 1846, p.7. In the report, the dead body is said to have been seen by a military officer.

[137] 'The Present War in Kafirland. Written on the Spot', *USM*, Part 2 (May 1847), 59–69 (pp.62, 68, 66).

women. When an outcry is raised against English soldiers for stripping some Xhosa women of their karosses [mantle-like garments], she dismisses such concerns as misplaced, and emphasizes that 'it was necessary to search them for powder!'.[138]

In her May 1847 report, Ward notes that 'Sutu, the mother of Sandilla [a Xhosa chief]' came to Fort Hare to 'surrender herself, and to make intercession for her son', and that the army General in charge refused to engage with her, stating that 'he does not war with women, and can enter into no negotiations with them'.[139] This image of Suthu pleading with the general on behalf of her warrior son is strikingly analogous to Ward's own self-image as an army wife who speaks on behalf of the military and presents its demands to the English government and the wider reading public. This parallel helps Ward to present her own unrelenting aggression towards the Xhosa in a positive light, as an inspiring sign of English gallantry that compares favourably with the capitulation of Xhosa women such as Suthu. More importantly, it suggests that Suthu's direct involvement in wartime politics is a coarse and uncivilized version of Ward's own participation in the war through English print media.

Ward repeatedly states that Xhosa women were denied any say in the everyday affairs of their communities, implying that such routine political repression had led to their perverse appropriation of masculine roles during wartime. She notes that a Xhosa chief named Tola, to whom she had spoken in the safe precincts of Colonel Somerset's house, had marvelled at the fact that 'white women spoke with the minds of men', since 'a female offering any opinion at all was a source of astonishment to him'.[140] By ascribing discomfort with women's political

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[138] 'The Present War', February 1847, p.229.

[139] 'The Present War', May 1847, p.67. Ward misspells *Suthu* as *Sutu*.

[140] 'The Present War in Kafirland.—1847. Written on the Spot. Part the Second', *USM*, Part 1(March 1848), 400–11 (p.408).

attitudes to the Xhosa, Ward pre-empts readerly opposition to her own war correspondence. By presenting women's public and political participation as a sign of civilizational progress, she also calls for a wider rethinking of Victorian models of domesticated womanhood.

As is evident from the overlaps between her 1844 'notices' and her war reports, the experience of war does little to alter Ward's view of South Africa. What sustains drama in her reports is the unpredictability of the 'wild' indigenous people, particularly the opposing Xhosa. Ward's articles regularly end with a forecast of what the next number would focus on, and sometimes carry a concluding byline that says 'to be continued'.[141] This introduced a sense of suspense into her reports, as though despite constantly retracing the same ground, they would offer something new and unpredictable in the ensuing issue.

Ward went on writing on the 'Present War in Kafirland' long after the official Seventh Frontier War had ended in 1847; her reports ceased only when she herself left the colony at the end of 1848. That very year Ward made a successful transition from journalism into book writing when she collated her articles from the *USM* and republished them under her own name as *Five Years in Kaffirland.*[142] Now identifiable from her signature on the two-volume book, Ward was chastised by some reviewers who found her dismissal of missionary and philanthropic endeavours to be 'unfeminine' and criticized her preference for the violent subjugation of the native population.[143] Ward seems to have struck a raw nerve in presenting the ruthlessness of the imperial project.

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[141] 'The Present War', November 1846, p.330.

[142] These differences in the spelling of *Kafirland* exist in the originals.

[143] 'Art II.— Five Years in Kaffirland', *Eclectic Review*, 24 (August 1848), 156–73 (p.163).

In 1849, in recognition of her knowledge of South Africa, she was commissioned to edit Lieutenant-Colonel Napier's book, *Past and Future Emigration*.[144] Letcher notes that though Napier himself protested against Ward's major revision of the text in her role as editor, reputable journals such as the *Athenaeum* commended her for writing in a balanced tone and countering the acrimony of the Colonel's writing.[145] Since the text itself bears no clear indications of which sections were added and altered by Ward, this assessment of her as a sober counter to the Colonel seems to have been prompted by her own note, in which she speaks of Napier as an 'excitable writer' whose tone needed to be editorially altered in order to ensure that his message was not misunderstood.[146] As editor, Ward states that it would be 'mistaken and unjust' to blame the missionaries for 'all the mischief in Kafirland', a charge that she had herself nonetheless levelled against the missionaries in her war-time articles.[147] Thus, within a single year of being back in England, she had transformed from being a war-mongerer to writing predominantly as a propagator of peaceful emigration. Evidently, Ward felt the need to leave her soldierly voice behind when she left the war-field. However, by proving women's ability to write from the warfront, her slow and steady reports paved the way for women like Florence Dixie whose appointment in 1880 as the *Morning Post*'s war correspondent for the Anglo-Zulu War marked the entry of Victorian women into the official rolls of field-based newspaper war reporters.[148]

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[144] [Colonel. E.D. Napier], *Past and Future Emigration; or, The Book of the Cape, Edited by the Author of Five Years in Kafirland* (London: Thomas Newby, 1849). Although the book was published anonymously in 1849, the reference to 'Author of Kafirland' would have made Ward herself identifiable.

[145] Ibid., p.i; Letcher, 'Trespassing Beyond the Borders', p.15; 'Past and Future of Civilization; or, the Book of the Cape. Edited by the author of "Five Years in Kafirland"', *Athenaeum*, 1154 (8 December 1849), p.1239.

[146] [Napier], p.i.

[147] Ibid., p.iii.

[148] Dorothy Middleton, 'Lady Florence Caroline Dixie (1855–1905)', *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32836> [accessed 23 May 2015].

Going Places: Harriet Martineau's *Letters From Ireland* and the Rise of the Female Itinerant Correspondent

As Ward was settling into editorial work and novel writing in the early 1850s, Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) set out to cover post-famine Ireland for London's *Daily News*. By the mid-nineteenth century, Martineau had become one of the most famous women writers of her time. The spectacular success of her *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34) turned her overnight into a literary celebrity.[149] Over the next few years, Martineau, a prodigiously prolific and versatile author, made her first forays into novel-writing, history, sociology, travel writing and translation. She valiantly sustained an active literary life through debilitating illness in her early forties and on recovering, took to writing with renewed vigour. At fifty, Martineau was poised to plunge into new fields of professional authorship; when the chance to write regularly for a daily newspaper came her way, she took it up eagerly.

In the next two sections of this chapter, I will examine Martineau's foreign correspondence for London's *Daily News*, through which she made her way into regular newspaper writing, and her later assignment as European correspondent for New York's *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, which was terminated when she resolutely refused to tailor her perspective to editorial and readerly expectations. I will show that Martineau forged a distinct role for the female foreign correspondent as an expert political commentator.

By the time she took on these assignments, both Ireland and America were familiar territories. She had visited Ireland at the time of writing her 1832 political economy tale, 'Ireland', on agricultural poverty and political unrest in the region; she had written against

[149] For these details of Martineau's early career, see R.K. Webb, 'Harriet Martineau (1802–1876)', *ODNB*, online edition < http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18228> [accessed 9 February 2015].

slavery in her political economy tale 'Demerara' as well as her travel books on America.[150] Studying Martineau's foreign correspondence shows the extent to which past knowledge could be inserted into foreign correspondence, which is usually regarded as providing the most recent account of a distant region. Her model of reportage also differs from the more familiar model of the Victorian foreign correspondent as a foreign resident who largely remained in one place and had a wide range of local contacts.[151] Although Martineau drew on an influential network of writers and reformers in Ireland and America to write her reports, she foregrounded her non-residential status as a mark of her disinterestedness and objectivity.

Frederick Knight Hunt, the editor of London's *Daily News* approached her in April 1852 to write leaders which, like modern-day editorials, were long, anonymous articles that represented the official line of a publication on important social and political issues.[152] It was no ordinary offer. This tremendously influential line of journalism was usually entrusted to experienced male journalists. Even Martineau, who had broken into other male-dominated avenues of writing like political economy and national history had never written leaders before. In fact, Knight found some of her early leaders unusable.[153] Yet, partly because of her well-established authorial credentials, he soon offered her yet another line of newspaper work that she

[150] 'Demerara', *Illustrations*, II (1832); 'Ireland', *Illustrations*, III (1832); Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, 3 vols (London: Saunders and Otley, 1837); Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travels*, 3 vols (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838).

[151] 'Foreign Correspondence', p.225. For newspaper correspondence by foreign nationals or expatriates, see Lucy Brown, *Victorian News*, pp.210–17.

[152] Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography with Memorials by Maria Weston Chapman*, ed. by Maria Weston Chapman, 3 vols (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1877), II, p.405. For the emergence of Victorian newspaper leaders, see Dallas Liddle, 'Who Invented the "Leading Article"? Reconstructing the History and Prehistory of a Victorian Newspaper Genre', *Media History*, 5 (1999), 5–18.

[153] For a letter from Martineau to Knight about her unused articles, see *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, ed. by Deborah Logan, 5 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007), III, p.235.

had never attempted previously: foreign correspondence. Although foreign correspondence did not carry the same collective editorial authority as leaders, the two genres had much in common. Like leaders, foreign correspondence usually addressed social and political issues, and was male-dominated and implicitly masculine in tone.

Deborah Logan and Glenn Hooper have offered insightful readings of Martineau's Irish correspondence as an example of mid-century British imperial discourse.[154] However, its remarkable place within Martineau's own career and the history of Victorian women's writing, especially women's travel writing and journalism, is yet to be fully recognized. For Martineau, the assignment transformed her initial plans of travelling simply to 'escape from the tourists' who flooded to her lakeside home in summer into a critical work opportunity.[155] Martineau was well-versed in travel writing, having written not only multi-volume travel books about her tours of America and the Middle-East, but also a treatise for travellers entitled *How to Observe Morals and Manners*.[156] In this volume, which has been called 'the first book on sociological methodology', Martineau claimed that observing and reporting on foreign lands while travelling without making prejudicial statements about a different culture was a science that required rigorous training.[157]

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[154] Deborah Logan, *Harriet Martineau, Victorian Imperialism and the Civilizing Mission* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.64–70; Glenn Hooper, 'Editor's Introduction', in *Harriet Martineau, Letters from Ireland*, ed. by Glenn Hooper (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2001), pp.1–23; Glenn Hooper, *Travel Writing and Ireland 1760–1860: Culture, History, and Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.172–89.

[155] Harriet Martineau to Charles Kingsley, 27 June [1852], *Collected Letters*, III, p.236.

[156] *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (London: Charles Knight and Co., 1838).

[157] Michael R. Hill and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, 'Taking Harriet Martineau Seriously in the Classroom and Beyond', in *Harriet Martineau: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives*, ed. by Michael R. Hill and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp.3–22 (p.12).

Although she had addressed social and political issues in her previous travelogues, she now faced, for the first time, the distinctive challenges of journalistic travel writing. As a travelling correspondent, she did not have the luxury of writing only after the journey had ended, of collating and revising her travel notes from the comfort of home and hearth. Moreover, apart from a call that Hunt made to her shortly before she set out to Ireland, Martineau had to learn the ropes of newspaper travel correspondence on the go, without the chance to consult her editor closely. She acquitted her duties with all due diligence and dispatch. Accompanied by her niece, Martineau travelled extensively across Ireland, starting from Lough Foyle and journeying southwards to Dublin and westwards to Galway, covering various towns and cities before ending her trip at the Island of Valentia.[158] She sent twenty seven letters, about three to four per week, which were published anonymously in the *Daily News* between 13 August and 14 October 1852. As I will show, Martineau strategically adapted her experience in writing travelogues, history and political economy to meet the specific requirements of newspaper foreign correspondence. Her success as a correspondent helped to strengthen her association with the *Daily News* and for the next sixteen years, despite being largely confined to her home in Ambleside, Martineau worked for the paper as a regular leader writer. Her trip to Ireland as newspaper correspondent proved to be a journey to greater authority in the press.

The conventional anonymity of foreign correspondence played a large part in enabling Martineau to enter this male-dominated line of political journalism. While reporting from

[158] One can only gauge Martineau's route roughly, since she constantly refers to regions that lie outside this trajectory. For example, her last region-specific report, sent from Valentia and published on 4 October 1852, is followed by three more letters on the general social and political condition of Ireland, which mention southeastern coastal areas like Wexford. For an outline of Martineau's itinerary, see Brian Conway and Michael Hill, 'Harriet Martineau and Ireland', in *Social Thought on Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Séamas Ó Síocháin (Dublin: University of Dublin Press, 2009), 47–66 (p.51).

Ireland, Martineau assumed the implicitly masculine persona of the *Daily News* journalist; in some letters, she explicitly presented herself as a male traveller. Having previously faced severe criticism for writing on such purportedly unfeminine topics as political economy, Martineau valued journalism's provision of anonymity. It enabled her to dodge such criticism and also, as Easley has shown, to speak on various topics, including women's issues, from a 'de-personalized point of view', without seeming to be driven by self-interest or the desire for self-display.[159] However, despite the many benefits that Martineau derived from this journalistic convention, in December 1852 — barely two months after her last report — she brought out a signed collection of her reports entitled *Letters from Ireland*.[160] Martineau used the opportunity of republication to foreground her skills as a newspaper reporter and present herself as a model for aspiring female journalists.

Writing Ireland: The Constraints and Opportunities of Foreign Correspondence

Those who wrote about their travels to Ireland in the nineteenth century had to negotiate the difficulty of writing about a space that was neither entirely familiar nor completely alien. As a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Ireland was not 'foreign' in the way that other European nations like France or Germany were. Its status as a 'colony' was similarly ambiguous. On the one hand, as Kevin Kenny has noted, the 1801 Act of Union that made Ireland a part of the United Kingdom had abolished a separate Dublin Parliament and certain colonial arrangements that were first started in Ireland, such as the establishment of a separate executive in Dublin Castle with a Chief Secretary and a Lord-Lieutenant, served as models for British rule

[159] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.35.

[160] Harriet Martineau, *Letters From Ireland* (London: John Chapman, 1852). All further references to the letters are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

in India.[161] However, the fact that Ireland had one hundred sitting Members of Parliament in Westminster after 1829 and that it was geographically very close to Britain complicated its colonial status.[162]

I follow Kenny's approach in treating Ireland as a distinctive colony, different from South Africa, Australia, or India. In the 1840s, Ireland was second only to India in its importance as an imperial possession.[163] The Repeal movement, the potato famine, and Irish emigration to England and Scotland created, as Edward Lengel has noted, 'widespread consternation and curiosity among the British as to the reasons for Irish poverty and the nature of the Irish people'.[164] Travel accounts from Ireland published in English newspapers catered to the English public's preoccupation with what they perceived as a particularly troublesome, and proximate, colony.

Newspaper travel reports on Ireland were influenced, as Niall O Ciosáin has pointed out, by the English government's own ethnographic reportage on the colony.[165] After the 1820s, Parliament increasingly replaced its earlier practice of interviewing witnesses summoned from Ireland to London by royal commissions, wherein a group of investigators travelled widely and prepared a report on Ireland, which was often subsequently published by the State.[166] Newspaper reports usually covered the same geographical areas and issues as state reports; however their

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[161] Kevin Kenny, 'Ireland and the British Empire: An Introduction', in *Ireland and the British Empire*, ed. by Kevin Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.1–25 (p.11).

[162] Ibid.

[163] Edward Lengel, *The Irish Through British Eyes: Perceptions of Ireland in the Famine Era* (London: Praeger, 2002), p.6.

[164] Ibid., p.10.

[165] Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Ireland in Official Print Culture, 1800–1850: A New Reading of the Poor Inquiry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.19–20.

[166] Ibid., pp.14–15.

brevity and cheapness meant that they enjoyed a far wider readership than official accounts.[167] Moreover, newspaper correspondents often presented their own work as independent inquiries that verified the conclusions of reports commissioned by the political party in power.[168] As Leslie Williams has noted, *The Times* called its Irish correspondent, Thomas Campbell Foster, its 'Commissioner', echoing the 1845 Royal Commission to Ireland headed by the Earl of Devon and implying that Foster's investigations 'were somehow the critical equivalent of, if not, indeed, a corrective to, the work of the Government's own body'.[169] English newspaper reports from Ireland were thus part of a wider discourse of colonial investigation, which became heightened in the wake of the famine.

Mid-century correspondence from Ireland quite literally carried the stamp of the English Empire. The Uniform Penny Post, established in 1840, delivered any letter that weighed less than half-ounce for one penny irrespective of how far the letter travelled within the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.[170] It strengthened English control over Ireland by making distance free of charge. The one penny black postage stamp that was issued for use in the Uniform Penny Post was thus both an instrument and sign of colonial modernity. This development in communication networks between Ireland and England enabled newspaper correspondents to send in frequent reports on Ireland, which leant a marked sense of immediacy to their articles.[171]

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[167] Ibid., pp.130–36.

[168] Ibid., p.20.

[169] Leslie A Williams, *Daniel O' Connell, The British Press and the Irish Famine: Killing Remarks*, ed. by William Williams (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.102.

[170] For an account of how such developments in postal systems strengthened English control over Ireland, see Patrick Joyce, *The State of Freedom: A Social History of the British State Since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp.64–70.

[171] Martineau's correspondence predates the establishment of Anglo-Irish telegraph services. Although attempts were made, in 1852, to link Holyhead (in Wales) and Howth (in Dublin), and Portpatrick (in Scotland) and

This timeliness was a critical selling point of newspaper reports as it distinguished them from governmental and other book-length travel accounts published only at the end of a journey. The *Daily News* emphasized the promptness of Martineau's letters by not carrying the datelines of individual letters, those tell-tale signs of the lapse of time between the sending of a report and its publication in the newspaper. Since they claimed to describe an ongoing tour, newspaper reports could be more open-ended than book-length travelogues. For example, after having remarked on the surprisingly healthy appearance of Irish peasants in some parts of the country, Martineau proclaims that she is 'now about to plunge into the very wildest part of the island—beyond Achill to the Mullet, which was depopulated by the famine' and if she had 'a different story to tell after being there, you will soon know it' (pp.102-03).

Even articles which, like conventional travelogues, relate the writer's own feelings acquire a greater sense of immediacy in being published intermittently. Describing a particularly pleasurable drive taken at sunset in autumn, amidst the mountains and lakes of Connemara, Martineau says that 'the air here, on such an evening, is like breathing cream' (p.92). The awkward grammar of the above sentence heightens the sense of delight felt by the writer; its readers gain access to the report within a few short days, and so absorb this information with a marked sense of its recency.

Periodical publication more commonly had the exact opposite effect. By foregrounding the lapse of time between individual reports, it made the travel series seem more slow paced than

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Donaghadee (in Ireland), by the telegraph, these were unsuccessful. The first Anglo-Irish telegraphic service was established between Portpatrick and Donaghadee in May 1853. See, Simone Fari, *Victorian Telegraphy Before Nationalization* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.89; Ken Beauchamp, *History of Telegraphy* (London: Institution of Electrical Engineers, 2001), pp.140–41.

a book-length travelogue. The *Daily News*' readers could never entirely forget that they had to wait for the correspondent to move to another region before they could advance any further in their own vicarious tour of Ireland. By contrast, readers of a travel book could vicariously travel at will, reaching whichever point of the journey they wanted and covering however vast a span of travel-time they wished in the course of a single reading.

Moreover, in a daily newspaper, a travel report like Martineau's, which usually appeared some days after it was written would seem all the more dated in comparison to other news that was only twenty four hours old.[172] The different kinds of simultaneity created by dailies, monthlies and annuals has been read by Mussell as an indication that the periodical press operated 'like multiple chronometers, all marking different times', rather than providing 'a synchronic pulse, dictating and constructing public, linear time'.[173] In taking an individual number of a journal as the basic unit of a periodical, Mussell's model does not account for the differently timed units *within* each issue of a journal. The very conditions of reporting while travelling, with varying degrees of access to channels of communication and unpredictable delays over land and sea mail, makes the periodicity of itinerant foreign correspondence markedly uneven and always different from the twenty-four hour cycle of a newspaper's main content. Thus, although printed without individual datelines, Martineau's letters follow a different rhythm than the rest of the *Daily News*.

The distinct temporality of foreign correspondence was particularly marked in the case of Irish correspondence. The coverage of day-to-day events was left to regular correspondents stationed in Dublin. Since itinerant Irish correspondents focused on ethnographic investigation

[172] The periodicity of Martineau's letters varies occasionally. In some weeks three to four letters appear. In others only two reports are published.

[173] *Science, Time and Space*, p.94.

rather than on the coverage of specific political events, they did not have to race against each other to break news of the latest happenings on the ground. Each of their letters, though featured as a part of an ongoing series of travel reports, made a self-contained argument on burning socio-economic issues. *The Times'* correspondent, Foster, could thus give his letters distinct thematic titles such as 'The Want of Employment [*sic*] The Cause of Disturbances' and 'On the Creation and Accumulation of Capital', while bringing out a collected edition of his originally untitled letters.[174]

By mid-century, Martineau was particularly well-placed to meet the above-outlined conditions of Irish foreign correspondence. The topics she had to cover, such as land tenure policies, unemployment, agricultural and industrial productivity in post-famine Ireland, were central to the contemporary discourse of political economy and Martineau's thorough knowledge of this male-dominated field stood her in good stead on this assignment. Like her 1832 political economy tale 'Ireland', Martineau's 'Letters from Ireland' offer a jargon-free analysis of Ireland's economic affairs. Drawing on the work of leading contemporary Dublin-based political economists like Professor Neilson Hancock and members of the Dublin Statistical Society and the Belfast Social Enquiry Society, Martineau repeatedly points out that the solution to Ireland's problems lies in the proper application of the principles of political economy, in introducing reforms in land policy that would encourage better division of labour and attract greater capital investment (p.iv).[175]

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[174] Thomas Campbell Foster, *Letters on the Condition of the People of Ireland* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1846). The original letters were published under the generic series title 'The Condition of the People of Ireland'.

[175] For the attempts made by Dublin-based political economists to adapt English principles to Ireland, see Peter Gray, 'The Peculiarities of Irish Land Tenure 1800–1914: From Agent of Improvement to Agent of Pacification', in

Martineau had visited Ireland in 1832, prior to writing her political economy tale 'Ireland', and in her newspaper reports she foregrounds her familiarity with its landscape. Observing a flax field near the Lough, she remarks that the growing flax is so 'abundantly […] intermixed' with marigold that 'a novice might be excused for carrying away the news that the flax has a yellow flower' (p.19). Martineau, however, is not a 'novice' and surveys Ireland with a knowing eye. As well as distinguishing clearly between the flax crop and the marigold weed that engulfs it, she also notes that the particular fields she covers form part of a wider trend of flax cultivation across Ireland. She states, for example, that the application of Schenck's new scientific methods of flax cultivation that she had observed near Belfast was only one of 'about eighteen establishments under Schenck's patent […] scattered over every part of Ireland where flax is grown' (p.30). Thus, despite Martineau's self-presentation as 'an English visitor', a 'stranger' who is curious to learn about the current state of Ireland, it is her extensive knowledge of the agricultural developments in the country that makes her seem a trust-worthy reporter (pp.5, 34).

Much of Martineau's first-hand investigation of Ireland was heavily underwritten by prior research. As she noted in the preface to the collected edition of the letters, her 'observation and inquiries' were directed by those very tracts of Irish political economy which she had already read 'by my own fireside' (p.iv). Defenders of classical political economy like Hancock are cited as indigenous experts; those who condemned the discipline as an English imposition

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The Political Economy of British Historical Experience, 1688–1914, ed. by Donald Winch and Patrick O' Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.139–62.

find no representation in Martineau's reports.[176] Some letters offer surprisingly little by way of new information. In two consecutive letters on the critical issue of land tenancy entitled 'Agricultural Improvement in Ulster' and 'Ireland Dying of Too Much Doctoring — The "Tenant Right Question"', Martineau argues that giving Irish farmers secure leases for a finite number of years would make them industrious, remedying the indolence bred by long years of insecure leases whereby they were not sure of benefiting from any improvement they made to the land (pp.34–40, 41–48). However, the evidence that she cites, such as past legislations in favour of fixed-period tenancies and bitter quarrels between landlords and tenants in the previous two years, is too dated to have been gathered first-hand (pp.38, 47). Though Martineau speaks of the mood on the ground, especially the anger of 'the poor Irish' who 'say that the landowners made the laws to suit their own purposes', such generic observations about farmer discontent, legion in print material on Ireland, can hardly be called exclusive field-reports (p.45).

These articles could have been written weeks, or months in advance, well before Martineau even set out from her Ambleside home, as buffers for occasions when unforeseeable problems in travel might make it impossible to sustain the pace of newspaper correspondence. Moreover, certain anomalies in the dates attached to the letters in the collected edition also suggest that they were, at least in part, written ahead of time. Almost every letter in the collected edition bears an earlier date than the date of original periodical publication. However, letter number fifteen, entitled 'Achill', is dated 14 September 1852, the very day on which it appeared

[176] During the famine years, there was a general opinion amongst the Irish that political economy, especially the doctrine of *laissez-faire*, promoted English interest at the expense of Ireland. Irish political economists like Hancock 'rushed to the defence of the scientificity of their subject and the universality of its laws'. Thomas A. Boylan and Timothy P. Foley, *Political Economy and Colonial Ireland: The Propagation and Ideological Function of Economic Discourse in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.8–9.

in the *Daily News* (p.117).[177] The next letter, 'The Wilds of Erris', is oddly dated 11 September 1852, three days earlier than the preceding report (p.126). These discrepancies might have been caused by typographical errors. However, given the statistical data and scholarly information contained in Martineau's reports, they suggest that the letters were not always composed 'on the spot' and in the order in which they appeared in the *Daily News*.

Investigative newspaper travel reportage, widely perceived as a field-based and time-bound form of journalism, was thus strikingly well-suited for remote, even leisured writing. When published in an ongoing series of travel reports, even articles that do not carry any evidence of actual travel appear as if they were written and dispatched from the field. Within the existing model of ethnographically-oriented Irish reportage, a journalist's ability to incorporate historical and statistical data within first-hand reports signalled their fitness to interpret the condition of Ireland. All journalists, whether male or female, could, at the very least, prepare their material in advance. Thus, despite being a novice in this field of journalism, Martineau could write indistinguishably from experienced newspaper correspondents, matching them in regularity, detail and breadth of coverage.

Righting Ireland: Harriet Martineau as Authoritative Commentator

Martineau took special care to seem like a male reporter, especially while addressing women's issues. Although she dedicates an entire letter, entitled 'The Women', to women's work in Ireland, she voices several misgivings about the common sight of Irish women 'sharing the labours of the men in almost every employment' (p.65). She speaks as a male traveller who initially finds 'something very impressive […] in the conviction which grows upon him, from

[177] Since the letters carried no individual dates when they first appeared in the *Daily News*, these discrepancies would have been undetectable even by an unusually alert reader.

stage to stage, that it is the industry of the women which is in great part sustaining the country' but who immediately worries that this would lower men's wages (p.65). This concern was underpinned by the view, widespread in contemporary political economy, that a fixed amount of capital was available to pay the labouring population.[178] Thus, many feared that the entry of women would necessarily reduce the wages of men. Rather than questioning this view, Martineau makes a case for women's entry into the professions by foregrounding their value as workers. Voicing the worst fears of those opposed to women working in fields and industries rather than sticking to 'proper "women's work"' like knitting and lace-making, Martineau says, 'one cannot but speculate […] whether the men are to turn nurses and cooks, and to abide beside the hearth, while the women are earning the family bread'(pp.69, 70).

Having adopted the masculine persona of the male traveller, she presents as unbiased and undeniable fact her observation that current Irish women, who undertook such public employments, were far better at domestic management than their predecessors, who had worked exclusively at home. She emphasizes that the sheer weight of evidence indicating the beneficial effects of women's paid work has led her to adopt a conciliatory view of women's employment:

> Practically, the condition of women, and therefore of their households, is rising. If there is something painful in seeing so undue a share of the burdens of life thrown upon the weaker sex; and if we cannot but remember that such a distribution of labour is an adopted symptom of barbarism; still, if the cabins *are* more decent,

[178] This view of the labour market, also known as the wages fund theory, was devised by Malthus and developed by James Mill. See, Donald M. MacRaild and David E. Martin, *Labour in British Society, 1830–1914* (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2000), p.42.

> and the women more womanlike, it seems as if the process of change must be, on the whole, an advance (p.70)

Although Martineau reinforced contemporary patriarchal ideology to some extent by suggesting that women's 'proper' work was domestic, she helped to make women's paid work more acceptable by presenting it as the informed opinion of a mainstream male reporter. Martineau reused some of this information on women's work in Ireland in articles like 'Female Industry' to promote paid work for English women.[179]

Apart from dispatching regular detailed articles, travelling newspaper correspondents also had to distinguish their own reportage from that of rival papers. London's *Daily News*, a liberal newspaper founded in January 1846 by Charles Dickens, was 'designed to counter the conservative, aristocratic bias of *The Times*' and was also its 'first serious competitor'.[180] Martineau's letters unmistakably evoke and subtly undercut Thomas Foster's reportage of the Famine for *The Times* from 1845 through January 1846. Foster had spread racial prejudice against the Irish by speaking of them as inherently inferior to the English and incapable of being transformed.[181] Martineau successfully counters Foster's racial discourse by emphasizing that Ireland's problems were caused by ignorance and mismanagement of Irish natural resources rather than any inherent incapacity of the Irish.

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[179] [Harriet Martineau], 'Female Industry', *Edinburgh Review*, 109 (April 1859), 293–336 (pp.300–01). As in the above letter, Martineau adopted a markedly masculine persona while writing about women in the *Edinburgh Review*. See Valerie Sanders, '"I'm Your Man": Harriet Martineau and the *Edinburgh Review*', *Australasian Victorian Studies Journal*, 6 (2000), 36–47.

[180] Logan, *Harriet Martineau and the Irish Question,* p.1.

[181] As Williams has pointed out, although Foster's first few letters seem to be sympathetic to the Irish in their attempt to understand the Famine as being brought by bad land management, he soon abandoned this approach and increasingly asserted that the people of Ireland, and their purported unwillingness to work, were to blame for the famine. *Daniel O' Connell*, pp.105–06.

In *How to Observe* (1838), Martineau had underlined that in order to refrain from making faulty generalizations and hasty judgments on the country visited, travellers had to understand that all people were historically conditioned, that they behaved in particular ways because of the social, political and economic systems under which they lived.[182] Putting her theory into practice, Martineau carefully contextualizes her observations about the Irish peasantry within the history of agricultural practices in Ireland. Unlike Foster, who emphasized the Irish's purported proclivity to violence by starting his series with a report about the murder of a magistrate in broad daylight, Martineau speaks of political violence in Ireland as emerging from financial and social distress and states that once land-management systems are reformed, one would see 'long leases, […] rich fields, full barns, and rising plantations, with no smoke of the assassin's blunderbuss curling among the trees' (p.48).[183] Though Martineau, like Foster, maintains that the Irish would shirk work if they could, she emphasizes, unlike Foster, that such inclination to idleness could be altered by making work necessary and enjoyable: 'If they [the Irish] can beg they will […] but, settled down under a just employer, out of the track of tourists and of conflicting religionists, they will work as well as anybody' (p.103).

Given this difference in viewpoint from Foster, it is interesting that Martineau corroborates Foster's highly critical reports on Daniel O'Connell, a revolutionary Member of Parliament from Ireland who became famous in the 1840s for mobilizing Irish resistance to the Union. Retracing Foster's footsteps through O'Connell's estate at Cahirciveen, she pronounces Foster's adverse remarks about O'Connell's mismanagement of his own estate 'to have been very true, and to have done great good' by not only 'causing a grand cleaning and mending all

[182] *How to Observe*, pp.17, 23.

[183] Foster, *Letters*, pp.5–6.

through Cahirciveen' but also 'opening a good many eyes to the great man's [O'Connell's] personal extravagance and forfeiture of his promises' (pp.185-86). In this instance, Martineau claims advantage over her famous predecessor not by challenging the authenticity of his reports but by suggesting that they had served their purpose and had now become outdated. O'Connell, whom Foster had taken on at the height of his political power, had died five years earlier and Martineau notes that he was now a forgotten man whose name was hardly ever mentioned in public (p.185). In a similar vein, Martineau suggests that with the worst years of the Famine over, there was a need to move beyond describing its devastating effects and to focus on how Ireland could be rebuilt. Therefore, reporting from the 'wilds of Erris—the wildest district of Ireland, and the scene of the worst horrors of the famine', Martineau states, 'of the horrors of the famine we shall say nothing here. It is more profitable to look at the present state of the district, to see if future famines cannot be avoided' (p.126).

Although this emphasis on Ireland's potential for reform, in the wake of death and emigration of Irish people, was common in post-Famine travel writing on Ireland, it was still relatively novel within the field of newspaper travel reportage.[184] Most newspaper reports about post-Famine Ireland were sent by stationary correspondents writing from specific locations. Drawing attention to the bewildering effects of such piecemeal reportage, Martineau notes, 'when we chance to pick up an English newspaper […] we usually meet with some remark on the discrepancy between the various accounts of the state of the potato-crop. Nobody knows, by

[184] *The Tourist's Gaze: Travellers to Ireland 1800–2000*, ed. by Glenn Hooper (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 3–4. Amongst the post-famine travel-writing included in Hooper's anthology, Martineau's is the only instance of official newspaper correspondence. Though Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne had published a few letters in the *Times* from his travels in the West of Ireland in 1849, he explicitly mentioned that he had not travelled to Ireland as an official correspondent. [Sidney Godolphin Osborne], 'The Working of the Irish Poor Law', *The Times*, 14 June 1849, p.5.

reading the newspapers, what to believe or expect' partly because 'the disease is worse in some parts of the island than in others' (p.142). Having travelled through different parts of Ireland that had varying degrees of potato cultivation, she claims to have found an underlying pattern that other reporters seem to have missed: even in areas where the poor ate other food out of necessity, they kept up their '*furor* for the potato' and were reluctant to shift to other crops (p.143). She points out that this preference for the potato-crop, despite being extremely harmful to the peasants, was being encouraged by the landlords 'for the sake of their rents, which are very much higher under potato-cropping than they can be under any other management' and that the only way of remedying this situation and rebuilding trust between landlords and peasants was to diversify agriculture through secure and unencumbered tenancies and increase the investment and participation of English capitalists in Irish agriculture (pp.144,146–49). Martineau thus suggests that the optimistic view of Irish progress presented in her post-famine travelling correspondence is more up-to-date, comprehensive, and insightful than either the mournful commentary of itinerant Famine-time correspondents or the area-specific reportage of contemporary stationary Irish journalists.

As Logan and others have shown, Martineau's letters present a resoundingly colonial, pro-Union view of 1852 Ireland.[185] Martineau's belief in the desirability of Ireland's Union with England, espoused in both her 1832 political economy tale on Ireland and her more recent monumental *History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace* (1849–50), was unshaken by her travels across a Famine-devastated Ireland.[186] Travelling through the southwestern region of

[185] Logan, *Harriet Martineau, Victorian Imperialism*; Hooper, 'Editor's Introduction'; Hooper, *Travel Writing and Ireland.*

[186] Harriet Martineau, *History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace, AD 1816–1846*, 4 vols (1849–50; London: George Bell, 1877). Charles Knight began this work but soon gave up on the writing and asked Martineau to take

Valentia, for example, she juxtaposes the filthy habits and idleness of an Irish fishing community with the '"fragrant cleanliness"' of an inn kept by an Englishwoman and the industriousness of a slate-works establishment which employs Irishmen but is 'sustained by English capital, and conducted by English skill and care' (p.192). The difference between the English-managed part of the population and the 'rest', she says, is 'so striking that the blind might be aware of it' (p.193). Though Martineau states that she was highly pleased to note 'how very large a majority of the purchasers in the Incumbered Estates Court are Irish', she highlights the benefits brought to the country by the minority of English settlers, 'each a centre of industry and a source of plenty' (p.116). Elsewhere, she claims that the Irish themselves hoped that 'the Irish purchasers […] will bring an English mind […] to their new enterprise,—conducting it, not according to feudal prejudices, but to sound economical principles' (p.209). In associating progress squarely with England, Martineau sees no other way of making Ireland modern than by making it English.

Martineau presents England as a well-meaning administrator, whose few and rare errors are unintended and quickly remediable. In most instances, she represents Irish discontent itself as short-sightedness. The anti-colonial perspective advanced by leaders like O'Connell is explained away as misinformation or a false perspective. The ghosts of past rebellion against England are revived only to be exorcised. Robert Emmet, who in 1803 was captured and hung for inciting a rebellion against England, is referred to primarily as a young man who, by his misguided politics, brought on his own tragedy. Martineau uses Emmet's tale as a cautionary example and

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over. Though the work, published in monthly installments, sold well initially, it was discontinued after 1849 and only published later in America. For Martineau's depiction of Ireland in this work, see Catherine Hall, 'Writing History, Writing a Nation: Martineau's History of the Peace', in *Harriet Martineau: Authorship, Society and Empire*, ed. by Cora Kaplan and Ella Dzelzainis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp.231–53 (pp.244–46). Even though her tale 'Ireland' represents its outlawed hero Dan Mahony as a victim of harmful land policies in Ireland, it does not envision an overthrow of English rule.

suggests that current Irish patriots 'have more knowledge and less presumption than those who have failed before them; […] they see that patriotism requires that they should not endanger the peace of their country, and the lives of their countrymen, without well knowing what are their own aims and resources'(p.204). The deprivation of post-Famine Ireland does not ever become grounds for questioning the legitimacy of English rule. As in her previous writing, she foregrounds it to illustrate the need for continued British rule.

In the immediate aftermath of the Famine, Martineau's letters help to assuage any guilt that her English readers might have felt about the termination of official aid to Ireland in 1849.[187] Despite the fact that the English press largely depicted the Irish as having brought their misery upon themselves, some writers, like Osborne, insisted that England could not abdicate its responsibility towards a constituent part of its empire. In March 1851, while London was caught up in the excitement of the Great Exhibition, Osborne wrote to the editor of *The Times*, stating:

> In a particular part of *Great* Britain there are certain workhouses […] in which the crowding of the sick is most shameful, the diet equally so. […] When, the other day, I looked on the Crystal Palace, and thought of Kilrush *workhouse* […], I confess I felt, as a Christian and the subject of a Christian Government, utter disgust.[188]

There are no comparable instances of shame and disgust at the English administration in Martineau's reports. In fact, on visiting the Kilrush workhouse that haunted Osborne,

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[187] The British government declared, in 1849, that the Famine had ended and ceased official aid. Lesa Scholl, 'Irish Migration to London During the c.1845–52 Famine: Henry Mayhew's Representation in *London Labour and the London Poor*', *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History* <http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=lesa-scholl-irish-migration-to-london-during-the-c-1845-52-famine-henry-mayhews-representation-in-london-labour-and-the-london-poor> [accessed 25 May 2015].

[188] S. Godolphin Osborne, 'The Kilrush Union', *The Times*, 31 March 1851, p.5.

Martineau offers an encouraging report, noting that despite there being room for improvement, much had changed for the better (p.164). More importantly, Martineau implicitly rationalizes the British Government's withdrawal from relief work by asserting that while workhouse relief was essential for Ireland, it had to be sustained by indigenous Irish industries (p.165).

Martineau's assurances about the revival of the Irish economy also helped to assuage public fear of the Famine-stricken paupers of Ireland flooding into England, a fear both manifested in and fed by ethnographical writing such as Henry Mayhew's reports for the *Morning Chronicle*, which were published in three-volume format in 1851.[189] Allaying such anxieties, Martineau states that Ireland would surely emerge from its current state of devastation by following as closely as possible, the principles of political economy. In this sense, her 1852 reports have the same palliative effect that Elaine Freedgood has observed in Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy*.[190] Those tales provided 'immediate consolation' for her middle-class readers racked by the social unrest and market instability of the early nineteenth century by suggesting that 'the pains of capitalism are due to misunderstanding and wrong action', and that 'obedience to the laws of the market will eventually lead to prosperity for all classes'.[191] For Freedgood, the tales worked like 'short-acting drugs': if their ready, political-economy-based solutions to complex economic problems provided quick relief to readers anxious about the uninhibited march of industry, the utopic nature of these solutions meant that

[189] For Mayhew's reports on Irish paupers, see Scholl, 'Irish Migration to London'.

[190] Elaine Freedgood, 'Banishing Panic: Harriet Martineau and the Popularization of Political Economy', *Victorian Studies*, 39 (Autumn 1995), 33–53.

[191] Ibid., p.35.

their effect wore off 'equally quickly, requiring the complementary action of additional doses of short-term relief'.[192]

Martineau's letters similarly provide quick 'on the spot' diagnoses of Ireland's problems, reassuring her readers that the laws of political economy will eventually turn Ireland into a thriving, submissive colony (p.136). For example, talking about Irish resentment of English settlers who make quick money by buying farmlands at cheap prices during the Famine and turning them into pasture lands, she notes, 'there is nothing really unfair in this. They give what the land, in a season of adversity, will bring, and they use it in a way most profitable to themselves […] the extension of tillage will in time restore the value of depreciated lands' (p.132). Martineau holds that Ireland should welcome such English pastoralists and that these initial problems of free-market cultivation would eventually be balanced out by the natural cycles of farming. When faced with a complicated issue that does not directly relate to political economy, such as the irresolvable differences between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, Martineau turns away from such conflicts and argues that once the principles of free-trade and industry are fostered in Ireland through better education and land management, these other issues will also be resolved.

Martineau's itinerant letters were arguably more effective than her political economy tale, 'Ireland', in assuring her English readers that Ireland would cease to be burdensome. Within the framework of travel correspondence, the swift turn away from sticky issues, and the short-term relief noted by Freedgood, seem *de rigueur*, a part of the ordinary course of travel. The travelling reporter, as expected, moves on to other places and matters of interest. Even in the rare instance when Martineau ends her letter with a disturbing image of Ireland, her own movement away

[192] Ibid., p.36.

from that site, to spaces that offer a more encouraging prospect of Ireland's future, keeps the generally positive tone of her reports intact. For example, she ends her letter on Galway with the following unsettling account of a visit to a parish church:

> Panelled in the wall, there was a barbarous image of Christ, for the most part hung with cobwebs […] and worse—there was another panelled image […] of God the Father, as a hideous, bearded, mitred old man; and God the Son, as a lamb with a human face, equally hideous. We turned away, and, when in the open street again, felt as if we had passed, with one step, from the recesses of a pagan temple into the vestibule of our own home (pp.90-91).

As a comment on Ireland, Martineau's sense of having moved in one swift stroke from a barbaric past to a civilized present is ambiguous: while she recognizes that certain aspects of Ireland are still very unlike England, she only has to take a few short steps to find relief. As Martineau escapes from this graphic reminder of Ireland's distinct religious structure, the English reader is carried along. Her next letter revealingly begins with a rapturous account of her ride through the lakes and mountains of Connemara, a short dose of pleasure that erases all memory of the disorienting experience related in the previous letter (p.92). Martineau's reports dwell only briefly on Ireland's current problems, swiftly moving on to suggesting solutions and providing visions of the great future in store for Ireland under an English administration.

A particularly marked instance of this visionary impulse is her report about an upcoming railway line from London Derry to Coleraine. In the 1830s and early 1840s, the English Parliament considered (and rejected) proposals for assisting private enterprise to set up railway projects in Ireland as a means of increasing employment opportunities and improving agriculture

through better distributions networks. [193] After 1847, the railways in Ireland continued to be constructed, as before, by private companies but they received considerable funding from the government and the low rates of initial profits raised concerns about the viability of this scheme.[194] Moreover, by the 1850s, English people would have been particularly wary of investing in such risky railway undertakings in Ireland, given that the 'Railway panic' of the 1840s had financially ruined large numbers of people who had invested in ill-planned or fraudulent railway projects.[195]

Martineau devotes considerable attention to the intended London Derry and Coleraine railway line, which was undertaken by English companies. Although she initially states that such public works would be of little use until Irish agriculture was improved and that there was 'something melancholy in the spectacle of a great apparatus which does not seem to be the result of any natural demand', she goes on to envisage a splendid future for it (p.17). She envisions it as facilitating the collection and transport of agricultural produce across vast parts of Ireland, releasing the country from dependence on subsistence single-crop agriculture like potato-growing, which was held to be largely responsible for the Famine (pp.19-22).

It is critical to note that this railway line was not completed till 1853.[196] Thus, Martineau's extended 'field' report of how the train would pass through various towns and villages, receiving potatoes, butter, eggs, fish, and grain, is entirely a fantasy (pp.20-22). This is all the more remarkable since Martineau states explicitly that the line was unfinished, that it had

[193] R.D. Collison Black, *Economic Thought and the Irish Question 1817–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp.189–97.

[194] Ibid., p.198.

[195] John R. Kellett, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p.29.

[196] W.A. McCutcheon, *The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980), 204–05 n 129.

already failed to actualize its plan of recovering operational costs by reclaiming bogland and that it was now dependent on railway traffic for profits (p.19). In fact, she slips in a note of caution, stating that railways and harbours would not be of much use 'so long as people cannot bring out its wealth from the soil which is actually under their feet and hands', before ending the report on a hopeful note: 'If, as some people hope, the railways will improve the tillage, it will be, as we said before, a capital thing. Let us hope and watch for it' (p.24).

How does Martineau manage to emphasize her high hopes for the railways while recording evidence to the contrary? How do her elaborate speculations about the success of this railway line fit into the framework of investigative travel reportage? It is, in fact, the itinerant nature of Martineau's assignment that allows her to incorporate such visions into newspaper reportage without compromising her credibility. Descriptions of a traveller's subjective impressions of a place, the hopes and fears evoked by a particular landscape, are conventional features of travel writing. But in being used within newspaper reports, in being presented as the sound speculations of a journalist who has studied the field at close quarters, Martineau's optimistic visions about English industrial undertakings in Ireland seem plausible.

It is a sign of Martineau's remarkably skillful use of the neutral, empiricist manner of newspaper reportage that Conway and Hill, despite noting that the letters endorsed a 'hegemonic political economy perspective' of development, see them as being relatively free of the promotional drive that characterized other post-Famine travel accounts.[197] 'Unlike other nineteenth-century travel writers', they note, 'Martineau did not write with the intention of enticing people to come to Ireland […] in a "Let's Go Ireland" manner. Rather her focus is

[197] 'Harriet Martineau and Ireland', p.55.

documenting and analysing its economic exigencies and conditions'.[198] However, it is precisely because Martineau records the failures of both the English government and the Irish people, and sometimes even bookends her reports with misgivings, that her suggested solutions, however far-fetched, seem to be based on sound risk-analysis.

In December 1852, Martineau reissued her anonymous reports in a signed volume as *Letters from Ireland*. She could have mentioned the original place of publication cursorily. Instead, she highlighted the periodical status of the reports. She proclaimed, in the very first line of the preface, that 'these Letters were communicated to the "Daily News" during my journey in Ireland this last autumn' and urged her readers to 'take them for what they are—a rapid account of impressions received and thoughts excited from day to day' (p.iii). Drawing attention to the conditions of travel reportage, she noted that she had traversed over 1200 miles and had written 'sometimes in a coffee-room, sometimes in the crowded single parlour of a country inn,—now to the sound of the harp, and now to the clatter of knives and forks, and scarcely ever within reach of books' (p.iii). Despite making some minor changes to her articles, such as adding titles to some letters and a few footnotes to update some of the news stories, Martineau claimed that the original letters had been 'left untouched', down to reprinting 'notices of passing incidents as if they were still present, and references to a future already fulfilled'(p.iii). She even appended a date to each chapter, thereby reminding the reader of their periodical provenance. The letters bore no datelines when they first appeared in the *Daily News* and, except in the one instance discussed earlier, the dates do not coincide with the actual dates of publication. The dates in the

[198] Ibid., p.49.

collected edition might refer to the dates of composition, or might be fictive.[199] However, in the collected volume, they appear as by-lines and underline the journalistic nature of Martineau's letters. Thus, far from reproducing her letters unaltered 'either in form or matter', Martineau elaborately framed them in ways that underlined her abilities as a newspaper correspondent and presented herself as a model for other professional women writers aspiring to enter this influential line of journalism (p.iii).

In her *Autobiography*, Martineau stated that after some Galway priests had pointed her out 'by guess, in the Irish papers, as the writer of one of the Irish letters', this news spread to English papers and the editor wrote to her, saying that 'all concealment was wholly out of the question' and that she need no longer trouble herself about it.[200] This anecdote could have been offered as a story of Martineau's early struggles as a journalist, of her failure to fully adopt the collective voice of the *Daily News*. However, Martineau presented the experience as having propelled her entry into regular newspaper journalism. Her editor is represented as being utterly unconcerned about the anonymous collective authority of the *Daily News* being diminished through the identification of one of its writers. In fact, after reassuring her that she need not worry about being recognized, he is said to have requested her to write even more regularly for his paper, that she send not three but four articles per week.[201] Whether this anecdotal account of

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[199] Martineau sent a personal letter to Hunt from Galway in August. This letter does not bear an exact date. In *Letters to Ireland*, the report on her travel from Dublin to Galway by train is dated to 29 August and another letter focused entirely on Galway is dated 31 August. These letters appeared in the *Daily News* on 2 September and 3 September respectively. This suggests that Martineau might have written the reports sometime in August, close to, if not on, the dates mentioned in the collected edition. However, the existing letters and her autobiography do not provide any definite indication of when the letter might actually have been written. Harriet Martineau to Frederick Knight Hunt, [August 1852], *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau,* III, p.241.

[200] *Autobiography,* II, p.409.

[201] Ibid., pp.406, 409.

her articles being recognized is true or not, it shows that Martineau was interested, by the time of writing her autobiography in 1855, in claiming that she had not obliterated her own voice to enter the avenues of newspaper journalism.[202]

Martineau also stressed the interrelations between her journalistic and book-writing careers. Directly associating her success as a travel writer with her fitness to be a foreign correspondent, she claimed that her books on America had convinced Daniel O'Connell of her 'capacity to understand and represent the political and social condition of another country' and that he had sent an emissary to request her to 'study Irish affairs on the spot, and report of them'.[203] After returning from her tour as correspondent, Martineau wrote an additional thirty-eight articles about Ireland for the *Daily News* between 1852 and 1866, and also published another fourteen articles on Ireland in *Household Words*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Once a Week*, *Westminster Review*, *Edinburgh Review* and the *New York Evening Post*, which suggests that she was widely perceived as a reliable commentator on the topic.[204] Her Irish assignment tested her skills as a sociological reporter and helped her become an icon of women's journalism in the 1890s. Her travel correspondence not only inaugurated a new and important phase in her own career, but also paved the way for subsequent appointments of female foreign correspondents, most notably that of Frances Power Cobbe, who was commissioned by the *Daily News* to report on the political climate of Italy in 1861–62.

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[202] Liddle has read 'the *Autobiography's* odd (and apparently counterfactual) insistence' that Martineau's anonymous articles were recognized as foregrounding Martineau's admirable journalistic frankness and ability to connect with the people. *Dynamics of Genre,* p.66.

[203] *Autobiography*, II, p.312.

[204] *Harriet Martineau and the Irish Question*, p.ix.

Losing Ground: Harriet Martineau's European Correspondence and the Challenges of Transnational Journalism

In 1859, New York's *National Anti-Slavery Standard* (*NAAS*), the official weekly newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society, invited Martineau to write as their European correspondent. Throughout her career, Martineau had emphatically opposed slavery, right from her *Monthly Repository* articles of the 1820s and her political economy tale 'Demerara', to her decision to speak in support of the principles of abolitionism while in America, braving threats of mutilation and murder from pro-slavery elements, as well as her travel writing and other journalistic work on America in the British press.[205] In recognition of Martineau's well-established abolitionist credentials, the *NAAS* gave her full authority, a '*carte blanche*', with regard 'to plainness of speech and choice of topics'.[206] The format of letters was chosen because it was felt that this form would enable Martineau to speak with 'greater ease and freedom of expression' than any other.[207] The editor also wrote to Martineau from time to time, reassuring her that she could 'exercise the freedom and frankness of speech that pertains to the most intimate and friendly relations'.[208] Despite the seemingly informal terms of the agreement, it was a thoroughly professional journalistic assignment: Martineau had to provide a detailed, English perspective on

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[205] Deborah Logan, 'Fighting a War of Words: Harriet Martineau in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 37 (Spring, 2004), 46–71 (p.47). Martineau notes that during her trip to America, some her detractors threatened to 'cut my tongue out, and cast it on a dunghill'. *Autobiography*, II, p.46. For Martineau's anti-slavery articles in *The Spectator*, *Once a Week*, and *Liberty Bell*, see Logan's anthology, *Harriet Martineau, Writings on Slavery and the American Civil War*, ed. by Deborah Logan (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002).

[206] *Autobiography*, III, p.369

[207] Ibid.

[208] *Autobiography*, III, p.370.

the American anti-slavery movement and she was given due payment.[209] The space made for Martineau in the pages of the *NAAS* thus marks an important development in transatlantic abolitionist networks.

Conversely, the bitter breakdown of this alliance in 1862, with Martineau being asked to resign, offers an important example of how tense and fraught such transnational journalistic assignments could be, even when founded on shared political principles. Deborah Logan, in her pioneering essay on Martineau's correspondence for the *NAAS*, attributes the breakdown of this alliance to Martineau's 'penchant for plain-speaking' and her exposing the compromises being worked out by 'those abolitionists for whom preservation of the Union outweighed the abolition of slavery'.[210] Such a reading accords Martineau the political high-ground, and takes at face value Martineau's own insistence that any form of negotiation on the part of American abolitionists is a sell-out of their political principles. By revisiting some of the debates that Logan has discussed, such as the Morill Tariff and Trent issue, I show that the breakdown of Martineau's relationship with the *NAAS* was, in fact, caused by the incompatibility of her stridently nationalistic voice with an American publication. Unlike Logan, I examine Martineau's writing as European correspondent as offering an important public model of female foreign correspondence, wherein a woman writer undertakes a critical international political assignment in her own name.

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[209] Ibid., p.377. Maria Weston Chapman, the American abolitionist who edited Martineau's *Autobiography*, notes that Martineau had, on coming to know of the Society's shortage of funds and opposition to some of her ideas, offered to write for free, but that the Committee had declined, thereby continuing on the earlier terms. Ibid., pp.386, 390. The amount of pay is not mentioned.

[210] 'Fighting a War of Words', p.47.

In her very first letter, Martineau explicitly presented herself as a facilitator of international communication and collaborative political action amongst abolitionists. She hoped to acquaint 'the citizens of Europe and America in regard to political interests of the day in both countries', so that instead of simply reading newspapers to gather information, people would 'look on the news of the day as material for thought', for 'national and perhaps individual action which will shape the destiny of future generations, and determine the prevalence of good or evil principles of government and society'.[211] Unlike her anonymous reportage for the *Daily News*, Martineau's articles for the *NAAS*, printed in the 'Our European Correspondence' section, were entitled 'Letters from Harriet Martineau'.[212] Though other correspondents share the European correspondence space with Martineau, she alone is not identified as writing from a particular city in Europe.[213] Like other signed articles, 'Letters from Harriet Martineau' derive their value not just from their content, but also from Martineau's personal reputation as a political writer and abolitionist.[214]

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[211] H.M. [Harriet Martineau], 'From our European Correspondent', *NAAS*, 9 April 1859. The *NAAS* does not carry page numbers.

[212] Henceforth 'Letters'. The first two articles differ from this general pattern. Though they were ascribed to 'Our European Correspondent', the articles bear only the initials 'H.M.'. The third letter, published in the 30 April issue of the paper, sets the main pattern described above, which is followed till the end of the correspondence. Moreover, this letter, in being identified as the third letter from Martineau, would have indicated to the readers that the writer of the earlier two articles was Martineau.

[213]These include an anonymous correspondent from Paris and Richard Webb from Dublin. Towards the end of 1860, an anonymous London correspondent also sends in letters intermittently. Occasionally, one of these correspondents fills the entire section so that an individual reporter's work alternates with that of other writers. R.D. Webb, 'From our European Correspondent', *NAAS*, 30 March 1861.

[214] Apart from Webb's signed reports, the *NAAS* also carried letters from well-known female abolitionists like Frances D. Gage. Frances Gage, 'Letter from Frances C. Gage', *NAAS*, 23 July 1859.

Martineau does not write as a purveyor of news about the latest events in Europe. For one, her location itself — all Europe — made such forms of news coverage impossible as she would have to first assimilate news of various countries herself, before sending it over to America. By that time her American readers would have already received news of the various countries involved from individual reports.[215] With regard to events in America, such as the immediate proceedings of the trial of John Brown, who had led an armed insurrection of freed slaves, she openly admits to not knowing as much as her readers, and acknowledges that her views might seem outdated by the time they reach them.[216]

Martineau's explicit foregrounding of her distance from the site of news is important, since it shows her keen understanding of journalistic writing that was removed from the scene of action. Martineau did not travel much after her Irish tour in 1852, partly due to recurring health problems, and from that point it was through distant writing that she retained her place in the national press.[217] In 1853, right at the onset of the Crimean War, Hunt, the editor of the *Daily News*, ensured that a copy of *The Times* reached her Ambleside home by teatime, so that she could go over the day's events, and choose a relevant topic on which to write a leader.[218] Thus, while William Russell was making his career by reporting from the Crimean battlefield, Martineau was making hers by writing editorials from home, placing the war in perspective.

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[215] Transatlantic telegraphic services were yet to be established. Although a line was successfully laid in August 1858, it stopped working within a month. A permanent line was only established in July 1866. John Picker, 'Threads Across the Ocean: The Transatlantic Telegraph Cable, July 1858, August 1866', *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History* <http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=john-picker-threads-across-the-ocean-the-transatlantic-telegraph-cable-july-1858-august-1866> [accessed 25 February 2016].

[216] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 31 December 1859.

[217] Logan, *Harriet Martineau, Victorian Imperialism*, p.46.

[218] *Autobiography*, II, p.415.

Although Martineau stated, in her autobiography, that 'being several hundred miles out of the way of the latest intelligence' made her incapable of reporting political news, she underlined that her own work required a masterful command of contemporary history and international politics, suggesting that hers was, in fact, far more serious journalism than merely conveying the latest information.[219]

Martineau's correspondence for the *NAAS* offers ample proof of her skills in comparative political analysis. She consistently highlights the connections between seemingly disparate social movements and political events. Italy's contemporaneous struggle for Unification, for example, is repeatedly presented as an admirable fight for liberty from which American abolitionists can draw critical lessons in political organization and principled resistance to despotism. A few months after the successful establishment of the Kingdom of Italy, she asks her American readers to 'Look at the Italians!' and take heart from the fact that their 'long course of holy resistance' to despotism had finally succeeded, suggesting that American abolitionists must remain similarly steadfast in their principles and that they too, would eventually succeed. [220] Contrary to Ted Hover's argument that Martineau perpetuated the discourse of American exceptionalism by speaking of America as a nation 'singled out for a special destiny' and containing a unique potential for 'genuine reform, revision, and […] revolution in social and political spheres', Martineau presented American politics as part of a wider international struggle for liberty.[221]

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[219] Ibid., p.413.

[220] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 5 October 1861.

[221] Ted Hovet Jr., 'Harriet Martineau's Exceptional American Narratives: Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Brown, and the "Redemption of Your National Soul"', *American Studies*, 48 (Spring 2007), 63–76 (p.72).

She repeatedly underlines that the issue of slavery continued to shape European politics in critical ways. She points out, for example, that the transaction between France and Portugal in relation to the French ship *Charles et Georges*, which had been caught by Portuguese authorities off the coast of Mozambique for trafficking slaves, in contravention of international treaty, had 'altered the whole course of the Italian question, which is now suspending all Europe between peace and war'.[222] Explaining England's refusal to assist Portugal despite professing abolitionist principles, Martineau notes that this was caused entirely by the 'the mental and moral incompetency' of the English diplomat Lord Malmesbury; the English people, and their elected representatives, she notes, had severely indicted Malmesbury's failure to act.[223] Speaking on behalf of 'the people of England' she asserts that they 'desire it to be understood that, if they had known what was being said and done, the matter would have turned out very differently'.[224] Highlighting England's abolitionist principles, Martineau claims that 'it was through English influence that Portugal took the whole series of steps toward the abolition of slavery which have distinguished the reign of the young king'.[225] Presenting a pro-British perspective on the Second Italian War of Independence, Martineau cites the terms of the 1815 Treaty of Vienna as the reason why England would not fight for Sardinian independence from Austria though it sympathised with their cause.[226] Like a model English diplomat, Martineau rationalises England's political actions for an international audience, and seeks to undo the damage caused to England's international image by inept bureaucrats like Lord Malmesbury.

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[222] 'From our European Correspondent', *NAAS*, 9 April 1859.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Ibid.

[226] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 6 August 1859.

In presenting Britain's official position on various international affairs as unexceptionable, Martineau views the actions of other countries in terms of their earlier conduct towards Britain. Talking of Napoleon III's attempts to win the support of other European countries, including England, for the European Congress to be held in January 1860, she says that he is 'treating all the world as if it had no memory'.[227] The 'memory' that is cited as a bulwark against making contemporary political blunders is emphatically nationalistic. France is fixed in the role of a despotic European power and even when it goes to War against Austria in support of Sardinia's struggle for independence, Martineau insists that France cannot be trusted to support liberty.[228] Britain's failure to fight for the Italians, 'while sympathizing in their cause', on the other hand, is taken as a sign of Britain's unwavering commitment to non-intervention in international affairs that did not directly involve it.[229]

Martineau's own position on international issues is marked by the contradictions and shifts that characterised British foreign policy in the mid-century. For example, having repeatedly derided American politicians for speaking in support of Napoleon in the course of the Second Italian War of Independence in 1859-60, she defends England's trade alliance with France as being a part of its commitment to free-trade principles.[230] Martineau similarly explained Britain's neutrality in the Second Italian War of Independence in her *Daily News* leaders.[231] While this nationalistic position fitted well into an English newspaper, it appeared

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[227] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 31 December 1859.

[228] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 6 August 1859.

[229] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 28 May 1859.

[230] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 24 March 1860.

[231] See, for example, [Harriet Martineau], Untitled Article, *Daily News*, 6 May 1859, p.4. Elizabeth Arbuckle has identified these untitled articles. See, *Harriet Martineau in the London Daily News: Selected Contributions 1852–1866*, ed. by Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle (London: Garland Publishing, 1994).

narrow and parochial in an international publication. Martineau's vehemently pro-English responses to two issues which set English interest in opposition to the North precipitated her dismissal from the *NAAS*. The first was the imposition of the Morrill Tariff, a restrictive tax on trade, by the Republican government in the North in March 1861. The Tariff considerably reduced British profits from exports to America, and Martineau, echoing English outrage, called it a form of economic slavery.[232] In the *NAAS*, Martineau's perspective was challenged by Mr. Horace Greeley, an American abolitionist and advocate of protectionism, who also wrote for the *New York Tribune*.[233] Their mutual antagonism derived in part from their close identification with countries which now had a direct conflict of interest. The editor had finally to intervene, and ask Martineau to stop discussing the issue.[234]

The second issue that soured relations between Martineau and the *NAAS*, was one that nearly made England go to war with America in late 1861: the Trent affair. On 8 November 1861, Captain Charles Wilkes, a Union navy officer, seized two Confederate commissioners, James Murray Mason and John Slidell, who were bound for Europe to seek support for the Confederate cause, from the British ship *Trent*.[235] Martineau's letters to the *NAAS* on the issue are suffused with outrage at what she, like many in England, saw as a violation of English autonomy:

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[232] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 13 April 1861.

[233] On Greeley's criticism of Martineau, see Logan, 'Fighting a War', pp.51–54.

[234] She grudgingly accepts this, but not without reviving the issue briefly in 'Letters', *NAAS*, 3 August 1861.

[235] Logan, 'Fighting a War', pp.58–59. Captain Charles Wilkes (1798–1877) was an American Antarctic explorer and officer in the Union Navy. In 1861, when he was in command of a Union warship, *San Jacinto*, he intercepted the British mail steamer *RMS Trent* in the Bahama Channel by firing at it, and forcibly arrested Mason and Slidell. 'Captain Charles Wilkes', in *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, ed. by I.C.B. Dear and Peter Kamp, online edition <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199205684.001.0001/acref-9780199205684-e-2682> [accessed 3 June 2016].

> Now, all is over! […] When Commander Wilkes fired his shotted guns across the bows of the Trent, he did more for the Confederate cause than giving them half-a-dozen victories […] no power on earth can restore the state of things which existed before […] the people of England are offered an outrage too gross to be endured; and, grieved, shocked, and ashamed, as we shall be to war upon you at the same time as the Southern states, we shall have no option.[236]

Martineau's letter offers little room for negotiation. Even if the American government were to immediately apologize and distance itself from the actions of Wilkes, she states, former relations between the two countries cannot be restored. It is particularly revealing that Martineau's nationalistic sympathies make her rationalize as inevitable England's alignment with the pro-Slavery South in potentially declaring war on the North. While Martineau explicitly distances England's imperatives from those of the South, this belligerence towards the North severely strained her alliance with the *NAAS*.

It is interesting to note that Martineau is far more sympathetic towards the North in her *Daily News* articles than in her *NAAS* articles. For example, in her leader on the Morrill Tariff for the *Daily News*, she explains to her English readers that the Americans passed the Bill largely out of ignorance, fostered by faulty representations in pro-protectionist American newspapers like the *New York Tribune*.[237] While writing on the Trent issue, she presents Wilkes as an excitable, but dutiful officer who should have been better managed by his seniors.[238] In order to ensure that English outrage against the North did not translate into sympathy for the South, she

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[236] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 28 December 1861.

[237] [Harriet Martineau], Untitled Article, *Daily News*,12 September 1861, p.4.

[238] [Harriet Martineau], Untitled Article, *Daily News*, 5 December 1861, p.4.

notes, in an ensuing article, that having 'demanded and obtained their [Mason and Slidell's] liberation, as we should in the case of any man, woman, or child of any nation' who travelled in a British ship, there was no reason to sympathize with pro-South principles that the rescued men represented.[239]

While addressing the readers of the *NAAS*, Martineau evidently assumed that her well-established abolitionist credentials made her support for the anti-slavery movement in the North unquestionable, however belligerently she may attack its position on other issues. However, her rigidly nationalistic perspective offended many of the *NAA*S's readers and contributors. Even while writing on the slavery issue, Martineau adopts an inflexible position, insisting that the North must not negotiate with the South, that it must break the Union if need be, but must immediately act to abolish slavery completely. In fact, almost a year before the Civil War began, she repeatedly uses the imagery of warfare, encouraging the North to start a military offensive against the South: 'It is a grave responsibility to impair or disturb your force while in full march on the open battle-field'.[240] Citing England's own recent declaration of war against China as an exemplary political action, she urges the North against receding from a conflict with the South. Commenting on South Carolina's cessation from the American Union in 1860, for example, she states that she would 'as soon expect the English and French troops to turn and flee to their ships because the Chinese soldiers hang their gongs, and shake horse-tails, and display rows of logs painted as guns' as expect the North to halt its march against slavery.[241] Not all English

[239] [Harriet Martineau], Untitled Article, *Daily News*, 14 January 1862, p.4.

[240] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 25 June 1859.

[241] 'Letters', *NAAS*, 29 December 1860.

abolitionists shared Martineau's intolerance for the North's attempts to maintain the Union and negotiate with the South.[242]

It is revealing that the editor's note about Martineau's resignation dismisses her status as a representative of Europe. Speaking on behalf of the abolitionists associated with the journal, the editor states their belief that she did not reflect 'the spirit of our British coadjutors', and that she was 'entitled to speak not for them, but only for herself'.[243] Thus, while Martineau's two-year transatlantic correspondence shows her capacity to participate in powerful international political networks, to debate about foreign policy and international trade with leading male abolitionists, her dismissal also shows the limits of her accommodation within such press networks. While her signature allowed her to assert her own authority, especially while speaking on issues involving political economy, such as the Morrill Tariff, it also meant that she could be dismissed as a singular and non-representative voice when her opinions became too critical to be published in the *NAAS*.

Examining Martineau's diplomatic and ambassadorial role as correspondent helps us to revise the influential view, represented most notably by Deirdre David, that Martineau perceived her writing as a work of 'auxiliary usefulness'.[244] Martineau herself used the phrase to describe her work of contemporary history, *History of England*, as preparing the ground-work for a future historian. However, given Martineau's evident belief in writing as a means of effecting political reforms, it is unlikely that she saw her popularizing function as inferior to the work of original

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[242] R.J.M. Blackett, *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), pp.17–18.

[243] 'Remarks by the Editor', *NAAS*, 1 March 1862, qtd. in Logan, *Harriet Martineau, Writings on Slavery*, p.163.

[244] Deirdre David, *Intellectual Women and Victorian Patriarchy: Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p.19.

thinkers. In her role as foreign correspondent, as in her work as a teacher of political economy, she wrote with authority, forging her own distinctive voice in the press. As Peterson has observed, Martineau presented professional authorship, especially journalism, as a 'social enterprise', wherein the editors and readers played critical roles in the 'formation of a literary career' and the shaping of the author's vocational, socially-oriented writing.[245] Her abrupt resignation from the *NAAS*, caused by her rift with the 'social enterprise' of an important American abolitionist journal, paradoxically strengthened her journalistic credibility as a high-minded journalist who did not buckle under editorial or even readerly opposition to her ideals.

As I have shown above, the mid-century female foreign correspondents played a critical role in claiming this line of political journalism as women's work. While Ward ensured that her authorial persona displayed signs of her continued adherence to the principles of middle-class respectability *amidst* conditions that were inimical to it, Martineau questioned the domestication of women in the very act of writing indistinguishably from men. Their strategic use of the generic diversity of foreign correspondence enabled both women to rival formidable and established male journalists. Their success as foreign correspondents not only enabled them to assume powerful positions in the mid-century press as editors of military narratives, leader writers and reform journalists, but also paved the way for professional journalism of the New Woman writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[245] Linda Peterson, *Becoming A Woman*, p.65.

Writing Women: Fictional Representations of the Presswoman

Even the predominantly conservative *Saturday Review* admitted, by mid-century, that women writers commanded a distinct position in the marketplace of letters. While George Eliot and Harriet Martineau had proved, respectively, that the ability to write on a 'range of spiritual facts', and to 'treat politics and political economy with independence and good sense' was not 'exclusively masculine', even those who wrote more conventionally 'feminine fiction' had shown 'surprising power' in writing 'saleable, commendable' novels that enjoyed a substantial and loyal readership.[1] However, the writer adds, there are 'still […] some drawbacks to female authorship' and nowhere are these shortcomings more glaringly evident in women's utter inability to write literary reviews:

> When a clever and pretty woman, delighting in the highest literature, accustomed to stimulate her friendly audiences, and to restore the balance of literary judgment by her captivating enthusiasm, sits down to write, she finds that she is *painfully powerless*. There is no sex, no sparkling eyes, no flowing hair in print; she has *to judge and write as a man* […]. All her old weapons are useless, and all her old strength seems gone from her. *Of course, if she makes fiction her line, she does not suffer from this feeling of weakness* […]. *But if she wishes to write as men write*, and to criticise, or narrate, or speculate, she then begins to feel how hard it is for her to stand on so low a level as she must be content at first to occupy, when in conversation she has held so much higher a place.[2]

[1] 'Authoresses', *Saturday Review*, 16 (10 October 1863), 483– 84 (p.483).

[2] Ibid., p.484, emphases added.

The above passage sharply indicates the critical issues at stake in representations of women's journalism: whether women could cultivate the authoritative masculine style of leader-articles and reviews; whether they could succeed as professional writers when they were not treated with chivalrous leniency; whether they could ever vie for the same financial and social distinctions as their male counterparts.

By claiming that women were bound to feel 'painfully powerless' when they try to 'write as men', the article attempts to put female writers in their place.[3] It suggests that however impressive their strides in professional authorship — in writing novels, illustrative fiction, or even 'tracts, and advice to the poor, and poetic musings' — women cannot rival the status, style and power of male writers.[4] Within the field of journalism, he suggests, women are bound to be a weak minority. In sharp contrast, supporters of women's professional authorship like Bessie Parkes claimed, as noted earlier, that women were, in fact, the unacknowledged mainstays of Victorian journalism: 'if editors were ever known to disclose the dread secrets of their dens, they only could give the public an idea of the authoresses whose unsigned names are Legion'.[5] They spoke of women's writing as inherently different from men's, suggesting that their very inability to write as men made them invaluable, inimitable participants in the Victorian periodical press.

Though the figure of the anonymous female journalist was appropriated by both opponents and proponents of women's journalism, the women who signed their own articles, or adopted a female persona, made the female presswoman increasingly prominent. Biographical literature about women writers such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld noted, if only in passing, their

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p.483.

[5] 'On the Adoption', p.4.

contributions to journalism.[6] Nowhere, however, was the presswoman represented in more striking detail and imaginative depth than in mid-Victorian fiction. It is these fictional presswomen that I examine in this chapter.

The very nature of fictionality made it particularly well-suited for the formulation of plausible models of women's professionalism. As Gallagher has shown, fiction provided imaginary instances without real-life referents and 'because a general referent was indicated through a particular, but explicitly nonreferential, fictional individual', the fictional narrative 'could be judged generally true even though all of its particulars are merely imaginary'.[7] The narratives I study can thus be read as presenting generalized, yet believable stories about women's lives as presswomen. Since fictional stories 'are nobody's, everybody can have an equal interest in them', and they could potentially have a wider appeal as models than autobiographies and biographies of real women writers.[8]

Though many of these novels about writing women were indeed read by contemporary readers and reviewers as having been based on the real-life experiences of their authors, the fictionality of these novels was ineluctable because the exact points of real-life references were impossible to establish. This mediated referencing between fictional presswomen and their female creators not only enhanced the plausibility of these accounts, but also gave their authors a chance to speak with greater freedom about their profession than they could in explicitly

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[6] Lucy Aikin's 1825 memoir of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, for example, mentions the two essays on education and prejudice that Barbauld had contributed to the *Monthly Magazine*. *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld: With a Memoir*, ed. by Lucy Aikin, 2 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825), I, lxvii.

[7] Catherine Gallagher, 'The Rise of Fictionality', in *The Novel*, ed. by Franco Moretti, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), I, pp.336–63 (p.342).

[8] Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670– 1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p.172.

autobiographical writing for fear of being censured for displaying an unbecoming interest in the marketplace of letters. As Poovey has noted in her discussion of eighteenth-century women writers' negotiations of contemporary notions of female propriety, fictional narratives enabled women to express themselves through 'strategies of indirection, obliqueness, and doubling'.[9] Though I do discuss some short fiction on the figure of the female journalist, I focus largely on novels in this chapter because it is in novelistic genres like the *Bildungsroman* and the *Kunstlerroman*, defined by their very ability to narrate the protagonist's development into an artist, that one finds the most extensive fictional representations of female presswomen.

Scholarship on Victorian women's writing has largely failed to distinguish between accounts of female presswomen and book-writers. Even Patricia Zakreski's impressive account of how fictional representations of middle-class women writers influenced their professional status subsumes the figure of the presswoman within a broad category of the female writer, which includes women novelists and poets.[10] This scholarly reluctance to remark upon the distinct characteristics of the fictional female journalist can be explained partly by the fact that Victorian fiction itself often shows the periodical authoress to be also engaged in book-writing. Moreover, certain issues that were central to Victorian women's experience of professional authorship, such as their complicated negotiation of domestic and public duties, authorial income, and celebrity, appear as important themes in most fictional representations of female authors, whether as journalists or book-writers. However, it is precisely because presswork and book-writing were two distinct, yet overlapping spheres that Victorian writers could straddle these two fields so profitably, often reproducing periodical articles and serial fiction as bound

[9] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p.42.

[10] *Representing Female Artistic Labour,* pp.97–138.

volumes of prose and fiction. By bringing mid-Victorian fictional representations of the female journalist into sharp focus, this chapter will illuminate the distinctive role played by such narratives in the mid-century discourse of women's paid, public work and professional authorship.

In order to present female presswomen in a positive light, novelists had to negotiate discursive problems that simply did not arise while writing about female novelists or book-writers. Unlike the female novelist, the female journalist usually worked in proximity with men, often under the gaze of the male editor. Emphasising the physical attractiveness of the fictional presswoman could therefore introduce unsavoury implications of sexual immorality and compromise. As I will show, novels about fictional presswomen envisioned new codes of feminine conduct that made women's co-operative, remunerative work with men, in such mixed-gender spaces as newspaper offices, seem respectable. Even when women are shown as sending articles and editing journals from home, they are depicted as transforming the domestic space into a suitable site for regular journalism: some protagonists turn a particular room into a personalized home office; others tactfully transform passing domestic events, such as family visits, into occasions for collaborative professional work. These novels are also likely to have influenced biographical accounts of female journalists like Margaret Oliphant who, in her 1899 autobiography, notably depicted her home as a workplace.[11]

In describing authorial work that was miscellaneous and shaped by house-styles of journals, editorial control and readerly expectations, these novels move away from the dominant Victorian myth of authorship as the creative outpouring of a single, autonomous agent to project

[11] Monica Cohen, *Professional Domesticity in the Victorian Novel: Women, Work and Home* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.2–8.

writing as a mediated and collaborative exercise. While these new visions of women's presswork largely leave out the working-class author, they do put forward a case for making presswork more accessible to men and women who do not belong to the propertied class or the professional middle-classes. They also demand greater support, recognition and pay for women journalists.

Pierre Bourdieu has noted, in relation to discourses surrounding art and literature, that 'every critical affirmation contains, on the one hand, a recognition of the value of the work which occasions it […], and on the other hand an affirmation of its own legitimacy'.[12] Drawing on Bourdieu's insights into the role of cultural discourse, one can say that the novels examined in this chapter similarly helped in creating the conditions of Victorian women's presswork: they not only put positive evaluations of women's journalism into circulation, but also affirmed the authority of the women novelist to represent the field of professional journalism. Many of these female novelists were themselves journalists and thus had a direct stake in the representation of women's presswork.

Entitling Genius: Women's Property, Propriety and Presswork in Eliza Meteyard's *Struggles for Fame*

Between 1843 and 1844, Eliza Meteyard's short story, 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress' appeared in three instalments in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (*Tait's*), a shilling monthly which promoted the principles of self-help.[13] Under the editorship of Christian Isobel Johnstone, a champion of women's political writing, *Tait*'s became an attractive publication avenue for

[12] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. by Randal Johnson (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.35–36.

[13] 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (December 1843), 765–75; *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (January 1844), 36–42; *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 11(April 1844), 245–54. Henceforth, 'Scenes'. Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress', p.83.

radical women writers like Meteyard.[14] Meteyard's 'Scenes', a story of how Barbara Chisenhale, an orphan gifted with exceptional literary talent, sustains her love for writing in the face of financial distress and emotional trauma, reinforces the journal's support for women's authorship. However, it ends prior to the publication of its heroine's first book.

Drawing the serial story to a close, Meteyard announces that a longer version of the tale will soon be published: 'we now take leave of our future Authoress, still but on the threshold of life, and of whom we shall have much more to say when her full History is fairly before the public'.[15] Her novel, *Struggles for Fame*, published a year later, carried Barbara's story forward.[16] Meteyard's statement about the afterlife of her short story could be read as a clever strategy of the female journalist to use her anonymous periodical pieces to advertise her forthcoming signed novel.

The novel's episodic plot follows the fortunes of Barbara, who, after being saved from ruffians at the age of two, lives with various guardians, including an abusive parish nurse, a wealthy gentleman, a captain who tries in vain to make her a musician, and a book-seller who educates her. Determined to earn her living by writing, Barbara wages a hard, and occasionally lonely, struggle with the conditions of the literary market and succeeds in becoming a celebrated woman of letters. For Meteyard, who often had her articles returned to her for being too radical,

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[14] Johnstone published positive reviews of Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832), and Marion Reid's *A Plea for Woman*, which argued in favour of female suffrage and women's public remunerative work. Easley has noted that female contributors to *Tait's* increased, under Johnstone's editorship, 'from about nineteen percent to thirty seven percent' and included Catherine Gore, Amelia Opie and Harriet Martineau. *First-Person Anonymous*, pp.69, 66–72; Helsinger, Sheets, Veeder, *The Woman Question*, I, pp.14–20.

[15] 'Scenes', p. 254.

[16] Eliza Meteyard, *Struggles for Fame*, 3 vols (London: T.C. Newby, 1845). Subsequent references are cited parenthetically.

moving to book-writing would have provided greater freedom to speak about Barbara's experiences in the lower, disreputable levels of journalism.[17] The signed novel also emphasized Meteyard's autonomy as a writer. As Poovey had noted, though 'the market relations that dominated serial publication implicitly governed all texts written for publication and sale', the greater standardization of the format of serial and part-issue publications emphasized the writer's proximity to alienated labour more than book-writing did.[18]

Moreover, unlike an ephemeral short story published in a monthly magazine, a novel, if successful, could continue to gather readers over time, and eventually earn its writer the status of a writer of note. The Copyright Act of 1842, which, for the first time, extended authors' copyright beyond their lifetime, supported the idea that the best of authors were likely to receive their due from the market gradually, over a long period of time. Catherine Seville, in her illuminating account of the 1842 Copyright Act, notes that male Romantic poets like Wordsworth supported the reform of copyright laws in the interest of the writer of genius, 'men of real power, who go before their age', who unlike 'useful drudges in Literature, or […] flimsy and shallow writers' were above the 'taste and knowledge of the age'.[19] Though Meteyard, who wrote with the aim of providing cheap, educative fiction for the masses, did not share

[17] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, p.96. The series might have been terminated mid-way for being too graphic in its description of a woman's experiences in the world of lower journalism. However, there is no evidence to establish this conclusively.

[18] *Uneven Developments.* p.105.

[19] William Wordsworth to Richard Sharp, 27 September 1808, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd edn, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967–1993), I, p.266; Catherine Seville, *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.159–60. The examples of Milton, commonly known to have been paid five pounds for the copyright of *Paradise Lost*, and Shakespeare, whose descendants were said to live in obscure poverty, were cited in favour of perpetuating the intellectual property rights of 'great' authors. Seville, *Literary Copyright,* p.156.

Wordsworth's contempt for 'useful drudges', she did aspire to the greater celebrity and remuneration that book-writers, with the extension of copyright in 1842, could get. As I will show, Meteyard's novel engages centrally with several issues that shaped Victorian women's presswork: issues of accessing the world of journalism, of authorial agency and editorial control, and of determining and securing due payment in a journalistic field where ownership was very slippery, especially for women writers who often worked under the cover of anonymity.

A staunch proponent of the Victorian ethic of industriousness, Meteyard cites 'Work is Worship' as the main moral of her novel (I, p.vi-vii). The novel's protagonist, Barbara, first expresses interest in professional authorship as a means of providing financial assistance to her ageing guardian, a bookseller named Adam Leafdale. She asks him if there is 'no means of getting money by the learning drawn from them [books]? Is there no way of being industrious?' (II, p.4). Adam recommends that she 'foster it [her love for literature]; yet build not too much upon the hopes it brings […] trust for thy bread to the labour of thine hands, and thou wilt be sure of it' (II, pp.4-5). While using the discourse of humble industry enabled Meteyard to make a strong case for public, remunerative authorship by women, it could also limit the professional ambitions of women writers to mere survival. Adam Leafdale, Barbara's well-meaning guardian, exemplifies the limitations of this discourse by underlining that literary distinction was rare and uncertain, and reserved for geniuses alone, and that Barbara had best aim for no more than earning her livelihood by writing (II, p.5).

Contrary to Kay Boardman's assertion that Meteyard's novel upholds a model of dedicated, yet ordinary writing, the novel is, in fact, deeply critical of this idea of self-help.[20]

[20] 'Struggling for Fame', p.46.

It underlines that unless writers' economic interests and social status were not better safeguarded, those aspiring to make a living by writing would only bring harm upon themselves. Barbara's experiences as a journalist struggling to make ends meet include battling the physical and sexual dangers of working in an exploitative press world; these experiences intensify the novel's criticism of the lack of support for industrious, middle-class writers. However, far from dismissing presswork as unsuitable for women, the novel makes a strong case for widening the publication avenues for all industrious authors, including women, and for a greater acceptance of women in the more established, lucrative, and respectable spheres of journalism.

Barbara's connections to journalism run deep. In a novel that says little about Barbara's parentage, a letter written by her father to her mother surprisingly surfaces in the third volume of the novel, to reveal that the orphaned and struggling female writer is, in fact, the daughter of a highly successful political journalist. In the letter, her father, William Chisenhale, writes to tell his wife Nelly that his articles for the *Edinburgh Review* had gone through the fourth edition, and that he would imminently assume the editorship of a newspaper (III, p.191). At the end of the novel, when Barbara rejects marriage in order to devote herself entirely to writing, she retains her maiden name and explicitly claims her father's professional legacy: 'a child who has had a *great* father, may be pardoned if she wishes to retain his name. *I* shall keep mine with fitting trust, by still linking to the name of Chisenhale, the well earned honours of *Authorship*' (III, p.368).

However, to Meteyard's readers, it would have been very clear that Barbara could not actually walk in her father's footsteps. By the 1840s, the *Edinburgh Review*, a weighty quarterly, was widely perceived as a leading organ of the Whig party which published 'only "gentleman

writers" who were at first unpaid'.[21] The fact that Barbara is not shown to write for high-repute journals, even when she can finally afford to write without requiring payment, indicates the gendered nature of access to this line of journalism.

It is curious that the novel shows William Chisenhale as eagerly anticipating a newspaper editorship. John Lockhart, another *Edinburgh Review* man, who would go on to become the editor of the high-brow *Quarterly Review*, could not be persuaded to assume a newspaper editorship despite the best efforts of its promoter, a young Benjamin Disraeli, since he thought newspaper journalism to be too undignified to associate himself with it publically.[22] Meteyard's depiction of a gentleman-writer of the quarterlies speaking in positive terms about a newspaper editorship puts newspaper journalism in a respectable light. However, the novel also emphasises the seedier side of newsmaking, and makes apparent the troubling lack of standardisation and quality control in this line of professional authorship.

When Barbara first sets out to make a living by writing, she is ignorant of her illustrious parentage and thus has to start from the very lowest rungs of professional journalism as a hired writer for the firm of Kilpec and Quick, who are penny-a-liners. Penny-a-liners were amongst the lowest paid freelance newspaper reporters and occasioned considerable commentary in the mid-century press. One writer in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* called them 'the stragglers of the London press—the foragers for stray news—the narrators of fires, street accidents, suicides,

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[21] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p.224. Siskin notes that the journal did accept contributions from a few women later in the century. Harriet Martineau, for example, contributed twelve articles between 1858 and 1868. However, these articles were published anonymously and the public image of the journal remained emphatically masculine. See, Valerie Sanders, '"I'm Your Man".

[22] Aspinall, 'The Social Status', pp.218–20. Lockhart did, however, accept a salary for providing advice and contributing occasional articles.

murders, police cases, and all the odds and ends that fill up the columns of newspapers in default of political opinions, debates, and foreign intelligence'.[23] In reports like the above, penny-a-liners were derided for their lower-class status and sensational style of writing, and suspected of cheating newspaper editors and readers by making up false reports. However, such reports also recognized that penny-a-liners were important sources of information for the press, especially about urban crime and violence, and expressed concern that the newspapers relied on such unofficial and largely unaccountable channels, rather than on their salaried reporters, for their news.

Meteyard's representation of the firm of Kilpec and Quick reinforces most of these fears. The duo get Barbara to write their sensational news reports, and since she does not personally gather news, it would appear that these reports are unsubstantiated. They also set Barbara whole weeks of 'invention' work, in which she entirely fabricates news (III, p.241). It is interesting that Meteyard represents Kilpeg and Quick as having their own organised firm, with an office and employees, given that most mid-century articles speak of penny-a-liners as freelancers. Kilpec and Quick bombastically describe themselves as 'reporters to the "Daily Radical," "The Universal," and the "Jockey Life in London"' and also claim to write 'leading articles for "The True Conservative Thunderbolt"' (III, p.138). While the claims made by the utterly untrustworthy Kilpeg and Quick are obviously inflated, the narrator notes that these reports were

[23] 'Penny-a-Liners', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 57 (1 February 1845), 65– 68 (p.65); Ned Culpepper (pseud.) [William Maggin], 'Place-Men, Parliament-Men, Penny-a-Liners, and Parliamentary Reporters', *Fraser's Magazine*, 2 (October 1830), 282–94 (p.94); James Grant, *The Great Metropolis*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Saunders and Otley, 1837), II, pp.282–324.

actually used by newspapers (III, p.196). Depicting an organized firm of penny-a-liners enabled Meteyard to suggest that regular papers also thrived on such ill-paid and sensational reportage.

It also enabled her to emphasize that even the lowest levels of newspaper journalism did not provide secure employment to the aspiring female journalist. The firm routinely exploits Barbara. Despite the fact that she, with her 'rare wit' and 'ready invention', helps to single-handedly raise the fortunes of Kilpec and Quick, with 'several sub-editors' now paying the firm more and complementing it 'upon its literary improvement', she is given neither credit nor due payment: 'To their hack no praise was given […] Barbara from hour to hour plied a weary pen, without *one* comfort, unless there be comfort in reproach, without further recompense than some three shillings weekly, paid with a begrudging hand' (III, p.196).

This kind of economic exploitation of the hack writer is shown to be common across various forms of lower journalism. For example, Barbara also writes for another low-brow periodical, the 'True Thunderbolt', whose editor Mr. Twiddikin, calls on her repeatedly, telling her that his paper *'had* a Poet's Corner, or an empty column for a few political truths' (III, p.52).[24] Although Barbara writes 'something every week', she receives little but 'the politest compliments of […] the editor' (III, p.52). She contributes a tale to a popular magazine, but once again, this kind of writing does little to keep her from starvation (III, p.251). Thus, even though Meteyard shows lower journalism attracting writers like Barbara who are desperate to make ends meet, she underlines that it is, in fact, a financially unsustainable avenue of authorship.

Barbara encounters similar difficulties while practicing non-periodical forms of writing at the lower levels of the press. She is deprived of due payment while writing poetry for the

[24] This is a different periodical from 'The True Conservative Thunderbolt', for which Kilpec and Quick claim to have provided leaders.

printing firm of Mr. Small and plays for Mr. Popkins's popular theatre (III, pp.52, 99). Barbara's lower journalism, written under the constant supervision of employers like Kilpec and Quick and to the standardised format of periodical publication, thus represents in an acute manner the severely compromised status of the author in all forms of writing in the lower press. By showing the road to the upper-echelons of writing as being paved with hackwork and exploitation for all poor writers, the novel questions the mid-century idea of authorship as an 'open' profession, presented by J.W. Kaye and others, wherein literary skill alone mattered.[25] The difference between Barbara's utter vulnerability as a writer for the lower press and her father's prosperous career in higher journalism, which not only paid him handsomely but also enabled him to republish his articles in volume format, exposes the privileging of upper class men within professional journalism.

Barbara's struggles also highlight the limited power of the recent legislation to safeguard the interests of authors: the Copyright Act of 1842. Within the Act, it was the section on journalism, section 18, which specifically addressed the rights of hired writers like Barbara:

> When any *publisher or other person* shall, before or at the time of the passing of this Act [or hereafter], have projected, conducted, and carried on, […], or be the proprietor of any encyclopaedia, review, magazine, periodical work, or work published in a series of books or parts, or any book whatsoever, and *shall have employed or shall employ any persons to compose the same* […], *the copyright in every such* […] work […] so composed and paid for, *shall be the property of such proprietor, projector, publisher, or other*

[25] For this idea of authorship in the 1840s and 50s, see Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, pp.106–07.

conductor, who shall enjoy the same rights as if he were the actual author thereof, and shall have such term of copyright therein as is given to the authors of books by this Act.[26]

As is evident from the above, when literary work was commissioned or published in a periodical format, it was the journal's editors and owners who enjoyed initial proprietary rights over it. Though the Act did state that the copyright could be retained by the author through an explicit contract, and that it would revert to the author after twenty-eight years, such caveats did little to alleviate the distress of journeyman writers, who lacked the power to negotiate contracts, were dependent on immediate payment for their daily needs, and whose writings, in being custom-made for quick and ephemeral reading, were unlikely to have republication value.[27]

Moreover, by assigning the copyright initially to periodical editors and owners but having it revert back to the writer after twenty-eight years, the Act is strikingly ambiguous about which of the two parties was to be considered the rightful owner of copyright. This contrasts starkly with the Act's clear validation and extension of the original copyright of book-authors. As Gallagher, Pettitt and others have shown, the idea that an author had proprietary rights over his production was historically based on an understanding of the writer as an inventor of a novel idea.[28] Since journalists worked in close collaboration, and often under direct instructions from periodical editors and owners, it was particularly difficult to identify the source of originality, and to treat the periodical writer as the sole creator of a literary work.

By stressing Barbara's lack of authorial agency, Meteyard absolves her of responsibility for the sordid writing that she undertakes under the directions of editors like Kilpec and Quick.

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[26] Appendix III — The Copyright Act 1842, in Seville, pp.258–76 (p.268), emphasis added.

[27] The 1842 Copyright Act had extended the life-time copyright term set by the1814 Copyright Act to seven years following the author's death, provided this was not less than forty two years in total.

[28] *Nobody's Story*, pp.156–57; *Patent Inventions*, p.7.

The novel suggests that it is precisely because even exceptionally talented writers like Barbara have no agency within the periodical press that managers like Kilpec and Quick can use them to debase the public taste further. The difference between the immensely beneficial writing that Barbara is capable of offering her readers and what she is forced to do while working as an employee of the lower press shows that it is not merely the writer but also the mass of readers who suffer when the author does not have adequate financial security and artistic freedom. Meteyard represents periodical editors and owners as approaching authorship merely as a business venture, and suggests that it is only if the author's interests are protected, only if the lower rungs of presswork are transformed into avenues of respectable authorial work, that even cheap publications can become socially beneficial.

The existing conditions of authorship are thus shown to be inimical to the ideals of self-help. Having set out to earn the 'bread of *independence*' through writing, Barbara finds professional writing to be utterly degrading (II, p.4). Slipping into free indirect speech, the narrator echoes Barbara's dismay at finding that lower journalism resembled not just mindless mechanical work but something far more demeaning — slave labour: 'What weary, slavish weeks were those two, passed in servitude to the literary firm of Quick and Kilpec. What degradation to the heart and brain' (III, p.175). Drawing on the abolitionist discourse of the 1830s and 40s which, as Pettitt has noted, argued 'for the limits of property—and that no man should own another', Meteyard protests against the intellectual and financial injustice meted out to struggling journalists. [29]

The figure of the unmarried woman writer helps Meteyard to illustrate markedly the slave-like status of journalists because, as a single woman, Barbara is already viewed as the

[29] *Patent Inventions*, p.37.

potential property of her future husband. When a starving Barbara entreats Kilpec and Quick to make the outstanding payment for a whole month's work, during which she claims to have written seventeen articles and laboured for 'eight hours a day', Quick and Kilpec propose that she marry the younger partner, Kilpec, as a substitute for the payment due to her (III, p.241). 'Adolphus Kilpec adores you', Kilpec proclaims pompously, 'when you are Mrs. Kilpec, you can stop at home, and do the romantic; whilst I, Adolphus, your husband, will travel to catch up whispers' (III, p.242). Kilpec's unwelcome amorous advances, imposed on Barbara when she is at her most vulnerable and made in an office whose only other inhabitant is Kilpec's male partner and supporter, is probably one of the earliest representations of sexual harassment at the workplace. Although this proposal is not elaborated upon, it foregrounds the sexual dangers specific to the aspiring female journalist and Barbara decides to leave the firm immediately.

Interestingly, within the novel, this starting sequence does not develop into an indictment of women's professional authorship. Barbara does not relinquish her authorial ambition after the above sequence. By showing that it was the shortage of professional authorial opportunities that exposed women to the sordid prospect of marrying for money, the scene reinforces the novel's call for reforming the lower ranks of journalism. It also suggests that a further expansion of respectable avenues of paid work for women would help safeguard them from having to work under unscrupulous men like Kilpec and Quick. Kilpec's invocation of the feminist ideal of marriage as an intellectual partnership, while violating Barbara's right over her intellectual labour and attempting to make her his property, is utterly laughable.[30] Like other feminists,

[30] This ideal is elaborated in Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Larry J. Reynolds (London: Norton, 1998), p.47. This work had already been published in the American magazine, *The Dial*, in 1843 and had included a celebratory reference to the Howitts' marriage as an 'intellectual companionship' where husband and wife worked together as comrades, fighting for various reforms 'with the same implement, the pen' (p.47). Although

Meteyard suggests that a truly companionate marriage, one based on love and respect, can only be sustained if women are enabled, by financial self-sufficiency, to marry for love alone.

In representing her heroine as a hack writer, Meteyard risked aligning her with the accursed figure of female depravity: the prostitute. As Gallagher has noted, since the mid-eighteenth century, 'when the identity of text and self' began to be emphasized and when 'texts (as distinct from books)' were commodified by copyright law, 'writers in the marketplace' were put 'in the position of selling themselves, like whores'.[31] The development of cheap periodicals and the expansion of a popular readership in the Victorian period emphasized the writer's embeddedness in the literary market and made the association between authorship and prostitution particularly close.[32] Given this context, Kilpec's indecent proposal paradoxically shields Barbara from this very unsavoury association by foregrounding her difference from the whore: even when she inhabits the seediest avenues of the literary market and merely produces whatever the market demands, she is perceived as a potential wife rather than a 'fallen' woman. After the 1842 Copyright Act, Gallager argues, the writer does not 'go to the market as a respectable producer with an alienable commodity, but with *himself or herself* as commodity'[33]; by contrast, the unremunerated journalist, whose copyright remained highly contested, evaded self-sale.

Meteyard may not have read Fuller's book, which was published in the same year as hers, before writing the above scene, she is very likely to have been familiar with Fuller's ideas about marriage and its tribute to her close friends, the Howitts.

[31] 'George Eliot and Daniel Deronda', p.43.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

The Victorian writer, Gallagher argues, does not 'go to the market as a respectable producer with an alienable commodity, but with *himself or herself* as commodity'.[34] By contrast, the unremunerated journalist, whose copyright remained highly contested even after the 1842 Copyright Act, evaded self-sale.

Revealingly, it is only when Barbara turns to book-writing that she is mistaken for a prostitute. 'Wholly ignorant' of the book market, Barbara imagines that in order to become a successful writer, she 'had only to enter a bookseller's shop — as Fielding did — and exhibit her manuscript' (III, p.55). She naively believes that book-writing, unlike lower journalism, is a merit-based profession, which even female writers struggling at the lower ends of the literary market could enter with as much apparent ease as someone like Fielding, a man of letters born into the landed gentry. Unlike Barbara's alienated and unremunerated journalism, her book is a labour of love with which she identifies closely and owns independently. In a remarkable depiction of book-writers' inability to distinguish themselves from their commodities, Barbara is shown as physically carrying her manuscript to potential publishers. The nightmarish sequence, in which she is 'laughed at' and 'thrust out' of various places, includes the only instance where, evidently suspected of being a whore, she is 'threatened with the police' (III, p.56).

This strikingly literal representation of the writer as whore anticipates the visual configuration of the female artist in a marketplace in Emily Mary Osborn's famous 1857 painting, *Nameless and Friendless* [Fig. 5]. As noted by Linda Nochlin, Osborn's painting shows an impoverished gentlewoman trying to sell her art in a dealer's shop and 'there is more than a hint, conveyed by the ogling [male] loungers […], who lift their eyes from a print of a scantily

[34] Move note 43 to here.

clad dancing girl to scrutinize the young woman artist, that merely being out in the world at all rather than safely at home opens a young, unprotected woman to suspicion' of sexual availability.[35] In Meteyard's novel, the woman writer who hopes to exhibit her manuscript, similarly becomes the object on display. The experience disabuses Barbara of her naive ideas about book-writing being an inherently more genteel avenue of authorship than journalism and shows the exploitation of writers as being widespread across literary avenues.

Having described the problems faced by the female journalist in great detail, Meteyard provides a rushed and unconvincing resolution in the last part of the novel. No longer under any illusions about the viability of writing for money alone, Barbara carefully considers two competing models of successful authorship, as represented by the popular writer Mr. Kickshaw and the writer of genius, Mr. Newfielding. Having, like 'the rest of the world', 'read, re-read---dwelt upon---lingered over---the writings of M. Newfielding', Barbara reflects upon the difference between 'this man […], who pretending to no greatness, had wrought out […] living, undying honour' and 'Kickshaw; who by feeding certain journalists, flattering the lordly Rumbelow [a publisher], and pandering to certain low tastes of the uneducated classes, was just enabled to flounder into the hazy twilight of dull mediocrity' (III, p.255–56). Mr. Kickshaw, the populist writer is shown as merely a more wealthy counterpart to the various impoverished hack writers that Barbara had hitherto encountered, and in being swathed in garish luxury, he elicits even less sympathy from the reader than the starving hack-writers. However, Barbara's adoption of the vocational impulse of Mr. Newfielding is sudden, and this part of the novel, in sharp

[35] Linda Nochlin, 'Women, Art, and Power' in *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation*, ed. by Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp.13–46 (p.26).

contrast to the earlier sections, does not explain how Barbara manages to sustain herself on such high-minded writing.

When poverty revisits her, making even ‘a crust once a day’ seem ‘luxurious’, she pawns ‘her books and clothes bit by bit’, and though ‘hope itself was dead’, she resists producing bad writing (III, p.256). She appeals to the great writer himself, hoping to learn in person from one who ‘had put his heart in his books, and plied a rare pen, in the cause of nature and humanity’ (III, pp.256–57). This ability to live off pawned goods is utterly unconvincing given the novel’s extensive representation of her struggles to earn her every meal by writing. Barbara’s fortunes change overnight. Mr. Newfielding personally helps her hone her writing. Shortly after, her parentage is revealed and she finds herself to be the legatee of another wealthy printer. The ending of the novel thus hurriedly deflects attention from the central problem about women’s professional authorship that it had constructed so painstakingly.

Yet, this ending reveals, in its very premise, one of the most enabling aspects of anonymous journalism. Barbara can move from being a low journalist to a respectable woman of letters because her previous identity as a hack writer is untraceable. Her lack of ownership over her anonymous writings, the fact that her identity was subsumed entirely by the periodicals she worked for, paradoxically enables her to start life anew as a high-minded book-writer. She comes out of her career as a hack, wiser for having suffered many hardships and indignities, but with an unmarked reputation.

The opportunity to conceal potentially unsavoury phases of their careers was particularly valuable for Victorian women writers, since contemporary discourses of female authorship drew heightened attention to their conduct and reputation. Early-nineteenth century records of male writers, as observed by Richard Salmon, underlined that an ‘author’s enduring value, or true

fame, transcends the immediate context of his/her reception, even to the point at which "fame" and [contemporary] "reputation" […] are deemed mutually exclusive states'.[36] Periodical notices about famous female writers, on the other hand, emphasized their status as relative newcomers to the field of professional authorship. In an anonymous *New Monthly* article entitled 'Authoresses and Autographs', for example, dead authoresses commemorated posthumously antecede living authoresses by a very brief window of time.[37]

In envisioning the rise of the woman writer as a recent occurrence, such accounts closely interlinked the posthumous and proleptic fame of the woman writer. While this placed immense scrutiny on women writers' contemporary reputation and public conduct, it also meant that in the course of their own lifetime, women could enter a canon of female literary greats. Barbara's successful 'struggles for fame', premised on the obfuscation of an earlier part of her career, underlines that anonymous journalism could indeed provide women with a pathway to everlasting authorial fame.

An alternative resolution to the novel's central problem, the debasement of female authorship in the lower press, is suggested through the cast of the many colourful and itinerant characters who value literature for its own sake and revere authors. These include Adam Leafdale, owner of 'the only bookseller's shop in Normanstow' and 'the trusty agent of […] John Childs of Bungay', the radical printer whose distribution of cheap, radical political pamphlets helped galvanise support for the 1832 Reform Bill (II, pp.9–10). Adam is shown to be a packman in the early part of the novel, and unlike Bob Jakin in the *Mill on the Floss* who does not

[36] *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, pp.6–7.

[37] 'Authoresses and Autographs No. 1', *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 11 (January 1824), 217–24 (p.217). All the women named in the article date back only to the late eighteenth-century. For example, it cites Ann Radcliffe, deceased only eleven months before.

understand the literary worth of the books he carries on his back, he is committed to 'spreading truth amidst hill and valley' by selling books (II, p.10). A group of antiquarian printers, headed by a namesake of William Caxton, are also shown to have immense regard for writers (III, pp.45-49).

Meteyard's representation of printers and booksellers from a range of classes as supporting writers is particularly striking because during the Copyright debates, printers, publishers and booksellers lobbied actively against giving the writer greater financial privileges.[38] The novel's depiction of the Caxtonian Club of gentleman antiquarian printers contrasts sharply with representations of the printer by petitioners for the 1839 Copyright Bill like Thomas Carlyle, who spoke of the printer as a tyrannical trader who curtailed the creative freedom of the writer, such that even a 'royal Johnson' was kept 'harnessed to the yoke of Printer [*sic*] Cave'.[39] Writing immediately after the passage of the 1842 Act, Meteyard seems to be concerned that the rifts between authors and members of the book trade, which had emerged in the course of the Copyright debates, might drastically reduce the publication avenues open to fledgling women writers. By presenting a vision of gainful co-operation between booksellers, printers and writers, the novel suggests that it is in the interest of all the functionaries of the literary marketplace to ensure that authorship remained a financially viable, socially-beneficial, and creatively satisfying enterprise.

Unlike Victorian representations of unthinking consumption and usage of books explored by Leah Price, Meteyard's novel does not show reading and literary appreciation to be mutually

[38] Although there were considerable conflicts of interest between printers and publishers, they campaigned jointly against the proposal for the extension of author's copyright in the early 1840s. See, Seville, pp.4, 116–17.

[39] 'The Hero as Man of Letters', p.198.

exclusive of 'doing other things with books'.[40] Barbara's own love of books is developed not only by reading and writing, but by stitching and repairing battered and torn volumes for booksellers like Adam (II, p.2). Characters who respond at a purely visceral level to literature are also shown to be capable of valuing good literature. The dwarf Jock who cannot understand a single word of Barbara's poetry, is utterly enthralled by its rhythmic cadences and refers to it as 'the *sun's music*' (II, p.19). At a later point, it is Jock who, unbeknown to Barbara, allows himself to get exhibited to a jeering crowd in order to earn the money needed to enable her to keep writing (III, pp.86–87). The anxieties about the exposure of the woman writer in the public sphere are displaced onto the figure of the dwarf. Though the novel does not fully develop this vision of women's authorship as being supported by a broad range of people from across classes, its beneficial effects are suggested. The idea of producing cheap and widely accessible art work, especially through communal support, would form one of the chief principles of the arts and crafts movement, of which Meteyard would go on to become an ardent supporter.[41]

The very lack of a convincing resolution to the problem of women's professional authorship makes the novel's critique of the gender and class biases within the mid-century literary marketplace particularly effective. By indicating the inadequate provisions of the 1842 Copyright Act in safeguarding the income and property rights of female journalists, *Struggles for Fame* foregrounds the need to recognise and encourage the professional ambitions of female writers. In the decades that followed, women writers would similarly comment on the difficulties of claiming copyright within journalism, in order to assert their desire for greater financial rewards and public recognition. In the wake of debates about international copyright of the

[40] Leah Price, *How to Do Things With Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[41] For nineteenth-century attempts to professionalize women's craftwork, see Hadjiafxendi and Zakreski, 'Introduction: Artistry and Industry', pp.1–22.

1870s, Caroline Norton, who, after separating from her abusive husband, had successfully campaigned for the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act that gave separated women writers ownership over their authorial income, wrote to *The Times* alleging a breach of copyright.[42]

Norton alleged that Ellen Wood had stolen the plot of her spectacularly successful *East Lynne* from her own short story, published in a literary annual that had since closed. She claimed that she had 'always intended to […] expand the story, to put an under--plots [*sic*] and to republish it as a three-volume novel' but had been unable to do this, partly because of 'the difficulty of procuring the book which contained the original, which was out of print'.[43] Though Norton's claims were emphatically denied by Wood in a subsequent letter to the *Times*, her complaint shows that the 1842 Act was being spoken of as having failed to sufficiently guard the republication rights of the periodical writer.[44]

On the one hand, as Linda Hughes and Michael Lund have noted, the gradual development of characters in serial fiction could create a particularly strong bond between the reader and the writer, as witnessed in the 'personal appeals' made by readers of serial fiction 'to authors that they provide happy resolutions to plots or the return of favorite characters from disaster or even death'.[45] On the other hand, as evident from Norton's complaint, the brevity and ephemerality of a periodical publication meant that such work, and their authors, could quickly

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[42] For Norton's influence on the Matrimonial Causes Act, see Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, pp.62–84; Caroline Norton, 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, 25 October 1871, p.6.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ellen Wood, 'Letter to the Editor of *The Times*', 28 October 1871. Norton's story has not been identified and the claim remains unproved. Elaine Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace 1800-1885* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p.135.

[45] Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, *The Victorian Serial* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), p.11.

fade from public memory. By representing the female journalist's struggles for lasting fame in a positive light, Meteyard paves the way for greater public articulation of women's professional ambitions.

Discreet and Powerful Presswomen: Anonymous Female Editors and Leader-Writers in Novels of the 1860s

Nearly a decade passed by before the presswoman made her next prominent appearance in fiction. In 1854, the American journalist Sara Payson Willis published an autobiographical novel, *Ruth Hall*, under the pseudonym Fanny Fern.[46] The novel provided English readers with an account of Willis's experiences in American journalism. Its heroine, Ruth, rises from abject poverty (brought on by widowhood) through presswork. An unhelpful family, that includes an editor brother who does not aid her, only adds to her problems, until she finds a supportive editor and starts to thrive in newspaper and periodical work, eventually publishing a selected volume of journal articles. Willis herself had brought out, in the previous year, an enormously successful volume of some of her newspaper articles under the title, *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio*.[47] The similarities between Fanny Fern (Willis's journalistic penname), Ruth Hall, and the writer Sara Willis were evident to her contemporary readers, and this added realistic appeal to the spectacular journalistic trajectory of the fictional Ruth. Though some English reviewers rebuked Fern for writing a 'revengeful' account that brought scandal to the easily identifiable real-life models of the novel's characters, particularly its villains, this did not keep her from making a

[46] Fanny Fern (pseud.) [Sara Willis], *Ruth Hall: A Domestic Tale of the Present Time* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1855).

[47] Fanny Fern (pseud.) [Sara Willis], *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio* (London: Ingram, Cooke, and Co., 1853).

strikingly successful cross-over into English journalism.[48] Fanny Fern had captured the imagination of English readers, and a number of journals, such as *London Magazine*, *Reynolds's Miscellany* and *Bow Bells* capitalized on this popularity, presenting her as one of their own contributors. Anything that Fanny wrote, whether it was a snippet on marriage or a bite-sized article on beauty, was worth publishing.[49] In fact, Fanny Fern acquired a life of her own, and outlived Willis herself. Although Willis had died in 1872, Fanny Fern's articles continued to be published till as late as 1888.[50]

In the wake of the public interest in presswomen generated by Fanny Fern, one finds references to women's participation in the periodical press across a range of genres. In Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 1857 partly-autobiographical verse novel, *Aurora Leigh*, Aurora realizes that 'in England, no one lives by verse that lives', and turns to journalism for her bread and butter. By writing anonymous articles for 'cyclopaedias, magazines, / And weekly papers', and learning the 'use/ Of the editorial "we" in a review', she keeps her poetry free from the pulls of the market.[51] In Elizabeth Gaskell's 1857 biography of the novelist Charlotte Brontë, the young Brontë children's playtime production of '"Little Magazines"', after the style of *Blackwood's*, is presented as indicating their precocious literary talents.[52] That even children play-acted at being journalists and editors suggests journalism's widespread reputation as a nursery of professional authorship. As noted earlier, in 1858, Meteyard's 'A Woman's Pen' presented the female journalist as a social reformer.

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[48] 'Ruth Hall—The Position of the Literary Man', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 22 (April 1855), 218–22(p.219).

[49] Fanny Fern (pseud.), 'Marriage', *London Journal*, 25 (30 May 1857), 207; Fanny Fern (pseud.), 'Mamma, Am I Pretty?', *London Journal*, 26 (10 October 1857), 87.

[50] Fanny Fern (pseud.), 'Dark Bedrooms', *Bow Bells*, 60 (22 February 1889), 126.

[51] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857), p.100.

[52] Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857), I, pp.86–87.

The mid-century era also witnessed some remarkable breakthroughs in women's journalism. In 1848, Eliza Lynn Linton joined the staff of the *Morning Chronicle* to become the first salaried female journalist in England. She would go on, in the 1860s and 70s, to write the spectacularly successful 'Girl of the Period' series for the very *Saturday Review* that proclaimed women's inability to 'write as men'.[53] Linton's entry into high-repute, male-dominated journals was prefigured by Marian Evans, who, as noted earlier, joined the *Westminster Review* as co-editor in 1851. As Dillane has shown, Evans not only carried out day-to-day editorial functions such as proof-reading and supervising the letter-press but also played an instrumental role in 'the reorganization of the layout of the *Westminster*, in the selection and arrangement of articles and in the coordination of an original reimagining of the book review section'.[54] Though Evans would quit her unremunerated position as co-editor in 1854, she continued to publish in the journal, anonymously, until her bitter fallout with Chapman in the late 1850s. As argued in the first chapter, the *EWJ*, launched in 1858, presented an exceptionally powerful public image of the female presswomen. Conversely, the journal's growing financial problems and eventual closure raised critical doubts about the viability of this model of women's journalism. Two novels of the 1860s, Charlotte Yonge's *Clever Woman of the Family* (1865) and Eliza Lynn Linton's *Sowing the Wind* (1867), provided extended reflections on the powers and responsibilities of the female journalist-cum-editor, and suggested innovative ways in which women could strengthen their hold on the powers of the press.

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[53] 'Authoresses', *Saturday Review*, p.483.

[54] *Before George Eliot*, p.26. Dillane notes that apart from a few 'brief end-of-review' notes in the contemporary literature section, Evans did not write regularly for the journal while editing it (p.25).

Enabling Presswork: The Invalid Woman as Female Journalist and Editor in *The Clever Woman of the Family*

Charlotte Yonge presided over the Tractarian *Monthly Packet*, aimed at a young female readership, for its first forty years.[55] Despite adhering to tradition and opposing 'all causes associated with liberalism', the Tractarians, as June Sturrock has shown, 'took the question of women's work very seriously, largely because of their belief in the spiritual importance of good works'.[56] Yonge was mentored by the Tractarian John Keble and shared this belief. In her fiction, she presented a remarkable range of jobs as acceptable for women, including 'those of hospital nurse, nursery nurse, telegraph clerk, dressmaker, teacher, as well as work involving music, literature and the visual arts'.[57] Despite noting that *The Clever Woman of the Family* was Yonge's 'pointed contribution to the contemporary debate on middle-class women and work, most critics have failed to notice its strikingly topical response to recent developments in women's journalism, especially the emergence of explicitly feminist models of journalism and editorship.[58]

The character of Rachel Curtis, the 'clever woman' of the novel's title, is unmistakably based on the Langhamites.[59] In order to enable women to find employment outside of the

[55] June Sturrock, 'Establishing Identity: Editorial Correspondence from the Early Years of *The Monthly Packet*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 39(Fall, 2006), 266–79.

[56] June Sturrock, 'Something to Do: Charlotte Yonge, Tractarianism and the Question of Women's Work', *Victorian Review*, 18 (Winter 1992), 28–48 (p.28).

[57] Ibid., p.36.

[58] Ibid., p.37; Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, pp.123–24.

[59] These similarities between Rachel and the Langham Place Women have been mentioned by other critics, but not analysed. Clare A. Simmons, Introduction, in *The Clever Woman of the Family*, ed. by Clare A. Simmons (Ormskirk: Broadview Press, 2011), pp.7–26 (pp.16–17); Sturrock, 'Something to Do', 46 n 2.

overstocked local lace-making industry, Rachel sets up a charitable asylum to teach young girls 'handicrafts that might secure their livelihood, in especial, perhaps, wood engraving and printing'.[60] Like the unfortunate initials of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (S.P.E.W.) started by the Langham Place Women, Rachel's enterprise, the 'Female Union for Lacemakers' Employment' has an embarrassing acronym. As Colonel Keith points out, F.U.L.E. constitutes the Scottish spelling for 'fool' (I, p.249). The F.U.L.E. is promptly rechristened F.U.E.E., the 'Female Union for Englishwoman's Employment', a name which only strengthens its correspondence to the various enterprises undertaken by the mid-century feminists to increase employment opportunities for Englishwomen (I, p.249). Just as the Langham Place Women had founded their own journal to publish articles that would not be carried by mainstream periodicals, Rachel plans to establish her own magazine so that 'no dull editor' may 'hamper, reject or curtail' her essays on such topics as 'Helplessness, […] Female Folly, and Female Rights' (I, p.241). Like the *EWJ*, Rachel's proposed 'Journal of Female Industry' is a shilling monthly composed largely of voluntary contributions. Though the initial plan is that the journal would be illustrated by the female traineees of the F.U.E.E., Rachel aims to eventually set up a female-run printing press to produce the journal, and hopes that the sales of the journal would make the F.U.E.E. entirely self-sufficient (I, p.251). These unmistakable references to the *EWJ* and the Victoria Press suggest that, like the feminist journalists of Langham Place, Rachel hopes to make her reform journalism intellectually, technically and financially autonomous.

[60] Charlotte Yonge, *The Clever Woman of the Family*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1865), I, p.241. All references are to this edition, and will henceforth be cited parenthetically.

The painstakingly developed similarities end here. The actual results of Rachel's work could not be more different from those of the Langham Place Women. Emily Faithfull, after all, had successfully overcome opposition to training female compositors and made the Victoria Press a prime example of women's ability to enter lines of paid work hitherto reserved for men. Through her articles, she created a respectable image for the Press, underlining that her female trainees and employees worked under her constant, motherly supervision, in a safe, sanitary environment, and were paid well.[61] The Queen herself recognised Faithfull's efforts, and appointed her as 'Printer and Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty' in 1861. Rachel, on the other hand, unwittingly appoints a fraudulent man named Mauleverer as overseer of the project, trusts him blindly, allows him to set up the asylum in another town and rarely inspects the premises. Mauleverer siphons the money meant to train the girls, starves and tortures them, and produces the 'Journal of Female Industry' by plagiarising illustrations from an overseas journal. Rachel finds herself in court under charges of abetting financial fraud, and the abuse and death of a young female apprentice. The 'Journal of Female Industry', meant to promote alternative employment opportunities for women, thus paradoxically makes the strongest case against such feminist schemes. It compounds Rachel's failure as a feminist journalist, exposing her shortcomings as a reform writer, editor and manager. Why does Yonge specifically pick the very projects of mid-century feminism that were successful, the launch of a dedicated women's reform journal and the establishment of a feminist press, to fictionally represent the downfall of this model of journalism?

Writing in the wake of the closure of the *EWJ*, and the 1864 Codrington Divorce case involving Emily Faithfull, which adversely affected the public image of the Langham Place

[61] Frawley, 'The Editor as Advocate', pp.89–92.

Women, Yonge raises critical doubts about the viability of the feminist model of women's journalism. By showing Rachel's journal as having deadly results, Yonge suggests that periodicals like the *EWJ*, which were produced entirely by female social reformers, might, in not having external checks, turn out to be literally fatal to the people they most seek to help. More importantly, Yonge suggests that the Langham Place Women have failed as models and mentors to aspiring female reform journalists like Rachel. A young and sharp-witted Rachel, already chafing against the 'circumscribed interests and habits' of her provincial society, learns of the 'great progressive world' through periodical literature (I, p.9). The 'examples of successful workers' provided therein stimulate 'her longings to be up and doing' (I, pp.9–10).

Such inspiring journalism gives women like Rachel welcome relief from the stifling monotony of their provincial lives, but it provides no guidelines on how they themselves may undertake similar work. Rachel simply knows nothing about how to go about the day-to-day business of writing and editing journals: how to write a reform article that appeals to a readership that may not be conversant with such issues; how to acquire skilled contributors; how to carefully develop networks of supporters and keep a close watch over the management of the whole. The fact that Rachel fails in the very lines of periodical work that the Langham Place Women had entered into with considerable success suggests that the London-based feminist journalists are too distant from women like Rachel to serve as models.

What Yonge's novel underlines most powerfully is the need for an alternative model of women's journalism that can help women like Rachel to conduct reform work responsibly. This alternative model is provided by Ermine Williams, the 'real' clever woman of the novel. Ermine is an invalid who writes anonymous articles in the periodical press to help her sister run the household. Ermine tries, throughout the novel, to act as Rachel's mentor, to provide critical

guidance on how to succeed as a journalist and a social reformer. She points out that Rachel's article on 'Curatolatry' is too long, and too heavy for the *Traveller's Review* and tries to dissuade her from using words like 'Curatolatry' — awkward 'hybrids between Latin and Greek' — that would betray her ignorance of classical learning (I, p.85). Ermine also voices her disagreement with some theoretical points of Rachel's article, but Rachel refuses to engage with her insights, and assumes that Ermine's criticism derives solely from her preference for gradual social betterment, 'the experiment of the hierarchy modified', as against her own choice of radical reform (I, p.87). Yonge implies that in adopting radical feminism as her model, Rachel can speak only to the converted.

Rachel's refusal to shape her writing to suit a general audience not only makes her incapable of publishing in widely-read mainstream journals like the *Traveller's Review*, but also makes her uncritical of her own ideas and writing style, which bodes badly for the quality of her independently produced journal. Midway through the novel, Ermine reveals to Rachel her journalistic identity as 'The Invalid' (II, p.28). Even after knowing that Ermine was the very writer whose work had inspired her all along, Rachel neither reflects on her earlier advice, nor heeds to her subsequent suggestions. Rachel's tendency to be utterly dismissive of well-meaning criticism leads to disaster: by ignoring various people's misgivings about Mauleverer, she becomes complicit, unwittingly, in the death of the very girls she meant to help.

At no point does the novel suggest that women are inherently unsuited to becoming successful political journalists or social reformers. One of its heroes, Colonel Keith, admits to Rachel that 'many things can often be felt and expressed by an able woman better than by a man, and there is no reason that the utterance of anything worthy to be said should be denied', thus underlining the distinctive social value of women's writing (I, p.173). Ermine even suggests to

Rachel that she would do well to write about the problems of lace-makers since she knows that subject so well (I, p.154). Rachel's writing is rejected not for its powerful social message, but because it is factually and lexically incorrect. Her failure as a journalist derives from her failure to acquire the skills required to capture and convince a periodical readership.

In one of the most striking comparisons between Rachel and Ermine, Colonel Colin Keith calls Rachel 'a grotesque caricature' of what Ermine used to be, before she was educated into the ways of proper womanly behaviour by her family (I, p.164). Distinguishing between the public and private aspects of women's authorship, Colin notes that 'the difference is great between being known to write, and setting up for an authoress' (I, p.173). This distinction 'between fact and pretension', between writing discretely and drawing public attention to it, ostensibly seems to suggest the novel's disapproval of public authorship by women (I, p.173). However, when viewed in relation to the novel's laudatory description of Ermine's journalism, Colonel Keith's statement seems more like a report on contemporary prejudices about authoresses, and a suggestion of how women may dodge them, than a validation of those views.

As Zakreski, one of the few critics to notice this subversive tendency in Yonge's novel, notes, Ermine's 'cleverness' is indicated not by her disavowal of public writing but by 'her successful manipulation of the metaphor of mothering'.[62] However, even Zakreski reproduces a binary between Rachel's ill-advised 'masculine style' of writing, and Ermine's cleverly-chosen motherly, domestic style.[63] This reading overstates the novel's promotion of a feminine style, and entirely misses the radical similarities between Rachel and Ermine. Ermine not only attempts to help Rachel in her journalistic endeavours, but also herself practises a style of journalism that

[62] *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.124

[63] Ibid.

is neither conventionally feminine nor domestic. As an invalid, she writes from home, not out of choice but necessity. Ermine, who empathises with Rachel's 'longing to be up and doing' and her 'puzzled chafing against constraint and conventionality' overcomes her financial and social subordination by becoming the driving force behind the *Traveller's Review* (I, p.164). When the editor, a friend of her brothers, meets her in London, he offers her the chance to 'write letters on things in general' believing that her very 'circumscribed view of the world' would make it distinctive (I, p.106). But it is Ermine who turns 'what began between sport and need to say out one's mind' into a distinguished career (I, p.107).

Far from keeping to feminine topics and genres like fashion, domesticity or fiction, she writes articles on 'Country Walks', and the progressive Edgeworth system of education for the *Traveller's Review* (I, pp.97, 57). Those who regularly follow the column she writes under the pseudonym 'The Invalid', find it difficult to judge 'whether they are man's or woman's writing' (I, p.97). Though Rachel guesses, rightly, that they are a woman's, her guess is based on a singular assumption that men could not write with as much earnestness. The more conventional view, that 'only a lady could have written anything so sweet as that about flowers in a sick-room' is offered by Rachel's cousin, Fanny Temple, but this view seems inadequate given that The Invalid's letters are followed most ardently by none other than the fiery Rachel, who even tries to imitate their style while writing her own radical articles (I, p.97). Ermine's professional achievements show that women may indeed break into masculine lines of journalism, provided they carefully simulate the features of such writing. As a regular contributor, Ermine moulds her authorial voice to suit the style and tone of the *Traveller's Review*. She also works as the magazine's reviewer, a role that in a general magazine like the *Traveller's Review*, was likely to have been gendered as male (I, p.107).

Ermine's tactful performance of masculine journalistic roles is most emphatically represented in her role as the *acting*-editor of the magazine. Ermine's editorial work, such as accepting contributions, and supervising the content and the shape of each issue as a whole, is conducted behind the scenes.[64] In not foregrounding or describing this work, Yonge makes Ermine's transition to editorship seem utterly smooth. The only time we see Ermine at work as editor is when, following an unexpected delay in the return of the main editor, and unable to postpone corresponding with contributors any longer, she asks her confidant and future husband, Colonel Keith, to copy her letters, lest her womanly handwriting give away her act (I, p.162).

To be a female editor of a mainstream journal like the *Traveller's Review*, Yonge suggests, is to act as a man. This involves becoming at times, a tactician, as described by Michel de Certeau, 'on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing"', turning to close friends to keep up the professional ruse.[65] Yonge herself often capitalized on such chance opportunities while editing the *Monthly Packet*. She regularly sought feedback from her family on submissions, and on one occasion, when she received a submission on Gloucester at the same time that she had cousins visiting from Gloucester (who were well-versed in its local history), she eagerly sought their expert opinion on the article.[66]

Moreover, from 1859 to 1864, the *Monthly Packet* itself carried articles on the sad plight of needlewomen and female factory workers, representing, as Catherine Sanbach-Dahlström has observed, 'a shift in interest in the magazine from the private sphere of family life and from

[64]Though Ermine's work seems strikingly similar to George Eliot's work for the *Westminster*, it is unlikely that Yonge knew of Eliot's anonymous editorship.

[65] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.xix.

[66] Sturrock, 'Establishing Identity', p.273.

matters of personal religion towards a sense of social responsibility that we also find in *The Clever Woman of the Family*'.[67] Although Rachel eventually marries Alick Keith and settles down to wifely duties, she never regrets her attempt at social reform. Rather, on reflecting upon her work for the F.U.E.E., she only wishes that she had collaborated with others, and had prayed for its success (II, pp.178-79). Alick, who undertakes reform work of his own, also relies on the help of friends and family, and combines work with prayer. As Sturrock has noted, for Yonge, an awareness of human inability to act independently was important, for both men and women.[68] The self-sufficiency of the mid-century feminists, who wrote, edited and printed their journal made it unacceptable to Yonge as a model for women's public work. However, what she upholds as an alternative, especially for single women, is not domesticated or feminine writing, but serious professional work, especially journalism. She shows through Ermine, that attending to one's roles within the family and community can only strengthen the vocational impulse of the female journalist and her chances of professional success.

I shall now turn to an even more surprising contribution to positive representations of women's presswork by examining *Sowing the Wind*, an 1867 novel written by none other than the infamous 'woman against women', Eliza Lynn Linton.[69]

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[67] Catherine Sandbach-Dahlstrom, 'Be Good Sweet Maid: Charlotte Yonge's Domestic Fiction: A Study in Dogmatic Purpose and Fictional Form' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stockholm University, 1984), pp.137–38.

[68] 'Something to Do', pp.39–40.

[69] Nancy Fix Anderson, *The Woman Against Women in Victorian England: A Life of Eliza Lynn Linton* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

The Pleasure of Powerful Presswork: The Female Editress and Leader Writer in *Sowing the Wind*

Scholars of Victorian debates on the 'Woman Question' have long pointed out that 'those who defended "woman's place" and those who sympathized with women's rights were often far more closely linked' than is suspected.[70] Despite this, some Victorian women who stressed the importance of women's domestic duties continue to be seen as unilaterally opposed to women's rights. Nowhere is this tendency more prevalent than in the scholarship on Eliza Lynn Linton. Even Andrea Broomfield who has argued that Linton, one of the few women to become a regular contributor to the male-dominated *Saturday Review*, was 'much more than an anti-feminist', leaves intact the assumption that she was, in fact, singularly opposed to the demands of the mid-century women's movement.[71] The dominant critical image of Linton has been that of a turn-coat, of a woman who, following the financial losses and unfavourable reviews drawn by an earlier novel on women's oppression, sold out to the market demand for conservative articles attacking women's deviations from the domestic norm. This image is constructed in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. For example, a recent critical edition of *Sowing the Wind* strengthens this view of Linton by quoting her as having said that '"it paid better to attack women than to defend them"', without noting that George Somes Layard, Linton's first biographer, cites this sentence as an example of the slanderous and false rumours that did the rounds after Linton's death.[72]

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[70] Helsinger, Sheets and Veeder, *The Woman Question*, I, pp.xiii–xiv.

[71] Andrea L. Broomfield, 'Much More Than an Antifeminist: Eliza Lynn Linton's Contribution to the Rise of Victorian Popular Journalism', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 29 (2001), 267–83.

[72] Deborah T. Meem, Kate Holterhoff, Introduction, Eliza Lynn Linton, *Sowing the Wind*, ed. by Deborah T. Meem and Kate Holterhoff (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2015), pp.5–24 (p.8); George Somes Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton:*

In fact, in 1854, Linton wrote a stunningly appreciative article on Mary Wollstonecraft in her husband's radical monthly, the *English Republic*.[73] As Barbara Caine has noted, at the time 'Wollstonecraft's very name served to symbolise the connection between personal and sexual revolt on the one hand and feminist conviction on the other'.[74] Calling *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 'one of the boldest and bravest things ever published', Linton presents its author as the intellectual equal of the most notable male intellectuals of her day.[75] Of Wollstonecraft's relationship with Imlay, that made her unmentionable for most Victorians, she speaks with remarkable sympathy, regretting that 'this greatest social experiment [of unmarried cohabitation …] turned out ill, and the sorrow and shame fell on her alone'.[76]

George Eliot, by contrast, who wrote the only other known mid-century article on Wollstonecraft, carefully avoided referring to this aspect of Wollstonecraft's life.[77] Forty years later, Linton, by then famous for her conservative articles in the *Saturday Review*, would refrain

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Her Life, Letters and Opinions (London: Methuen and Co., 1901), p.141. Meem and Holterhoff see Linton's radical depiction of the female journalist as a nostalgic recollection of an earlier phase of her career, before she gave in to the market demand for anti-feminist prose.

[73] [Eliza Lynn Linton], 'Mary Wollstonecraft', *English Republic*, 3 (1854), 418–24 (p.422). This article is signed 'E.L' and has been identified as Linton's. See, *Prose by Victorian Women: An Anthology*, ed. by Andrea Broomfield and Sally Mitchell (London: Garland, 1996), p.352. W.J. Linton, Eliza's husband, was an avid supporter of Giuseppe Mazinni's republican ideals, for which the *English Republic* (1851-55) served as a mouthpiece. Following the couple's separation in 1867, he emigrated to the United States. John Murdoch, 'William James Linton (1812–1897)', *ODNB*, online edition < http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16745> [accessed 15 March 2016].

[74] Barbara Caine, 'Victorian Feminism and the Ghost of Mary Wollstonecraft', *Women's Writing*, 4 (1997), 261–75 (p.262). Caine provides an illuminating study of why most Victorian feminists found it so difficult to publically claim allegiance to Wollstonecraft, even as they privately admired her. However, Caine also fails to mention Linton's piece on Wollstonecraft, and treats George Eliot's 1855 article on Wollstonecraft as 'the one published essay' on the controversial writer (p.267).

[75] 'Mary Wollstonecraft', p.422.

[76] Ibid., p.423.

[77] [George Eliot], 'Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft', *Leader*, 6 (13 October 1855), 988–89 (p.988).

from castigating Eliot's own scandalous affair with Lewes, stating that 'her [Eliot's] devoted attitude during George Lewes's lifetime stood in lieu of the marriage ceremony; and her genius set the seal to the association'.[78] Given that even the self-proclaimed champions of women's rights, the authors of the *EWJ*, distinguished themselves from 'the wildnesses of the Wolstonecroft [*sic*] school, and all its ultra-theories', Linton's 1854 article was at the very cutting-edge of mid-century Victorian feminism.[79]

Yet, in that very year, Linton wrote 'The Rights and Wrongs of Woman' for *Household Words*, to challenge the American Thomas Wentworth Higginson's arguments that women should be allowed to enter public work hitherto reserved for men.[80] Linton alleged that a woman who was given public work such as 'teaching, preaching, voting, judging, commanding a man-of-war, and charging at the head of a battalion' would become 'an amorphous monster, not worth the little finger of the wife we would all secure if we could'.[81] Nancy Anderson has argued that this evident dichotomy in Linton's position need not be viewed as 'mere hypocrisy and professional expediency' but as a sign of Linton's deeply 'conflicting feelings about the role of women rooted in her ambivalence about her own emancipated nonconforming lifestyle'.[82] For Anderson, Linton's journalism for *Household Words*, 'with its editorial expectations, provided the occasion

[78] Eliza Lynn Linton, *My Literary Life* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1899), pp.102–103.

[79] E.J.B. [Emilie Jessie Boucherett], 'Maria Edgeworth', *EWJ*, 2 (September 1858), 10–35 (p.11). This is the only known reference to Wollstonecraft in the *EWJ*.

[80] [Eliza Lynn Linton], 'Rights and Wrongs of Women', *Household Words*, 9 (1 April 1854), 158–61.

[81] Ibid., p.158.

[82] Nancy Fix Anderson, 'Eliza Lynn Linton, Dickens, and the Woman Question', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22 (Winter 1989), 134–41 (p.138).

for her anti-feminist feelings to surface, even as the radical *English Republic* fostered her rebellious sentiments'.[83]

However, this approach does not explain why Linton introduced radical elements in some of her most inflammatorily conservative essays. For example, in this very *Household Words* article, she speaks in favour of women becoming nurses, which, though presented as more suitable for them than becoming physicians, is still a radical proposition in 1854, as it was not till the 1860s that, following a transformation in the public profile of female nurses in the wake of Florence Nightingale's exemplary voluntary work at Scutari, nursing became a line of paid work for women.[84] Strikingly anticipating Cobbe's famous 1868 article demanding the property rights of married women, 'Criminals, Idiots, Women and Minors', Linton argues that 'the laws which deny the individuality of a wife […] which class women with infants and idiots […] are the real and substantial Wrongs of Women'.[85] Charles Dickens often turned to Linton for articles on the 'woman question' for *Household Words*, and she evidently made skilful use of the space granted to her; seemingly appeasing the *Household Words*' conservative slant on women's public work and suffrage, yet fully utilising Dickens's own support for reforming marital law to push for radical changes in the property rights of married women.

In fact, Linton's characteristically exaggerated rhetoric against the women's rights activists appears to be a clever strategy to gain some ground for demanding women's rights on conservative platforms. In her most infamously anti-feminist *Saturday Review* contribution,

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Arlene Young, 'The Rise of the Victorian Working Lady: The New-Style Nurse and the Typewriter, 1840-1900', *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. by Dino Franco Felluga <http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=arlene-young-the-rise-of-the-victorian working-lady-the-new-style-nurse-and-the-typewriter-1840-1900> [accessed 11 June 2015].

[85] Linton, 'Rights and Wrongs', p.159.

written as a part of the sensational 'Girl of the Period' series, entitled 'Shrieking Sisterhood', Linton railed against 'Advanced Women' for making a 'hysterical parade […] about their wants and their intentions'.[86] Yet, some of her arguments are, in fact, indistinguishable from those of many mid-century feminists. Like the writers of the *EWJ*, Linton also celebrates women who 'stormed the barricades' of male-dominated professions like medicine, and pays homage to Mary Somerville, Harriet Martineau, and Rosa Bonheur for showing by example, that science, political economy, and animal painting were not 'unwomanly' pursuits.[87] What Linton recommends women to do, albeit without petitioning and shouting, is to let their work speak for them, demanding no special privileges or concessions, but also not keeping themselves back from any profession for which they thought themselves ready. Linton's hysterical, 'shrieking sisterhood' is evidently an exaggerated version of the mid-century feminists, raised only as a straw man so to speak, to be beaten in order to subtly push for women's professional work within the overtly conservative *Saturday Review*.

The main targets of the 'Girl of the Period' essays are not feminists at all, but women who shirked domestic duties. Criticism of such 'idle' women formed a regular feature of mid-century arguments in favour of making women more industrious, both within and outside the home. Linton even speaks encouragingly of women's potential success in establishing a commercially successful women's journal. If women could find the physical and mental energy 'to establish a newspaper, and work it amongst themselves, not a single law could be brought to

[86] [Eliza Lynn Linton], 'The Shrieking Sisterhood', *Saturday Review*, 29 (12 March 1870), 341–42 (p.341).

[87] Ibid., p.342.

bear against them; and if they made it as philosophical as some, or as gushing as others, they might enter into a formidable rivalry with the old-established [newspapers]'.[88]

Linton's demand that women's fitness for professions be judged on their work alone might seem to ignore the point, made by some Victorian women, that women couldn't compete with men unless they were provided with better education and training.[89] However, some of the most vocal supporters of women's paid work made the same arguments as Linton. For example, W.T. Stead, a well-known advocate of women's suffrage and right to paid work, whose *Review of Reviews* was 'particularly distinctive for the large proportion of women […] employed at rates of pay equal to the male colleagues', emphasised that women must prove their fitness for journalism by successfully undertaking the exact same assignments as men.[90]

By the 1870s, Linton's sensational pieces against women's rights advocates were finding space even in journals with a liberal orientation, like *Macmillan's*. In such articles, Linton entertained her readers with her rants against contemporary women's 'mad rebellion against the natural duties of their sex', and simultaneously pushed for women's rights to undertake paid, public work, to vote, and own property in marriage.[91] In 1867, Linton, who, as I noted earlier, held the distinction of being the first English woman to be employed on the staff of a newspaper,

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[88] Ibid., p.341.

[89] For examples of such arguments about women's education, see 'Female Education in the Middle Classes', *EWJ*, 1 (June 1858), 217–27; 'University Local Examinations', *EWJ*, 10 (November 1862), 191–204.

[90] Gowan Dawson, 'The Review of Reviews and the New Journalism in late-Victorian Britain', in Geoffrey Cantor et al., *Science in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical: Reading the Magazine of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.172–95 (p.175); W.T. Stead, 'Young Women in Journalism', *Review of Reviews*, 4 (October 1892), p.373.

[91] E. Lynn Linton, 'The Modern Revolt', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 23 (December 1870), 142–49 (pp.142, 146–48).

made history again. Her novel *Sowing the Wind* gave Victorian fiction its first staffed female newswoman: Jane Osborn.[92]

Even a brief consideration of prevailing mid-century images of newspaper journalists helps us to understand the enormity of the challenge faced by Linton in launching the figure of the fictional newswoman. With the repeal of the stamp duties in 1855, newspapers became affordable for many in the working classes; as noted in the introduction, this enabled journalists to claim the status of 'teachers of the nation'.[93] Capitalizing on teaching's long-standing status as work suitable for women, Martineau presented herself in the respectable role of 'a governess to the nation'.[94]

However, Martineau claimed this status for her writing in general, rather than her newspaper journalism and notwithstanding her exceptional success as a leader-writer for London's *Daily News*, newspaper work continued to be characterized in resolutely masculine terms. From taking on the government itself in editorials if it failed to stay true to the interests of the public, to reporting directly from Parliament, law-courts, jails, stock-exchange, foreign lands and working odd hours in an office, newspaper work was perceived as being premised on access to public spaces, institutions and skills that were not available to women. As one writer put it, the newspaper writer was a man one would expect to meet 'in the Park, at the club, and at Cambridge House', and who usually held a successful parallel career in public service.[95]

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[92] Eliza Lynn Linton, *Sowing the Wind*, 3 vols (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867). Subsequent references are cited parenthetically.

[93] Liddle, 'Salesmen, Sportsmen', p.39.

[94] Shelagh Hunter, *Harriet Martineau: The Poetics of Moralism* (Hants: Scolar Press, 1995), p.37.

[95] 'Newspaper Writers and their Profession', *London Review*, 7 (26 December 1863), 680–81 (p.680).

This popular perception of newspaper journalism as being directly related to other lines of men's work made it particularly difficult for women to claim that they were capable of undertaking it. In order to present the female newspaper writer in a positive light, Linton had to show not only that there were indeed lines of news-work that women could undertake, but also that their entry would not downgrade the quality of writing in the daily press. True to her belief that women entering male professions must prove themselves entirely on the basis of merit, and seek no favours, Linton presents Jane as willing to learn whatever skills might be required of a newspaper writer. Jane Osborn's father dies leaving her with a legacy of 'only business debts and complications'; therefore she turns to journalism in order to fend for herself and her mother (I, p.22).[96] Knowing full well that 'all people must go through a certain apprenticeship before they could succeed', she sends 'a crude but vigorous article on some small event that had just happened' to the editor of the 'Comet', a daily paper, seeking a frank and fair assessment of her journalistic abilities (I, pp.22–23).

Jane's letter, outlining her plight, is read with sympathy by the editor, Mr. Smith, who, while willing to help out a destitute single woman, is in no way inclined to compromise the quality of his paper by undue chivalry. Linton highlights this editorial review of Jane's work, foregrounding the fact that Jane was awarded her first assignment purely on terms of merit. The editor passes Jane's sample piece to the subeditor Wyndham for careful consideration, only because it strikes him as promising. Wyndham reinforces Smith's opinion, finding the article even better 'in substance than what many practised pressmen would have sent in', but 'not quite fitted [at the moment] for the leader of a "daily"', lacking finesse and marked with 'certain

[96] The story of Jane's apprenticeship and professionalization forms the subplot of Linton's novel. Linton parallels Jane's narrative with a sensational domestic tale about the crumbling marriage of Jane's cousin Isola, who matures from a frivolous upper-class wife to a responsible surrogate mother.

feminine blunders in political economy' (I, p.22). Wyndham agrees to train her, and initially tests her with occasional assignments, a few book-reviews to be done at home and delivered on time. Jane passes her apprenticeship with flying colours, learning quickly on the job, and soon rises to become a regular leader-writer for the 'Comet'.

Some reviewers understandably found Linton's representations of 'Miss Osborn's employment on the staff of the *Comet*' to be 'a little too easily brought about'.[97] As the *Athenaeum* put it, 'an eccentric and rambling letter from a perfect stranger to the editor of a daily journal would scarcely produce an immediate visit from the sub-editor and a batch of books for review'.[98] Such reviews show an awareness of the odds against women making newspaper journalism a source of livelihood, especially if they, like Jane, did not have any prior familial connections to the pressworld. Although there are parallels between the editor's acceptance of Jane and W.S. Williams's enthusiastic acceptance of *Jane Eyre*, a manuscript sent by post from an unknown provincial writer, this kind of breakthrough was less likely to happen in newspaper journalism, where work was generally entrusted to known hands.[99] While Jane's easy entry into newspaper journalism seems incredible, even within a predominantly sensational novel that has many improbable twists and turns, it enables Linton to underline that if given a chance, women would acquit themselves successfully in such male-dominated lines of work.

Jane's apprenticeship distinctly addresses male prejudice towards women in the workplace. Even before meeting Jane in person, the editor expresses a number of reservations

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[97] 'Sowing the Wind: A Novel', *Athenaeum*, 2054 (9 March 1867), 316–17 (p.316).

[98] Ibid.

[99] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. by Margaret Smith, Introduction by Sally Shuttleworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.xxxiv.

against the 'employment of women […] in the office', seemingly generated by his previous disappointments with female contributors (I, p.25). He inveighs against their 'looseness and partiality', and the 'annoying […] uncertainty of their work, their want of reliable power' (I, p.26). He fears that most women are too inconsistent to be relied upon for daily newspaper work, having a tendency to write magnificently for a day, but following up with 'a dozen slips of trash', making him regret having reserved the subject for them by setting aside a 'better man who was sure to have done his work at least creditably' (I, p.26). The editor also voices the popular prejudice that women were not professional enough to take criticism in their stride, that they unreasonably, and unprofessionally demanded 'the cream of both states — the independence and money-getting power of men, and the conventional respect of drawing-room ladies' (I, p.26).

Jane Osborn's every quality counters these prejudices about women being nuisances in a newsroom. Distancing herself from the 'whole idiotic class of womanish women' who seek chivalrous tolerance for professional tardiness, Jane proves to be a pioneering model of women's ability to write as men (I, p.31). Her 'strong language' and her personal belief that 'bad things want strong language to scarify them as they deserve', make her temperamentally suited for review-writing, and for countering the common image of women as incapable of writing objective and dispassionate criticism (I, p.31).[100] On having had to read through 'a stupid novel' sent to her for reviewing, Jane methodically 'cut[s] it up' (I, p.70). Jane is a thorough professional, ever dependable. Even after a particularly long time spent looking after an invalid lodger and being constantly nagged by her mother, Jane diligently plies her pen: 'The article was written, and well written too — Jane Osborn never "scamped her work" […]; it was folded in her

[100]For example, the *Saturday Review* essay entitled 'Authoresses', quoted at the start of this chapter, stated that women wouldn't be able to write 'balanced and cold criticism'. 'Authoresses', *Saturday Review,* p.484.

rough untidy way, and laid on the hall slab to be given to the office boy when he should call' (II, p.18). Stepping into the shoes of her dead father in providing for her family, she masterfully puts her limited resources to professional use, turning the 'miserable little back parlour […] which had been her father's surgery' still redolent with the pungent odours of medicinal drugs, into her own office-at-home, where she may write her clinical reviews uninterrupted (II, p.29).

Taking a leaf straight out of a book that she had reviewed so highly, Wollstonecraft's *Vindications,* which argued that women should be given the same education as men, Linton shows that female journalists can acquire, through experience, the intellectual skills that enabled men to work as reviewers and article-writers. While Wollstonecraft spoke of educated women as making good wives and mothers, Linton depicts the trained female reviewer and article-writer as successfully undertaking the same work as her male counterparts. Though Jane realizes that her exclusion from 'clubs, and lectures […] studios and places' where men like Harvey pick up 'varied knowledge' and keep themselves 'informed of the last things in art science and politics' disadvantages her professionally, she compensates for this by reading extensively under the guidance of her editor (II, p.185).

Jane's apprenticeship, thus not only exposes male prejudice and professional privilege, but also underlines how women may overcome them. Linton's strategy of countering masculine images of newspaper work would be followed by advocates of women's journalism in the *fin-de-siècle*. In the 1890s, as Hamilton has noted, celebrity male journalists like Henri Blowitz highlighted such masculine skills as boxing, horseriding and shooting a revolver as essential to becoming a great journalist; champions of women's journalism, like Catherine Drew, recognised that few women would be able to meet such criteria and therefore foregrounded intellectual

qualities including maturity, dependability, and accuracy as the necessary attributes of professional presswork.[101]

But Jane does not merely survive in newspaper journalism. She excels in it, rising to become a leader-writer for the 'Comet'. As Dallas Liddle has noted, newspaper leaders were 'the most concentratedly and pointedly authoritative genre in British society' and were 'read by the highest and most influential ranks of society, especially by political and economic decision makers'.[102] The feminine joys of 'babies, and love, and the graces and prettinesses' hold no appeal for Jane (III, p.29). What she desires most is 'the real solid pleasure of work—a man's work—work that influences the world—work that is power!' (III, p.29). Presswork bestows Jane with exactly the kind of public power and responsibility that are otherwise denied to her as a woman. The collective, masculine voice of the newspaper, the practice of anonymous publication, and the cultural might of the genre of leader-writing, enable Jane 'to sit behind the scenes and pull the strings' (III, 29). Linton suggests that male journalists who have other professions and outlets to influence the world cannot derive from anonymous newspaper journalism the 'strange thrill of secret mental power' that Jane feels, in saying something through the 'We in the "Comet"' that is 'taken among thinking men as a new gospel, when if one had said it as I, Jane Osborn, it would have been sneered at as woman's babble' (III, pp.29-30).

Empowered to speak the final word on the most important social and political issues of the day, Linton's Jane offers a triumphant alternative to the myth of Cassandra, the disregarded female prophet, that Florence Nightingale used to critique the social constraints placed on

[101] '"Her Usual Daring Style"', p.40.

[102] *Dynamics of Genre*, p.59.

women.[103] For Jane, newspaper work is much more than a job, it is her very means of self-fulfilment. This attitude strikingly departs from other models of Victorian professionalism wherein, as shown by Colon, self-interest is subsumed by an ethic of social service.[104] Linton suggests that women entering male-dominated professions can usher in a new kind of professionalism, wherein self-interest and self-fulfilment can ensure the maintenance of the highest ethical and practical standards of work.

The pleasures of professional journalism also give Jane the conviction that her life, despite being perceived by those around her as unenviably shabby, laborious and thankless, was in fact filled with far greater pleasures than conventional women can ever experience; as she proclaims to Isola, 'when I think of myself as one of the real influential workers of the world—one of the uncatalogued movers of society and men's minds—I feel as if I had found the treasure which you are all seeking, and that my share in life has been a Benjamin's mess!' (III, p.30) . Linton's Jane exemplifies the figure of the successful and happy professional single woman that feminists like Frances Power Cobbe promoted in their articles, modelling a viable lifestyle option for the overabundant numbers of single women.

Jane's self-sufficiency means she never has to look to marriage as a form of sustenance. Though she does fall in love with Harvey, her attraction to him is based on her regard for his intellectual merits alone. When Harvey, a manipulative social climber, marries a rich heiress, Jane continues to lead an independent and fulfilling life as a professional journalist. In fact, Jane takes over from Harvey as the sub-editor of the 'Comet'. She does her editorial work for free, out of sheer gratitude for his help in teaching her the ropes of journalism. But the work also helps in

[103] George P. Landow, 'Aggressive (Re) interpretations of the Female Sage: Florence Nightingale's *Cassandra',* in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse*, ed by. Thaïs E. Morgan, pp.32–45.

[104] *The Professional Ideal,* p.14. Also see Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists*, pp.61–64.

making her irreplaceable at the 'Comet'. When she is pressed for money at one point, her editor advances a considerable loan to her, trusting that he will commission enough articles to make good the investment. By the end of the novel, Jane is shown to have become a regular fixture at the 'Comet''s office and an invaluable asset to the institution:

> She went daily to office-work like a man, and blew up compositors and readers like a man too […] She grew to be a standing institution at the office of the "Comet," and 'old Johnny Osborn' in her frayed black gown trailing about her feet […] excited no more sensation among the boys and men of that establishment than if she had been an office boy herself (III, p.285).

Jane's transformation into 'John' or 'Johnny', as her male colleagues at office call her, is particularly striking. Ostensibly, the novel seems to indicate that undertaking men's work invariably makes women masculine and unfeminine. However, this kind of reading entirely ignores Jane own self-assessment. As shown above, she views herself as a successful, devoted, professional woman, and takes the masculine nicknames given to her in her stride, as a compliment to her professional abilities. We are told that 'so long as she could make a sufficient income for herself and her mother, do her work well and manfully', she 'did not mind what was said of her' (III, p.285). Jane's sense of identity itself is linked to her deep conviction that conventional womanhood made women submissive and unthinking, and she herself 'would rather have been the ungainly and unlovely boy-woman she was than even Isola' (III, p. 286). Jane's work, which makes her less feminine, gives her the only kind of life that would have satisfied her. In outlining Jane's own sense of self, Linton prevents her critics from having the last word on her lifestyle.

Jane's inherent unconventional womanhood fulfils an even more critical function within the novel. It enables Linton to make a spectacular breakthrough in mid-century representations of professional women: the description of a woman working in an office full of men without even a hint of sexual threat or intrigue. Victorian representations of women working in close proximity with men almost always suggested the presence of potentially threatening sexual attention directed towards the woman. This is one of the reasons why Emily Faithfull and her team stressed that the Victoria Press was a female dominated workspace, overseen by women. As noted earlier, Victorian visual representations of the female artist like Osborn's *Nameless and Friendless* [Fig. 5] stressed the sexual dangers to which women exposed themselves in stepping into a male dominated marketplace. In Dinah Craik's *Olive*, the eponymous heroine, an invalid artist, is made an offer of marriage by her professional mentor even though she works from home.[105] Home-based women writers also felt that the attainment of public fame included an element of shameful self-exposure, which potentially compromised their respectability.[106]

Those who represented the female journalist understandably struggled to underline the respectability of a woman who worked directly under the gaze of a male editor. As seen earlier, in *Struggles for Fame*, the very beauty and grace that make Barbara Chisenhale a conventionally attractive female protagonist also draw unwanted sexual attention from her male employer. Yonge's Ermine Williams is safely distanced from her male editor as she operates from the comforts of her provincial home. In *Sowing the Wind*, Jane's harsh and masculine manner makes it unthinkable, even laughable, for those around her to view her with sexual or romantic interest. When Jane complains about people who spread scandalous gossip about women who are friendly

[105] For a discussion of the novel's representation of the relationship between Olive and her male mentor, see Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour,* p.79.

[106] Mermin, *Godiva's Ride*, p.xiv.

with men, Harvey laughs and thinks to himself that 'if ever woman was privileged by nature to escape the danger of such […] misrepresentations it was she, the least lovely and the least loveable woman who had as yet come within his sphere' (II, pp.185–86). Linton had to markedly de-eroticise her heroine in order to make her professional life acceptable.

Jane's aggression also makes her seem utterly inviolable. Though she does not work at night, during the day she walks the streets of London alone and unafraid. There is probably an element of wish-fulfillment in Linton's portrayal of Jane's fearless inhabitation of male-dominated spaces. She herself had been accosted by a criminal in the very sanctity of the reading room of the British Museum, shortly after her first novel, *Azeth the Egyptian*, written through a year's painstaking research in the library, was published.[107] In 1847, one Mr. John King, a junior employee at the reading room of the British Museum was taken to court by Linton's friends for handing over to her a letter containing 'insinuations of a most offensive and disgraceful character', and demanding five pounds for keeping silent.[108] Linton's traumatic experience, which is not mentioned in Susan Bernstein's recent account of women writers in the Museum's reading room, shows that despite furnishing 'an alternative space for middle-class women seeking asylum from domestic obligations', this was nevertheless a public space that contained the risk of being sexually compromised.[109] While the British Museum certainly enabled women like Linton to undertake lines of research-based book-writing and journalism that were customarily dominated by University-educated men, such untoward incidents, widely reported

[107] Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton*, p.48.

[108] 'Central Criminal Court', *The Times*, 24 August, 1847, p.7. This incident was also noted in the Times' regular column of police reports. 'Police', *The Times*, 13 August 1847, p.8.

[109] For a recent study of women writers working in the British Museum, see Susan David Bernstein, *Roomscape: Women Writers in the British Museum from George Eliot to Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

through newspapers, would have reinforced contemporary perceptions of such public spaces and professions as unsafe and inappropriate for women. Thus, although this incident ended in a spectacular victory in court for Linton, with her assaulter being transported for seven years and the Judge commending her for 'taking the necessary steps to have the matter investigated', it is entirely elided in Linton's own accounts of her career.[110]

In living through an age where earlier models of female work were undergoing a massive change, Linton seems to have been unsure which aspects of her journalistic life might appear disreputable. Thus in 1885, Linton wrote her life-story as the autobiography of a male writer and journalist named Christopher Kirkland.[111] Published a year after the foundation of the National Association of Journalists, Linton's book strengthens the contemporary discourse of journalism as an educated middle-class profession comparable to medicine and law.[112] Linton's biographers, right from Layard to Anderson, have curiously ignored the interpretative difficulties presented by her adoption of a male narrator. They have treated the text as a straightforward autobiography, and even quoted Christopher's words as Linton's own. In doing so, they lose sight of the factors that informed Linton's use of a masculine disguise, especially the continuing social prejudice against female presswork.

The use of a male narrator enabled Linton to represent aspects of Victorian newspaper journalism that she never broached in her own later memoirs and interviews, or even through the manly fictional Jane. In *Christopher Kirkland*, Linton depicts the dingy by-lanes of Fleet Street, the nocturnal work in a newspaper office, the aggressive competition amongst foreign

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[110] 'Central Criminal Court', p.7.

[111] Mrs. Lynn Linton, *The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland*, 3 vols (London: Richard Bentley And Sons, 1885).

[112] Hampton, 'Defining Journalists', p.139.

correspondents looking for scoops.[113] Moreover, through Christopher, Linton could criticise aspects of Victorian journalism that were non-conducive to women's success without seeming to be driven by narrow self-interest. For example, although Christopher puts up with his editor's short-temper and habitual swearing, he expresses his deep resentment at such behavior, stating that it used to 'curdle my blood'.[114] And when the editor, in a fit of rage, shakes his fist in Christopher's face, he quits the paper immediately.[115]

This contrasts strikingly with Jane Osborn, who unquestioningly accepts, and even emulates, the brusque manners of her male editor and colleagues, in order to prove her fitness for the 'rigors of journalism'.[116] As a man, Christopher is under no comparable pressure to prove his journalistic mettle. Rather, by bringing his refined code of conduct into the domain of periodical writing, he helps to transform journalism from being a 'low class *métier* […] a degradation' to a respectable middle-class profession.[117] By showing the rise of the gentlemanly journalist in *Christopher Kirkland*, Linton also implies that the late Victorian pressworld is increasingly becoming fit for genteel women to inhabit.

In her own memoirs and interviews, Linton presented herself in this light, as a refined woman-of-letters. Even in an interview where she underlines that she was one of the earliest women to work on the staff of a newspaper and that she had written leaders on social issues, she emphasizes that she had worked at home, in a 'dignified and sheltered' manner, with the editor sending 'a little note in the morning with the House of Commons discussions or the Blue Books'

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[113] *Kirkland*, I, pp.265–66, 273–74; II, pp.145–46.

[114] Ibid., I, p.275.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Hampton, 'Defining Journalists', p.145.

[117] *Kirkland*, I, p.224.

and the printer sending someone 'at four P.M. […] to fetch the "copy" for the next morning's edition'.[118]

Jane, who successfully commands a newsroom full of men, might have been too manly to be viewed as an attractive career model by aspiring female journalists. However, in managing to break away from the negative representations of women's work in mixed-gendered spaces, Linton's novel was certainly ahead of its times. The very next year Anthony Trollope wrote two 'editor's tales' for *Saint Pauls Magazin*e, where a woman writer's encounter with the pressworld is shown to be deeply problematic. In the first tale, an ageing editor takes an aspiring female novelist, Mary Gresley, under his wing, teaching her how to write, but the tale is suffused with a sense of his sexual attraction to her.[119] In another tale, an aspiring and utterly untalented female journalist named Mrs. Brumby tries to bully the editors of a periodical into publishing her articles, and when they refuse, brings a court case against them, making them pay money as well as offer an apology for their alleged misconduct.[120] Evidently, the female journalist working with men continued to be viewed either as a sexual object, or a nuisance. Even Meredith, famed champion of women writers including Olive Schreiner, offers a brief, though damning depiction of women's presswork in *Diana of the Crossways.*[121] The eponymous heroine, a novelist, is modelled on Caroline Norton. Towards the end of the novel, Diana, driven partly by financial need, sells a political secret about the repeal of the Corn Laws to a newspaper. This particular plot point was based on a false rumour that had circulated at the time of the Repeal, that Caroline

[118] 'A Chat with Mrs. Lynn Linton', *Temple Bar*, 102 (July 1894), 355–64 (p.359).

[119] [Anthony Trollope], 'An Editor's Tales. No II. Mary Gresley', *Saint Pauls Magazine* (November 1969), 237–56.

[120] [Anthony Trollope], 'An Editor's Tales. No VI. Mrs Brumby', *Saint Pauls Magazine*, 6 (May 1870), 181–99.

[121] George Meredith *Diana of the Crossways* (1885, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909); Royal Gettman, 'Meredith as Publisher's Reader', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 48 (January 1949), 45–56 (p.45).

Norton, having learnt of Robert Peel's decision through Sidney Herbert (a politician and an admirer of her), had leaked it to the *Times* before it had been officially declared.[122] In focusing on this very unsavoury episode in Norton's illustrious journalistic career, Meredith, depicts women as incapable of responsible political journalism.

One notable exception to such negative narratives of women's presswork is George Moore's 1886 novel, *A Drama in Muslin.*[123] The novel, which offers a devastating critique of the objectification of upper-class Irish women in the marriage market, begins with the staging of a dramatic adaptation of Tennyson's 1842 ballad, 'The Beggar Maid', written by its heroine, Alice Barton.[124] Unlike most of her peers, Alice shows no interest in hunting for a rich husband and is depicted as being deeply concerned with the political and social issues of Ireland. A London-based writer and journalist named John Harding, whom Alice meets by chance in Dublin, encourages her to write and offers to try to get some of her stories published.[125] Enthused by a prospect of escaping the ennui that engulfs her, Alice attempts journalistic prose and finds immediate success. By choosing subjects that are 'healthy and practical' and executing them with 'integrity and good sense', Alice manages to write 'short stories and a newspaper article unfalteringly' and soon begins to earn a regular income from her journalism.[126]

Alice's journalism enables her to assume the conventionally masculine role of protector and provider towards other women: when her close friend, May Gould, becomes pregnant with a lover's child, Alice gives her authorial earnings to May, enabling her to have her baby at a

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[122] Elmer James Bailey, *The Novels of George Meredith: A Study* (New York: Haskell House, 1971), p.153.

[123] George Moore, *A Drama in Muslin: A Realistic Novel*, 7th edn (London: Vizetelly, 1887).

[124] Ibid., p.4.

[125] Ibid., pp.180–81.

[126] Ibid, p.233.

convent without compromising her reputation.[127] More importantly, Alice's professional income enables her to disregard parental opposition and marry her lover, Dr. Reed, a middle-class medical doctor who is far below her own social class. Confident of adding 'two hundred a year […] at the very least' to Dr. Reed's income of three hundred pounds a year, Alice feels assured of a comfortable marital life, and becomes the only female character in the novel to have a fulfilling, companionate marriage.[128] At the end of the novel, Alice is shown to have become a successful novelist, living with her husband and children in a comfortable, though simple home in suburban London. This emancipatory trajectory of the female journalist has led many scholars to read the novel as an early example of the New Woman novels of the *fin de siècle*.[129]

Yet, while Moore's heroine is a successful professional who balances domestic and public duties, she is, as Ann Heilmann and María Elena Pablos have noted, only a 'middlebrow writer' who finds easy success precisely because she meets the established standards of the literary market.[130] The narrator explicitly states that Alice cared little for 'the artistic question' and merely approached writing like 'any other business she might have undertaken', infusing it with 'clearness and common sense'.[131] As a regular columnist for the *Lady's Paper*, Alice undertakes such conventionally feminine genres as personal sketches and short stories and ends up writing novels, which had been described by Harding, earlier in the novel, as 'the right and

[127] Ibid., pp.254–55.

[128] Ibid. p.311.

[129] Ann Heilmann and María Elena Jaime de Pablos, 'Portrait of an Artist as a Young (New) Woman?', in *George Moore: Influence and Collaboration*, ed. by Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn (Newark: University of Delaware Press and The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2014), pp.99–121.

[130] Ibid., p.99.

[131] *A Drama in Muslin,* p.233.

proper thing for a young lady to write'.[132] Moore's own early novelistic career was adversely affected by being rejected by Mudies and other circulating libraries and he had written articles denouncing the current aesthetic standards of novels.[133] Hence, by foregrounding Alice's market success, he also recalled 'his own superior position as a more high-cultured and challenging, hence censored, artist'. [134]

George Gissing's 1891 novel, *New Grub Street* provides an important response to the changing journalistic field of the 1880s.[135] Before drawing this chapter to a close, I shall examine, in brief, its marginal, yet significant representation of the female journalist as literary drudge, which marks an important shift from earlier representations of the presswoman.

Coda: The Presswoman as Unacknowledged Drudge in *New Grub Street*

New Grub Street offers extensive commentary on the general degradation of the literary profession to a trade in the 1880s. Molly Youngkin has offered a particularly useful account of Gissing's tenuous relationship with the Society of Authors, which was founded in 1884.[136] Drawing on private correspondence, Youngkin notes that the high subscription rate kept Gissing from joining the Society for years, and that he later joined it 'only because he felt he had to in order to stay competitive with other authors', and to take advantage of its advanced marketing services, such as the provision of a literary agent.[137] Youngkin states that Gissing remained a

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[132] Ibid., pp.255, 180.

[133] Troy J. Bassett, 'Circulating Morals: George Moore's Attack on Late-Victorian Literary Censorship', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 40 (2005), pp.73–89.

[134] Heilmann and Pablos, 'Portrait of an Artist', p.99.

[135] George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (1891. London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

[136] Molly Youngkin, 'Men Writing Women: Male Authorship, Narrative Strategies, and Woman's Agency in the Late- Victorian Novel' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2002).

[137] Ibid., p.19.

somewhat grudging, unenthusiastic member of the Society and even refused to join its exclusive all-male Author's Club. In *New Grub Street*, Gissing voices his discomfort and dissatisfaction with the Society of Authors, partly through the marginalised figure of the female journalist Marian Yule.

Marian Yule differs from Jasper Milvain, the novel's epitome of the 1880s professional journalist, in spending long hours at the reading room of the British Museum, carefully collecting information for her father's articles. Gissing's novel shows a literary world where high-repute journalism has been emptied of high-mindedness. While Jasper views Marian's methodical writing as misguided and unnecessary, her father, Alfred Yule, parasitically draws on her literary labour, even making her write most of his articles, and passes them off as his own.[138] The narrator notes that Marian's writing helped to augment her father's professional reputation, since they were far better in style than anything that he had written himself. Marian's lack of an individual career is contrasted in the novel with the literary careers of Jasper's sisters. With Jasper's support, his elder sister Maud Milvain writes some reviews for an illustrated magazine; Dora, who is a more ambitious author, becomes a successful journalist and children's writer. In the journalistic world of *New Grub Street*, the success of women journalists depends on the patronage of brothers and fathers, and their ability to write exactly what the market demands. Alfred Yule's abuse of his daughter's love in claiming the public benefits of her labour for himself exposes the corruption, not only of relatively young upcoming writers of the 1880s like Jasper, but of everyone who has managed to survive in that market.

[138] In fact, the novel suggests that it is particularly difficult to know whether Marian's father, Alfred Yule, even contributes to the articles that Marian labours so hard at.

The novel mounts its strongest critique of the 1880s literary market by its representation of the miserable death of the two male writers of genius, Edward Reardon and Harold Biffen. In fact, Reardon cannot, even if he wishes to, fit his writing to the market. Biffen marks a more stubborn resistance to the marketplace, insisting on writing to his own artistic standards but being driven ultimately to suicide. By contrast, Marian's lack of any literary ambition, and the fact that she is prompted to write, not by her own desire, but the need to help her father sustain their family, enables her to maintain a critical and detached attitude to her work. She is painfully aware that even her carefully-researched writing will only be valued for its current market rate: 'here was she exhausting herself in the manufacture of printed stuff which no one even pretended to be more than a commodity for the day's market. What unspeakable folly! […] She herself would throw away her pen with joy but for the need of earning money'.[139]

As a reluctant participant in the late-Victorian world of literary production, Marian understands better than anyone else in the novel the utter degradation of contemporary literature. Looking about the reading room of the British Museum, that symbol and storehouse of literary wealth, she sees nothing but an ever-increasing pile of worthless, mechanical writing: 'This huge library, growing into unwieldiness, threatening to become a trackless desert of print—how intolerably it weighed upon the spirit!'.[140] The authors who come to read there, Marian feels, have no higher aim than to 'to make new books out of those already existing, that yet newer books might in turn be made out of theirs'.[141] Marian's abandonment of writing and London society and her acceptance of the post of an assistant director of a public library in a provincial town is in keeping with the novel's larger exposure of the utter lack of real support structures to

[139] *New Grub Street,* p.110

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid.

aid a promising writer. Gissing thus underlines that professional institutions like the Society of Authors, and the Institute of Journalists, founded in the early 1880s, have so far failed to make journalism conducive and rewarding to women like Marian.

As I have shown, fictional representations of the female journalist emphasize the diversity and range of this particular line of literary labour. Breaking away from the myth of the author as a single, autonomous creative agent, they depict writing as a mediated and collaborative exercise. These texts helped woman writers to voice their resistance to gendered notions of writing, not only through the figure of the female presswoman but also through the supporting cast of male participants in the periodical press. Whether the plotlines of such novels showed the failure or triumph of presswomen, they extended the visibility of the female journalist in mid-Victorian England, and represented her professional claims in the realm of fiction.

Conclusion

George Gissing's pessimistic view of the late-Victorian journalistic field as inimical to high-minded writing is surprisingly echoed in *Presswork for Women* (1904), a guidebook written by Frances Low, a self-sustaining female journalist, to advise aspiring young women on the best ways of making a career in the press.[1] For Low, the growing numbers of women journalists had caused an alarming decline from the high 'standard for many years sustained in this country by Harriet Martineau, Frances Power Cobbe, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and others': 'Whereas fifty years ago the women journalists were picked members of their sex, possessing scholarship and culture, added to a high sense of responsibility, to-day every semi-educated girl attracted by an easy mode of earning a small income, takes to journalism'.[2] Although Low emphasizes that those women 'determined to do only the finer kind of journalistic work' had best 'choose some other mode of bread-winning', she nevertheless ends her account by hoping that 'women of education and refinement and artistic tastes, […] penetrated with the responsibility of their task' would take over and help refine women's presswork.[3] The distinguished mid-century presswomen, invoked by Low just a few lines previously, serve as beacons to direct this course of future reform in women's journalism.

In the 1880s and the 1890s, the further expansion of the periodical press, the establishment of institutions such as the Society of Authors (1884), The National Association of Journalists (1884), and the Society of Women Journalists (1894), and the rise of the 'New

[1] Frances H. Low, *Press Work for Women: A Text Book for the Young Woman Journalist* (London: Charles Scribner, 1904).

[2] Ibid., p.91.

[3] Ibid., pp.3, 92.

Woman' debates, all revived discussions about the professional status of women journalists. Within this context, eminent female journalists from the 1850s are repeatedly cited as offering both proof and promise of women's journalistic abilities. Catherine Drew's reference to eminent predecessors like Cobbe and Martineau in her 1894 speech, discussed in the introduction of this thesis, was far from isolated. Eliza Linton, Harriet Martineau and the Langhamite Adelaide Proctor, are all lauded in an 1880 guide for their thoroughly professional conduct with editors: the writer claims that they never displayed such signs of 'feminine amateurity' as making personal appeals to editors, and recommends his female readers to follow their lead.[4] Even Arnold Bennett, who bemoans that 'women-journalists are unreliable as a class', attributes this not to their 'sexual imperfection' but to their lack of training; he too believes that 'there is no reason why a woman should not deal as effectively as a man with general matters'.[5] In 1894, W.T. Stead asserted that Cobbe, who, through her fearless political journalism had 'proved, once for all, that a woman may be relied on as a journalist no less than a man', was 'the oldest New Woman now living on this planet'.[6]

Although the professional status of women journalists continued to be debated through the *fin de siècle*, there was an increasing acceptance that women, if given the same opportunities as men, could enter the same lines of journalism. This thesis has elucidated the work of 'model presswomen' from the mid-Victorian era who helped to bring about the above change in opinion. When most of their female contemporaries capitalized on the expanding market for such

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[4] John Oldcastle (pseud.) [Wilfrid Meynel], *Journals and Journalism: With a Guide for Literary Beginners* (London: Field and Tuer, 1880), p.16. For identification of Meynell, journalist and husband of Alice Meynell, as writer of the above piece, see Sally Mitchell, 'Ephemeral Journalism and Its Uses: Lucie Cobbe Heaton Armstrong (1851-1907)', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42 (Spring 2009), 81-92 (p.82).

[5] Arnold Bennett, *Journalism for Women: A Practical Guide* (London: John Lane, 1898), pp.12, 54.

[6] W.T. Stead, 'Character Sketch', *Review of Reviews*, 10 October 1894, 329-38 (pp.336, 329).

conventionally feminine topics and genres as fiction, romance, fashion and gossip to forge successful careers in the press, the subjects of my thesis chose to take on the male bastion of social and political journalism. This exceptional presswork has been largely ignored by scholars of Victorian professional authorship. Those who have studied articles written by leading Victorian female reformers have assumed that such activist presswork was amateur in nature. However, as I have shown, such clear-cut distinctions between amateur and professional writing do not hold for the mid-Victorian period, when there was no clear consensus on the nature and status of professional journalism. By emphasizing the vocational ideal within Victorian discourses of professionalism, a number of women were able to write on purportedly masculine subjects while also retaining their claims to respectable, middle-class womanhood.

From Harriet Martineau, whose work spanned international politics and economics, to the Langham Place Women, who were especially dedicated to the mid-century women's movement in England, all contributed to claiming political journalism as fit work for women. The means and strategies they adopted varied widely: Parkes and her friends founded a journal of their own; others, like Cobbe and Martineau, while never ceasing to write in specialist journals, also broke into the domain of mainstream journalism targeted at a mixed-gender readership. They responded in innovative ways to the demanding schedules of periodical work: some, like Martineau, prepared material well in advance before setting out on her foreign correspondence assignment; others, like Ward, deliberately adopted a remarkably relaxed pace of reportage but sustained readerly interest by using a sensational, dramatic style of writing.

These women's success in rivalling male journalists must not make us see them as having broken free of the constraints of Victorian middle-class culture. The universities and clubhouses where male journalists acquired a formidable education and influential networks, remained

closed to them until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[7] Their ability to write on political issues was commonly questioned, and occasionally, even ridiculed. The greatest strength of the 'model presswomen' studied in this thesis was their ability to test the boundaries of male and female journalism, and to successfully claim a place for women within the most distinguished areas of social and political journalism. Martineau and Cobbe showed, for example, that women could use information gathered from published accounts of legal and parliamentary debates to write well-researched, timely political articles. Ward demonstrated that despite never being on the battlefield, army-wives could draw on military documents, eye-witness accounts, and colonial newspapers to rival the reportage of male journalists who covered battles from the frontlines. Even illness and disability could not hinder Martineau's remarkable rise into the highest rungs of newspaper journalism. Familial connections and membership of reform organizations like the NAPSS provided women with initial access to influential social and political circles, and their journalism itself served as a pathway to greater social influence.

By offering an in-depth analysis of three avenues of political journalism that were claimed by women in the mid-century era, I have drawn attention to the distinct challenges

[7] A number of women's clubs were founded in the late nineteenth century but these did not enjoy the same social status, and did not offer the same professional opportunities, as gentlemen's clubs. By the end of the nineteenth century, some gentlemen's clubs admitted women as guests but did not give them membership. As Amy Milne-Smith has noted, 'clubland remained a distinctly masculine space throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'. *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late-Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.31. Women's entry into universities was gradual. Women's colleges were founded in Cambridge and Oxford in the 1870s. Although these colleges provided women with greater access to higher education than before and even enabled them to take some of the examinations that male students took, they were not fully integrated into the social and cultural life of the universities. The University of London granted degrees to women in 1878, but female students at Oxford and Cambridge could not attain degrees and become full members of the universities till the mid-twentieth century. Vicinus, *Independent Women*, pp. 121–62.

presented by specific genres and sites of periodical writing. This has enabled me to examine closely both the content and form of women's political writing within the Victorian periodical press. The study has also revealed hitherto unknown connections between neglected and celebrity women writers, and revised their current standing: in the chronological line of pioneering female foreign correspondents, for example, the largely unnoted but remarkably innovative Harriet Ward takes pride of place over the lionized Harriet Martineau. My examination of diverse forms of female professional journalism has shown that even such periodicals as the *EWJ*, long taken to be disinterested in market sales, had in fact, always sought to maximize sales and even released advertisements. In the mainstream press, I find Meteyard and Cobbe claiming space for the female journalist alongside the most influential male journalists and reformers of the age. The last chapter has shown that the domain of fiction was also used by women writers not only to contest the limits of contemporary female presswork, but also to demand better working conditions and payment for women journalists. Signing articles, was only one amongst a wide range of writing and publishing strategies through which female writers asserted their status as serious journalists. The methodology adopted in this study may be applied to other areas of women's presswork such as leader-writing and reviewing.

The ambit of women's professional presswork was thus far wider than was hitherto assumed. A career in political journalism, these women showed, was one of the many avenues of distinguished paid work that the single middle-class woman could attempt. Contesting the contemporary view of the unmarried woman as redundant or burdensome, they showed that she could be socially useful, self-sustaining and distinguished. Although they had to exercise caution in venturing into domains of writing that were conventionally barred to women, they

successfully assumed positions of authority in the press. The ‘model’ presswomen of the mid-nineteenth century helped to create new public, political and professional identities for women.

Illustrations

Figure 1. Daniel Maclise, 'Regina's Maids of Honour'



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Figure 2. Daniel Maclise, 'The Fraserians'

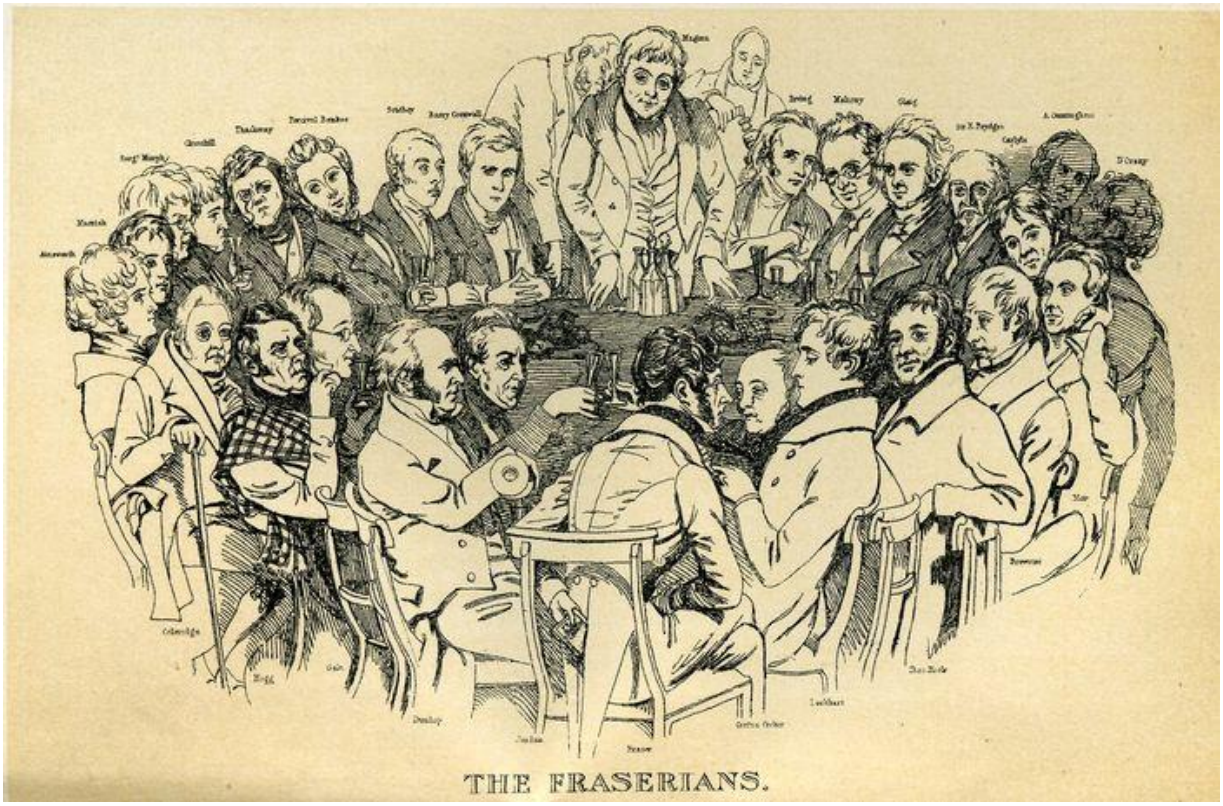

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Figure 3. Maria Rye, 'On Assisted Emigration'

The Government Emigration Officers and Offices for promoting the Emigration of the Laboring Classes, are as follows:—

S. Walcott, Esq., 8, Park Street, Westminster;
Com. Lean, R.N., 70, Lower Thames Street;
Lieut. Prior, R.N., Stanley Buildings, Bath Street, Liverpool.

The Colonial Agents for assisted passages:—

William Field, Esq., 3, Bridge Street, Westminster, (for Cape of Good Hope;)
Messrs. Ridgway & Co., 40, Leicester Square, (for Auckland;)
Messrs. John Gladstone & Co., 3, White Lion Court, (for Wellington;)
E. Fitzgerald, Esq., 32, Charing Cross, (for Canterbury.)

The usual length of the voyage to the Australian colonies is about three months and a half, and to New Zealand a little longer: and as, at whatever season of the year it may be made, passengers have to encounter very hot and very cold weather, they should be prepared for both.

The following is a list of the principal articles required; but it cannot be too strongly impressed, as a general rule, that the more abundant the stock of clothing each person can afford to take, the better for health and comfort during the passage.

A single (working) woman's outfit for Australia.

		s.	d.
1 warm cloak, with cape		6	0
2 bonnets	each	3	10
1 small shawl		2	3
1 stuff dress		11	0
2 print do.	each	6	0
6 shifts	„	1	3
2 flannel petticoats	„	2	6
1 stuff do.		3	9
2 twill do.	each	2	0
1 pair of stays		2	6
4 pocket-handkerchiefs	each	0	3
2 net do., for neck	„	0	5
3 caps	„	0	10
4 night-caps	„	0	7
4 sleeping jackets	„	1	4
2 pairs of black worsted hose	„	0	10
4 cotton do.	„	0	10
1 pair of boots		5	0
6 towels	each	0	4½

Each person will also require:—

1 bowl and can.
1 knife and fork.
1 deep tin plate.
1 pint tin drinking mug.
1 table spoon.
1 tea-spoon.
An assortment of needles and thread, 1s.

Figure 4. George Measom and John Franklin, 'Life's Contrasts; or, New-Year's Eve 1847'



Figure 5. Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless'



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